



BUDGET CUTS WILL HIT: The Arlington Fire Department

The Arlington Fire Department (AFD) protects the residents and property in our town from hazards, including fire, hazardous materials, and downed power lines. The AFD provides trained EMTs to respond to medical emergencies.

Firefighters work 24 hours a day and on an average day they:

- respond to medical calls (which are 60% of calls) and transport to area hospitals
- examine hazardous conditions (such as downed power lines), flooding, hazardous materials, lockouts, and when smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are set off
- maintain the firehouses (the firehouses have no janitorial staff)
- check and maintain their apparatus (3 engines and 1 ladder truck, two ambulances) and all emergency response equipment
- inspect stores, schools, and multi-family homes to insure compliance with codes
- inspect over 1400 hydrants in the fall and shovel hydrants out in snowy weather

The AFD is adding a second ambulance, which will generate revenue, but will result in fewer firefighters available to respond to fires if the ambulances are transporting patients. The revenue generated by the second ambulance will allow the town to hire more personnel, but will potentially result in fewer firefighters and equipment available during fires.

Without an override AFD will have to:

- ***Cut 5 firefighting positions.*** This is a 5.2% cut. Since FY1990, the department has lost 15 positions.
- ***Decrease minimum manning.*** This refers to how many firefighters we schedule per shift. The decrease from 15 to 14 will not allow sufficient staffing for all equipment.
- ***Remove the ladder truck from service.*** The truck was removed from operations this spring due to cut backs.
- ***Operate the 'quint' without a full crew.*** A quint can operate as either a ladder or a pumper truck. With only three firefighters scheduled, AFD can only use one function, which limits response options.
- ***Delay the deployment of a ladder.*** Deployment of the quint's ladder will be dependent on the availability of the firefighter/EMTs in the ambulances being available and not en route to hospitals.

With an override the AFD can:

- ***Restore all the cuts listed above.*** This allows operating both the quint and the ladder truck. Overall manning will remain below national standards, but the 15 person manning increases the equipment AFD has available.
- ***Invest in technology improvements.*** On-line training programs can reduce costs and reduce liability for EMT licensing.

It's up to us. Vote Yes on June 7.