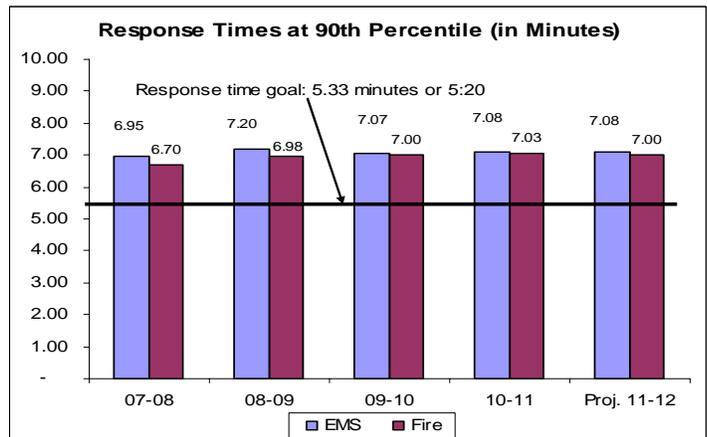
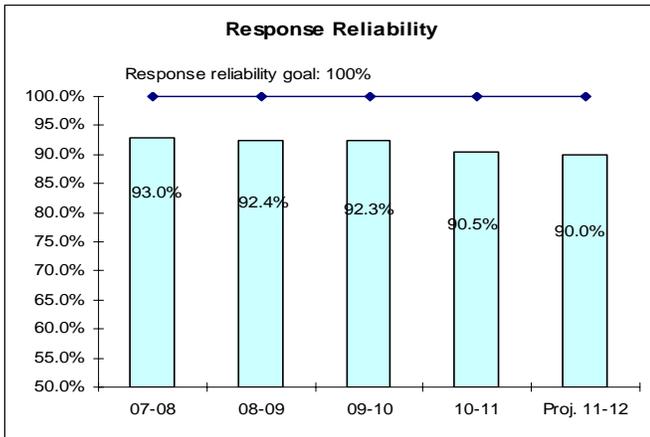


# PF&R COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION – APRIL 12, 2012

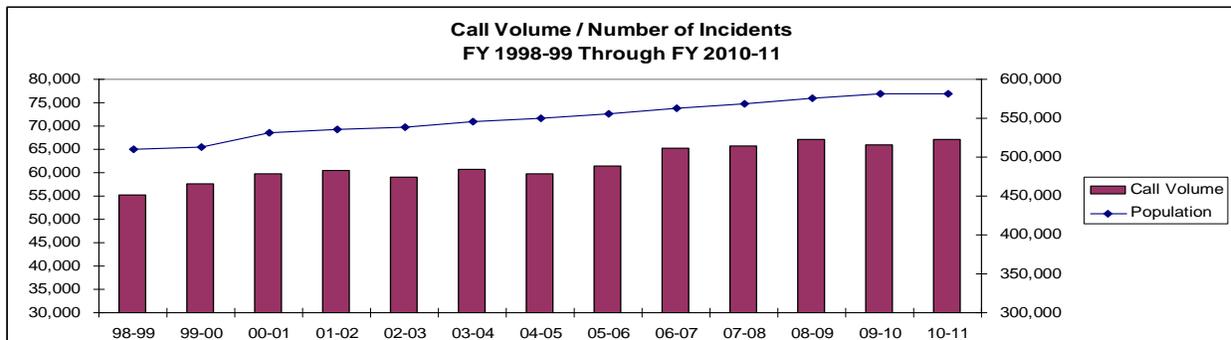
## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUE #1 – Response Reliability and Response Time**

Emergency response reliability and response time are the most significant issue currently facing Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R) and will continue to be over the next five years unless permanent ongoing funding is secured to support the current service level. Reliable and timely response is at the very core of our mission to save lives and protect property for the people who live, work, and visit our community. If the budget reductions take place as recommended by the Financial Planning Division (FPD), PF&R's response reliability would significantly decline further and response time would increase drastically.

