

HINESBURG VERMONT
FIRE
DEPARTMENT



STRATEGIC PLAN

2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Vision
2. Surveys & Results
 - a. Strengths
 - b. Weaknesses
 - c. Threats
 - d. Opportunities
3. Mission Statement
4. Department Objectives
5. Strategies
6. Summary
7. Apparatus Replacement Timeline
8. Appendix

VISION

The Hinesburg Fire Department was officially organized in 1943 by a small group of volunteers. The first truck was an old Chevrolet with a 55-gallon drum and a container of baking soda. When the baking soda was inverted into the tank, it created pressure for the single small hose. The Department and equipment have come a long way.

Because of good forethought and action by the Firemen's Association and tremendous support by the Town of Hinesburg, the Department has grown to meet our expanding needs by adding equipment and services as required.

We wish to continue this trend. After careful thought and consideration, in order to maintain our first rate department, we have adopted this strategic plan as a road map.

We see our town continuing its growth due to our location in southern Chittenden County. Because of Hinesburg's desirable quality of life, people will continue to migrate here.

Our plan and goal is to assure the citizens of Hinesburg that fire, rescue, and medical services provided by the Hinesburg Fire Department will continue to be of the highest quality in order to meet our community's expectations of the greatest level of protection and care at a reasonable expense.

SURVEYS AND RESULTS

In order to ascertain our strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities to build our strategic plan, we have done an intensive study of our equipment, facilities, level of training, personnel and our community. We also used data from Vermont Housing reports, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Town planning commission and the DRB, years of firefighting experience, and local knowledge.

STRENGTHS:

1. Equipped to meet most of today's needs.
2. Highly trained membership.
3. Great teamwork with Hinesburg town departments.
4. Strong public support.
5. Strong mutual aid system with surrounding towns.
6. Strong volunteerism within Hinesburg.
7. Most police officers are EMS trained.
8. Efficient delivery of EMS is provided by a highly capable first response organization, making the addition of an ambulance not required at this time.

WEAKNESSES:

1. Limited base of daytime coverage (7:00AM - 6:00PM).
2. Increasing number of structures that are beyond the reach of current equipment.
3. Fire station capacity exceeded. Inadequate room for equipment storage requires use of offsite storage facilities.
4. Available seating in classroom and meeting area is insufficient for current needs.
5. Lack of space for equipment and possible housing of staff.
6. Although volunteerism is strong, retention of highly trained personnel may become an issue in the future.

THREATS:

1. Daytime coverage issues.
2. Inability to provide life saving actions due to lack of proper equipment for multi-story buildings.
3. Increased demand from regulatory agencies regarding the minimum training levels required.
4. Rapid construction in town without capital funding program dedicated to purchase of needed equipment.*

OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Ability to co-locate with police department.
2. Combining off-site storage, both heated and unheated, into a central facility to maximize efficiency.
3. Retain current members and recruit for the future by providing incentives.
4. Provide alternative to property tax to supplement purchase of capital equipment.*

MISSION STATEMENT

As first responders to fires, medical emergencies, disasters, and other public safety incidents, the Hinesburg Fire Department protects the lives and property of Hinesburg residents and visitors. The Department promotes public safety through its fire prevention and health care education programs. The timely delivery of these services enables the Hinesburg Fire Department to make significant contributions to the safety of Hinesburg and surrounding communities.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Provide an adequate public safety facility for the needs of Hinesburg
2. Purchase an aerial apparatus no later than 2013
3. Maintain and continue developing our high level of training
4. Continue to provide EMS service at a level that incident frequency and the town dictates; also, acquire an ALS (advance life support) ambulance when the need arises
5. Develop membership incentives to ensure 24-hour coverage
6. Implement a revenue-generating program dedicated to the Department's reserve fund *
7. Enhance capabilities for rescue from outdoor recreation areas

STRATEGIES TO OBTAIN OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY FOR THE NEEDS OF HINESBURG

STRATEGY: One of the greatest assets of the Hinesburg Fire Department is its central location. Being located in the center of town with immediate access to Route 116 allows a quick and effective response to all areas of our town. This enhances our insurance rating for the entire community.

