

Summary of Comprehensive Fire Department Strategic Plan October 2018¹

The Plan was submitted by the McGrath Consulting Group

Findings:

Currently, the Township budget is about \$2.5 million dollars annually and the Alpine Township Fire Department budget is almost \$500,000 annually or about 20% of the total Alpine Township budget. It is important to understand that the Alpine Township has limited financial resources based on the fact most of the revenue for Alpine Township comes from property taxes and state shared revenue funds. The ability to increase taxes is limited by state law and increases of shared revenue by the State of Michigan is not assured and cannot be depended upon.

The Plan recommends that addressing staffing for the Alpine Township Fire Department should be the highest priority as the fire department is having problems with not having adequate staffing on emergency responses and this issue can be addressed by multiple options. One option is to provide additional funds for part-time staff to work day-time hours during the work week. This option could include funds to staff one part-time position initially with a second position being the goal as soon as funding allows. This staffing option will address the immediate problem of not having adequate fire department staffing during the day-time hours during the work week when most of the fire department members are working at their full-time employment. Other options for solving the staffing problem are identified in the report and would require the funding of full-time fire department positions (which will likely result in higher salaries and benefit costs). At some point in the future, the need for some full-time positions staff the fire department will certainly be a requirement.

The consultants have addressed the Alpine Township Fire Department fire stations needs and are recommending that Fire Station #1 be relocated, and a new fire station be constructed. Since the Plan was submitted the consultants worked with Alpine Township to identify a location for the new fire station on Henze Street.

The consultant's impression of the Alpine Township Fire Department was very positive. The members that were interviewed were very professional and spoke highly of the Fire Chief and Township government officials and the Township Supervisor. Although the study did not include an assessment of the fire department, it was apparent the fire department is managed very well and committed to providing a high level of service to the citizens and the entire community.

¹ A complete copy of the Plan can be found at: alpinetwp.org/government.firedepart.

Summary of Recommendations:

*The Alpine Township Fire Department does need to address the recommendation to construct a new fire station to replace the current Fire Station #1.

*The consultants recommends that the property located at 1100 Henze Drive in Alpine Township be purchased for the location of a new Fire Station #1.

* A new fire station should contain sleeping quarters to be prepared for the future when the station can be staffed 24hours/day. The new station should have larger drive thru bays that will allow for larger size fire vehicles to be stationed there including aerial ladder and platform vehicles. The apparatus bays should be at least two vehicles deep.

*The Alpine Township Fire Department should continue staffing with paid-on-call personnel, but the need to supplement the paid-on-call staff should be addressed based on only having an average of three personnel responding on emergency calls.

*A priority for the Alpine Township Fire Department should be to increase day time staffing.

*The Alpine Township Fire Department should continue to provide EMS service at the Medical First Responder and Emergency Medical Technician level.

*The Alpine Township Fire Department has only averaged three personnel responding to all emergency calls annually for the years 2015-2016 and only two personnel for 2017. With the number of square miles protected in Alpine Township, the number of citizens, the number of calls, and the fact that over 70% of the calls are for EMS, only two to three personnel responding to calls on an average is a concern.

* Current Fire Station #1 concerns include:

- The station is constructed on a busy north-south State of Michigan highway with large traffic numbers.
- The size of the land that Fire Station #1 is located on is limited in terms of adding an addition or constructing a new building at this location. The station is built into a hill which limits the ability to modify the existing structure or to build a new station at this location
- The station does not have sleeping quarters and the ability to add sleeping quarters in the future is not a possibility due to the station being located on an incline. The need for sleeping quarters for the fire department to meet the response needs of the fire department on a 24-hour 7 day a week schedule should be a priority in the near future.
- The current Fire Station #1 has apparatus bays that are very small for the size of fire apparatus of today's fire service.

*To meet the future needs of the Alpine Township Fire Department, Fire Station #1 will need to be able to accommodate larger fire apparatus, including the possibility of an aerial ladder.