- Response reliability is the measurement of whether or not a first-due (closest) unit in the Fire Management Area (FMA) is available to respond when a citizen makes a call for service. If the first-due unit is unavailable, another unit will respond from a farther geographic distance, resulting in a significantly longer response time (we anticipate this time to be 5 to 10 minutes or longer) depending on the location and how busy the system is at the time of the emergency. PF&R's goal for response reliability is 100%, but the reliability has been slowly trending down to approximately 90% in the last fiscal year.
- Response time refers to the time interval from dispatch to arrival on scene, including both turnout and travel times. Time is a critical factor in our ability to save lives, property, and the environment. National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) recommends a total of 5 minute response time (1 minute for turnout, + 4 minutes for travel) to all emergency response, 100% of the time. PF&R's response time goal is 5 minutes and 20 seconds or 5.33 minutes at 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. Currently, PF&R's overall response time at 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is approximately 7 minutes, significantly longer than the NFPA recommendation and PF&R's goal.



- Demand for service continues to go up as the population grows. The call volume increased over 21% from 55,313 in FY 1998-99 to 67,212 in FY 2010-11, while PF&R experienced approximately \$11 million or 15% of ongoing budget cuts during the same period. Increased demand and decreased resources create a tremendous challenge for PF&R to meet its reliability and response time goals.



## **Impact on Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- In FY 2009-10 on-going funding for two third's of a fire station and two rescues was eliminated and replaced with one-time resources. The rescues and fire station continue to be funded with one-time resources through FY 2011-12.
- For FY 2012-13, FPD is recommending one-time funding for the station but not for the two rescues. It is also recommending the closure of two fire stations currently supported with ongoing resources. In effect the FPD recommendation closes two stations and discontinues the operation of the two rescues, which eliminates 36 front-line firefighter positions.
- Each of PF&R's 30 stations is part of an intricate network strategically located throughout the city to provide emergency response. Station location and maintaining a minimum daily staffing level are crucial to optimizing response reliability and response times throughout the city, as well as providing effective emergency scene response. Each station not only serves its primary response area, but also serves as a backup to the stations surrounding it.
- Closing even one station within the network will detrimentally affect the community served by that station and have a ripple effect negatively impacting response reliability and response times across the city. Closing two stations and discontinuing two rescues would have an exponential negative impact since fewer units would be available to respond to the increased call volume.
- Reliability in the closed station and the adjacent FMAs would decrease from an already low 90% to the range of 70% in the immediate community and approximately 80% in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The Service and Deployment Study done by TriData in 2011 indicated the travel times for units from outside of a vacated FMA are a minimum of 30% longer than for units from within the FMA. In some incidents, it is likely that response times could be doubled to the range of 14 to 16 minutes.
- These delays will impact the number of lives we can save from fire and other life-threatening emergencies. Studies show that extension of fire beyond the room of origin occurs approximately six minutes after ignition, and flashover (simultaneous ignition of all flammable materials) occurs within ten minutes of ignition. Depending on materials and furnishings typical of today's fashion, flashover may occur within two to four minutes. On medical calls, permanent brain damage can occur within 4-6 minutes without oxygen, and when people are suffering cardiac arrest, the odds of saving their life decreases 10% every minute cardiac defibrillation is delayed.