However, while the location of the fire station can be seen as an asset, the facility has exceeded its capacity. We currently need additional space to store medical and firefighting supplies and equipment. Also needed is a larger area for training, classroom space, and additional bays to consolidate all equipment in one location.

In the future, we will need additional space for men's and women's showers and sleeping quarters. As our service demands increase and special circumstances warrant (such as natural and man-made disasters), overnight staffing of the station may be necessary.

Instead of replacing our facility, it is our intention to add on to the current station. This would allow us to be as cost-effective as possible while meeting the needs described above. We have already worked with a local architect to design a floorplan that meets our needs. This plan includes a community room that will allow us to have adequate training space and also provides a public space for the benefit of Hinesburg residents.

We hope to have a bond vote on this project in 2012 and begin construction in 2013.

OBJECTIVE: PURCHASE AN AERIAL APPARATUS NOT LATER THAN 2013

STRATEGY: We currently have buildings in town¹ that present significant challenges if not impossibilities to life safety and fire suppression, and we can expect housing projects to be more of the high-density configuration we are now experiencing. Our present ground ladders would not reach the upper portions of some of the larger structures being built should rescue be necessary. Our capabilities for fire suppression would also prove ineffective should fire exist in the upper reaches of a building. The Department plans to add an aerial device to meet these needs. This apparatus is not only required for evacuation of these buildings, but also for fire suppression and exposure protection when ground attack is not possible due to obstructions such as fences, buildings, or land terrain. The aerial device is also required when building depth is such that an outside attack is not possible and an aerial attack is required.

In order to meet the challenges currently presented by large structures, we require an aerial apparatus. This vehicle should be designed and prepared for bid in 2012. In 2013, it would be ready for a bond vote. After bond approval we would order the truck and expect delivery in late 2014. Our plan is to specify this apparatus as a ladder truck with pumping capabilities. A ladder truck is more suitable for our community than an aerial device with a bucket because it requires less space and is easier to maneuver.

¹¹ The following structures have been identified as high risk due to their height and/or limited access to roofs and upper floors: CVU High School, the former Suputo Foods site, Lantman's Best Yet Market, NRG, Lyman Meadows development, Hinesburg Community School (the old white building), Village Heights development, Green Street development, and Thistle Hill development

OBJECTIVE: MAINTAIN AND CONTINUE DEVELOPING OUR HIGH LEVEL OF TRAINING

STRATEGY: The current training strategy of the Hinesburg Fire Department consists of in-house trainings conducted by senior members of the Department and occasional contracted trainings with independent professionals. Due to the fact that the Department is a completely volunteer service, all trainings must take place on evenings or weekends to accommodate most of the volunteers' schedules.

Requirements and standards on training are issued by the State of Vermont, the Vermont Fire Academy, and the National Fire Protection Agency. The Hinesburg Fire Department is currently maintaining our level of training. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult as new requirements are instituted. In the coming years, to maintain the current level of training and meet current requirements, the Department's strategy will need to rely on more contracted professional training services. The benefits of these contracted professional services are numerous. Outside professionals bring new information, new technology, and new ideas, which further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work done by the fire department. Also, it relieves the burden that falls on the shoulders of senior members of the fire department to constantly prepare realistic and beneficial trainings. Due to personal obligations, members do not have the time required to prepare such classes. To continue to require them to do so would lead to attrition of these experienced members.

In 2011, we began to work towards this objective by hosting a Firefighter I course taught by a state instructor. We expect to have a number of our members certified at the conclusion of the course.

OBJECTIVE: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EMS SERVICE AT A LEVEL THAT INCIDENT FREQUENCY AND THE TOWN DICTATES; ALSO, ACQUIRE AN ALS (ADVANCE LIFE SUPPORT) AMBULANCE WHEN THE NEED ARISES

STRATEGY: EMS Training has been organized at the district level and we expect that to continue. Our objective is to achieve or exceed the EMS certification goals put forward by the training committee and requirements set by the regulatory standards of the State of Vermont. The Department plans to continue to conduct in-house EMS training on a regular basis. As our call numbers grow and thereby demand for service increases, we do not expect to be able to rely on out-of-town agencies to provide ambulance service to the Town. We estimate a need for acquisition of an ALS ambulance by approximately 2016.

