

## Appendix C - Fire Protection Service Level Adjustment Report

### Volunteer Service Analysis – Valley East (Stations 15, 16 & 17)

In 2019, of the 426 unique calls in Valley East (Fire Beats 15, 16 & 17), volunteers responded to 138 or 32% of the calls and arrived on scene at various times after the first arriving truck. Multiple stations may respond to these calls (e.g., in the case of a fire, all three stations may respond). For further context, in 2019 there were 43 responses from Val Caron volunteers (10% of the total), 119 from Val Therese volunteers (28% of the total) and 69 from Hanmer volunteers (16% of the total). The Val Therese career truck responded to 417 incidents of the 426 unique calls during the same period across Fire Beats 15, 16 & 17. The career truck was unavailable for the remaining nine incidents.

Valley East Calls for Stations 15, 16 & 17 - 2019		
Incident Type	Number of Incidents	Percentage of Valley Incidents
Fires	52	12%
Open Air Fires	38	9%
Alarms	102	24%
Leaks	8	2%
Hazards	21	5%
Motor Vehicle Collisions	99	23%
Rescues	3	1%
Medical	64	15%
Assistance	39	9%
Total	426	100%

The full-time apparatus from Val Therese (Station 16) arrives on scene first 94% of the time with an average response time of 7:36 in Valley East, 5:10 time within Val Therese, with an average 2.4 firefighters. In Valley East, volunteers from Stations 15, 16 & 17 arrive on scene first 6% of the time with an average response time of 10:50. Due to data limitations we are unable to determine initial unit firefighters for the first responding volunteer truck.

Over the past three years, the average attrition rate for all volunteer stations is 15.8% per year, representing a loss of 42 volunteer firefighters annually. In the same period, Fire Services ran five recruitments and hired 101 volunteer firefighters. Currently in Valley East, we have 32 active volunteers (not including long term absences) from Val Caron (9), Val Therese (9) Hanmer (14). Attrition rates in Valley East average 18.6% per year over the past three years. Over the same period, 25 firefighters resigned, and 29 firefighters were hired. This constant cycle of hiring is difficult to manage in terms of training, recruitment, and associated costs. This impacts attendance rates for emergency calls, response times and fireground staffing.

The median Volunteer attendance at incidents in 2019 was 38% for Val Caron, 33% for Val Therese, and 39% for Hanmer. Attendance rates may not be sustainable as call volumes to these stations increase. It is common for several volunteers included in the above attendance numbers to arrive at the scene in personal vehicles after the assigned fire apparatus. Although volunteer availability fluctuates throughout a 24-hour period, Fire Services currently does not have the capability to track volunteer firefighter availability or scene response by hour of the day.

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Recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters remains a challenge for all Fire Services across North America. Fire chiefs are struggling to attract new volunteers due to the considerable time commitment, new training requirements, minimum standards for volunteer firefighters, and increased call volumes.

Insights publication states:

“In volunteer/combo departments, retention of members is a critical concern. Across the country, fire chiefs are sounding alarms to their communities about their recruitment and retention problems. Another challenge for volunteer fire departments is that firefighters do not have the time to keep up with rigid training requirements while balancing the commitments of a full-time job and family life. In North Carolina, for example, the number of volunteer firefighters has declined by 22 percent in the past two years, according to FEMA – and many other states face similar shortages.”

<https://insights.samsung.com/2019/06/17/four-critical-issues-facing-fire-services-today/>