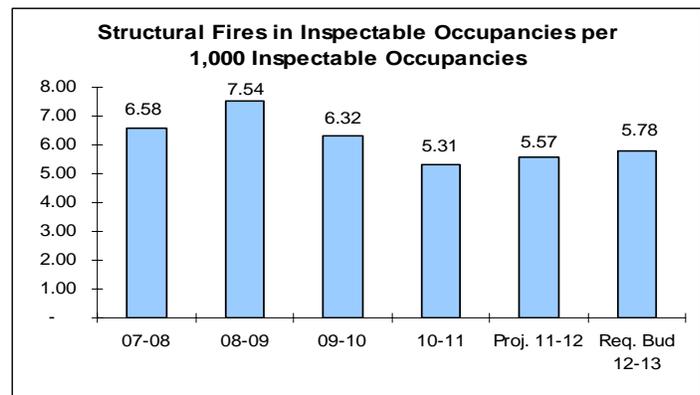
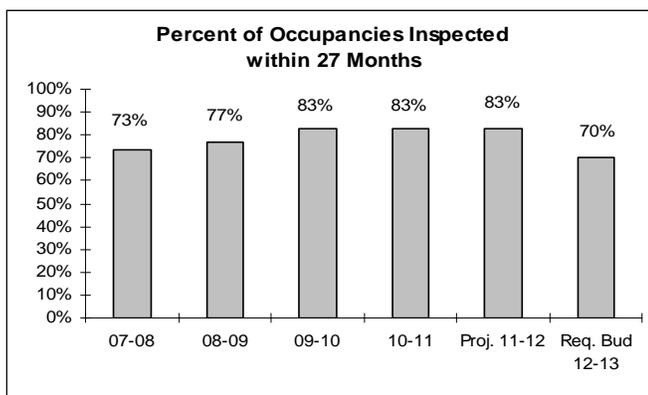
## **Strategies to Address Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- In the next few months, PF&R will be starting a pilot program and putting Rapid Response Vehicles into service to respond to EMS calls. In order for this program to be successful, there is a lot of work to be done beforehand including staffing, proper EMS and dispatch protocols, cooperation with social service agencies, and approval from the Multnomah County Physician Supervisor. At the conclusion of the pilot, PF&R will assess the effectiveness of the program to determine its future.
- Approximately 70% of PF&R's calls are EMS. Providing EMS service is an added value for the citizens of Portland, since the current network of stations and minimum staffing level are necessary to respond to fire, special rescues, and other large scale emergencies. By jointly providing fire, EMS, and other rescue services, PF&R takes advantage of economies of scope and scale to lower the cost of services. PF&R has been working with BOEC, Multnomah County, American Medical Response, and other public and private health organizations to continue to improve coordination and EMS service delivery.
- PF&R doesn't have a simple or easy solution to avoid closing fire stations and mitigating the dramatic impact it would have on reliability and response times throughout the city of Portland. Citizens have come to expect the high quality of service currently provided by PF&R, and the neighborhood(s) affected by a station closure would quickly and directly feel the loss of lives and properties due to delayed response. At this time, specific stations have not been identified for closure and won't be until the final budget decisions for next fiscal year have been made.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUE #2 – Code Enforcement**

PF&R's Code Enforcement program is charged with identifying and mitigating fire hazards in approximately 39,800 commercial buildings and multi-family housing of three or more units located in the city of Portland. In 2001, PF&R established a two-year inspection cycle with approximately 19,000 inspections conducted annually. However, staffing reductions since that time have prevented PF&R from achieving this goal for many years.

- PF&R has an exempt status agreement with the Oregon State Fire Marshal, which gives enforcement jurisdiction to PF&R, and requires regular inspections to be conducted.
- The inspectable occupancies include all businesses, multi-family residences of three or more units, and institutions (school, hospital, jail, etc.).
- Regular code enforcement inspections help to prevent and reduce the frequency and severity of fires in the community. Current data shows a decline in the number of structural fires in inspectable occupancies, although the budget cut could reverse the decreasing trend.



- In addition to the scheduled fire inspections, inspectors respond to citizen requests and special situations, such as unlawful occupancy, dangerous buildings, illegal public assembly/overcrowding, chronic false alarms, and illegal burning, all of which are a risk to the public. In FY 2010-11, over 11,000 unscheduled inspections occurred.