OBJECTIVE: DEVELOP MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVES TO MAINTAIN 24-HOUR COVERAGE

STRATEGY: The Department believes that if we are unable to offer greater incentives to our members we will need to begin planning for paid personnel during daytime, weekday hours. Possible incentives may include, but are not limited to, property tax relief and stipends. We will enlist community and selectboard members to help us review the possibilities. We will continue a strong recruiting effort for members and hope that the Hinesburg Community Police Department will continue their commitment to EMS involvement.

We also believe that providing overnight accommodations will result in greater manpower coverage at the station and enable out-of-town participation.

It is our plan that by enhancing membership incentives we will be able to maintain adequate coverage without the addition of paid staff.

OBJECTIVE: IMPLEMENT A REVENUE-GENERATING PROGRAM DEDICATED TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S RESERVE FUND

* As of 2009, an impact fee program was instituted by the Town of Hinesburg. We feel this satisfies this objective and look forward to reaping the benefits for the good of the Town.

STRATEGY: It is the desire of the Department not to overburden the taxpayers of Hinesburg while still providing the services they request. To that end, we feel a program must be developed to provide funds directly to the fire department's reserve fund. We estimate that if the expansion of the fire station and needed capital equipment purchases were to be made outright over the next 5 years, the cost would well exceed \$2.2 million. This is not a burden we wish to put on our town's residents through taxation. It has been suggested that a direct fee on property sales or development be enacted. We feel that it should be a selectboard priority to implement a funding mechanism.

OBJECTIVE: ENHANCE CAPABILITIES FOR RESCUE FROM OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

STRATEGY: With the addition of outdoor recreation areas, the Department needs to increase our ability to handle medical and traumatic emergencies that may occur with greater frequency in these areas. It is our goal to provide specialty training on effective ways to deal with such emergencies beginning 2011. In 2014 we will pursue the purchase of required equipment to provide adequate response to these areas.

SUMMARY

The Hinesburg Fire Department's Strategic Plan is the result of many meetings and long hours of research. It has been compiled and written by fire and rescue personnel with many years of experience in this field. We have used U. S. Census data, Vermont housing data, historical data from our last 15 years of calls, as well as input from the police department, highway department, community members, and comments from our entire membership of firefighting and medical professionals.

With this data, we have constructed our plan, identifying our strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. We have looked at our vision for the future, and put forth objectives as well as strategies on how to achieve them while being fiscally responsible. We know if our plan is followed, our department will continue to provide our citizens with the finest protection which they expect and deserve.

APPARATUS REPLACEMENT TIMELINE

- ☒ 2011: Replacement of Med100, a 2002 Dodge Durango that has served as the Department's First Response vehicle for EMS (originally slated for acquisition in 2010)

- ☒ 2013: Addition of a quint, a fire apparatus equipped with an aerial device (ladder) and a fire pump (originally slated for acquisition in 2012)

- ☒

- ☒ 2015: Replacement of Engine 1, a 1990 pumper, and Rescue 1, a 1998 heavy rescue vehicle, with a combination rescue/pumper apparatus (originally slated for acquisition in 2014)

- ☒ 2016: Addition of a class 1 ALS ambulance

- ☒ 2017: Addition of a mobile command post/chief's vehicle (likely sport utility vehicle) (originally slated for acquisition in 2015)

- ☒ Approximately 2020: Replacement of Engine 2, a 2001 pumper

- ☒ Approximately 2022: Replacement of Engine 3, a 2003 mini-pumper

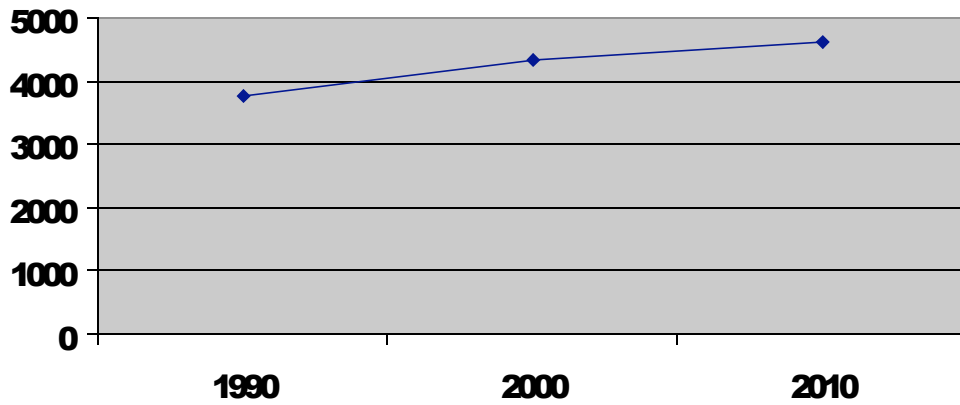
- ☒ Approximately 2030: Replacement of Tanker 1, a 2005 water tender



APPENDIX

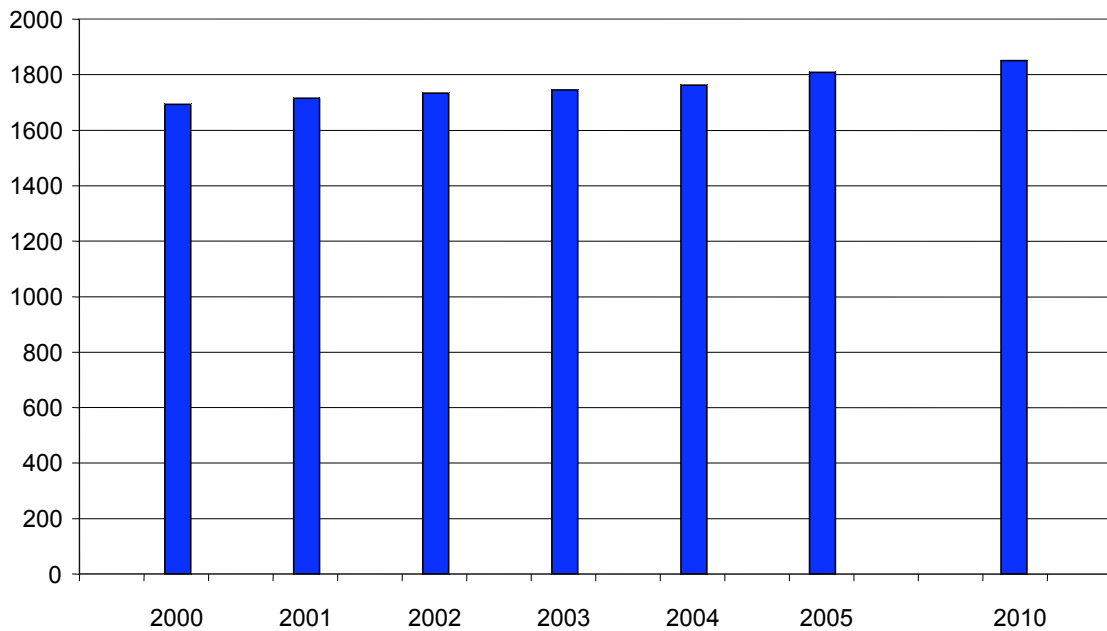
Included in the following pages are plots of some relevant statistics.

Population - Hinesburg (source: US Census)