### **Impact on Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- Eliminating two more code enforcement inspectors will further lengthen the inspection cycle, which currently is close to 2.5 years due to staffing reductions in prior budget years.
- The Code Enforcement program has been successful in reducing structural fires in inspectable occupancies. Extending the inspection cycle could jeopardize this success and lead to an increase in structure fires.
- With fewer inspectors, the majority of their time will be spent on responding to citizen requests and special situations, and the backlog of regular inspections and re-inspections will continue to increase.
- PF&R's ability to enforce State and local fire code in accordance with the exempt status agreement with the Oregon State Fire Marshal will be further compromised. The Oregon State Fire Marshal does not have the capacity to take over code enforcement, which has only one code enforcement inspector to cover all of Multnomah County.
- The integrity of citywide data will be negatively impacted, since information will not be updated regularly. Code enforcement inspectors collect information such as ownership, approximate square footage, business type, on-site hazardous materials, variances, and alarm and sprinkler data which is stored in PF&R's Fire Information System (FIS). This information is critical to emergency response personnel and is also shared with other City bureaus.

## **Strategies to Address Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- PF&R has made adjustments within the Code Enforcement program to accomplish as many inspections as possible with limited resources. Internal processes were streamlined to increase productivity; a priority ranking system by occupancy type was established and tracked in FIS. Under the new ranking system, managers are able to ensure the highest risk occupancies are given priority. If two more inspectors are eliminated, PF&R will need to identify strategies to address the impact on the Code Enforcement program.

## **SIGNIFICANT ISSUE #3 – Retirement Payouts**

In FY 2005-06, PF&R entered a period of increases in retirement, reflecting PF&R's aging workforce. Since that time, retirements have been a significant issue due to the number of retirements that have occurred each year and the associated payout costs.

- PF&R has had 193 sworn employee retirements since FY 2005-06, resulting in a tremendous loss of experience and a large amount of retirement payouts.
- Approximately 90 sworn employees are currently eligible for retirement. These are sworn employees who are at least 50 years old with a minimum 25 years of PF&R service or at least 55 years old with any amount of PF&R service. The number of retirement eligible sworn employees is forecasted to remain high for the next several years.
- PF&R is forecasting a retirement spike in FY 2012-13 as a result of the 27-payday look back in December 2012 and the relatively high number of eligible employees.
- Depending on the number of retirements in June 2012 (also with a 27-payday look back), up to 30 retirements are projected in FY 2012-13, which would result in payouts of approximately \$2.5 million. This amount is more than twice of PF&R's one million annual budget designated for retirement payouts.

## **Impact on Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- PF&R's requested budget didn't include a retirement decision package, therefore, there isn't a budget reduction proposed. Retirements payouts have been identified as a significant issue for several years since PF&R's budget doesn't include adequate resources to cover the projected retirement payouts.

## **Strategies to Address Significant Issue if Budget Reductions Are Made**

- PF&R monitors its personnel services expenditures monthly and prepares year-end projections, which are regularly communicated to FPD. Because PF&R is a 24/7 operation and maintains a minimum daily staffing level, there isn't a lot of opportunity to reduce these costs.
- Historically, PF&R has received resources from General Fund Compensation Set-Aside to cover the projected retirement payout budget shortfall. If PF&R experiences the projected number of retirements next year and the \$1.5 million shortfall materializes, PF&R will request the additional resources from the Compensation Set-Aside in Spring BMP.

## **PORTLAND PLAN DISCUSSION**

PF&R participated in each of the four Regional Multi-Agency Public Safety Coordination meetings convened by Mayor Adams. The following coordination opportunities were proposed:

1. Refinements to BOEC/911 call triaging and protocols
2. Data resource development and sharing across agencies
3. Training coordination opportunities
4. Joint purchasing/strategic purchasing
5. Technology and equipment standardization

PF&R supports and looks forward to continued participation in these initiatives if they can enhance regional coordination and partnership and improve cost efficiency and effectiveness.