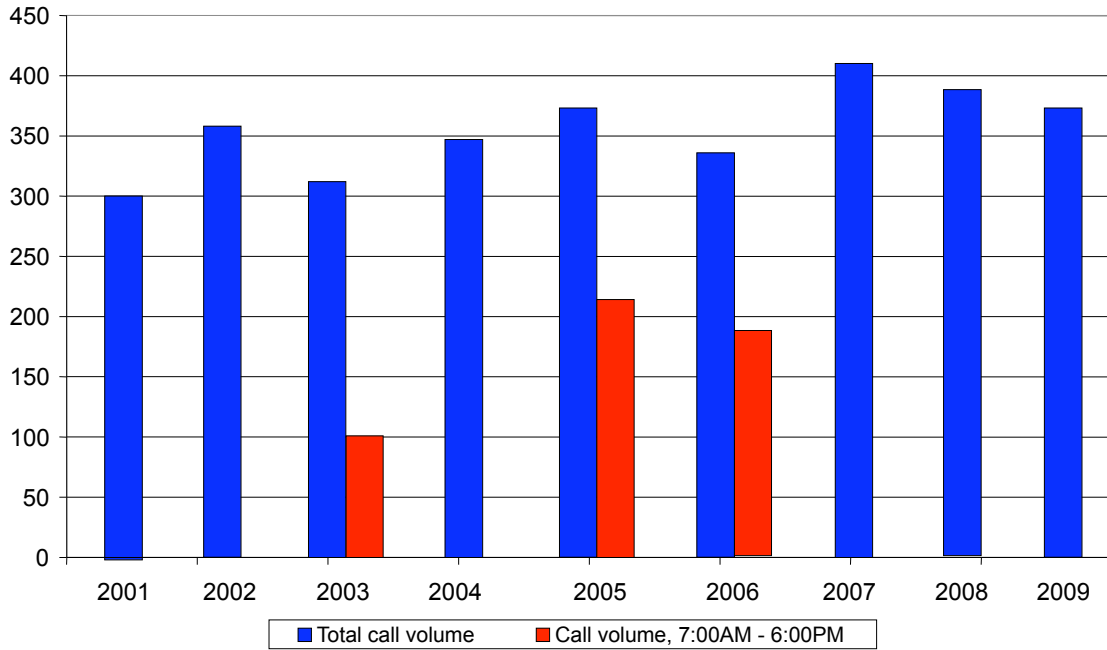
Housing Units - Hinesburg

Source: Hinesburg Town Plan & Affordable Housing Data Study



Call Volume

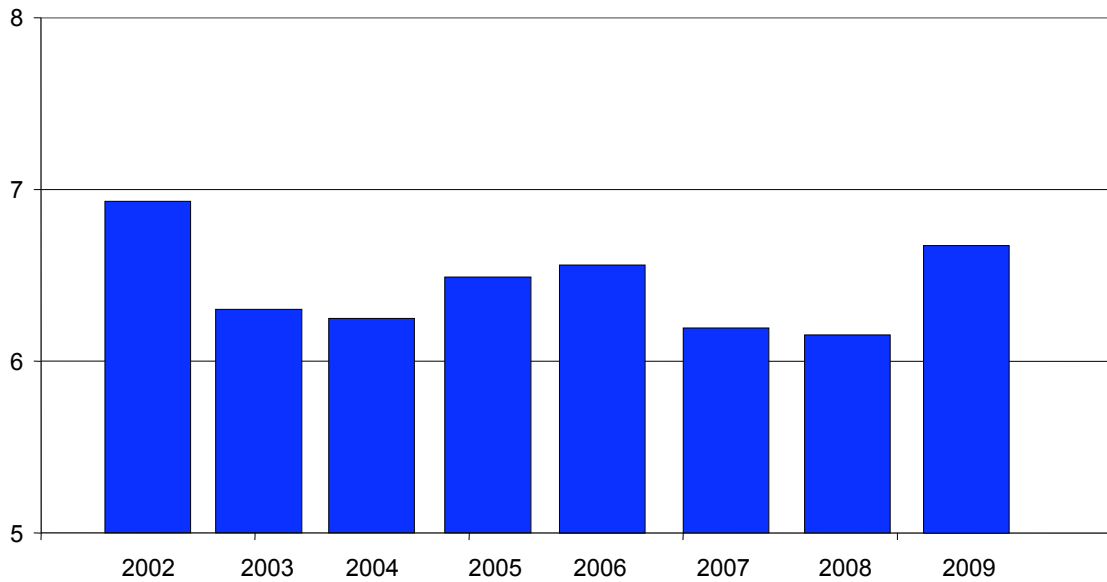
Source: HFD records; for the fiscal year ending June 30



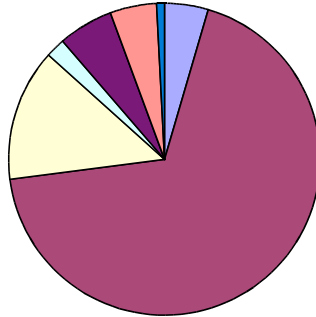
Average Response Time (minutes)








Elapsed time from 911 call received to first responder arriving on-scene

Source: HFD records



Call Breakdown for 2009-2010



-  **Fire**
-  **Rescue/EMS**
-  **Hazardous Condition/No Fire**
-  **Service Calls**
-  **Good Intent**
-  **False Alarm**
-  **Severe Weather**