

FIRE DEPARTMENT



Claresholm 2022 - 2026 Business Plan

Vision Statement:

Provide the citizens of Claresholm with exemplary service in a cost-effective manner.

Mission Statement:

Our family serving your family to help mitigate the threat to life and property from fire, medical and other emergencies, through education, prevention, community preparedness and emergency response

Our Motto:

Our Family Protecting Your Family.



Updated: December 2024

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Town of Claresholm Bylaws 1662 and 1782 are the establishing bylaws for the Claresholm Fire Department.

They provide clear and accurate policy direction reflecting how Council expects the Department to deliver on their core activities to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the Town of Claresholm.

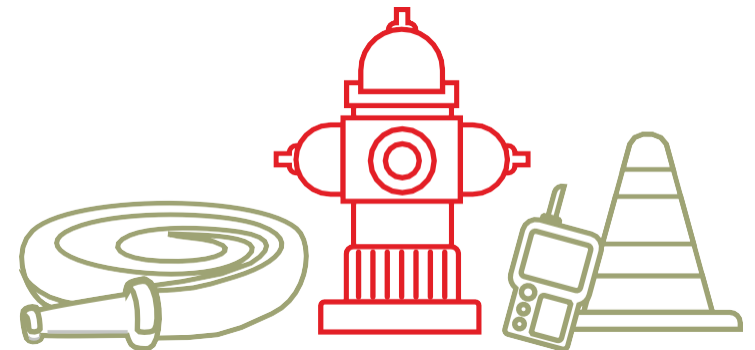
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW:

The *Municipal Government Act* R.S.A. 2000 Chapter M26 provides that a Council of a Municipality may pass bylaws for the safety, health and welfare of people and the protection of people, property, and for services provided by or on behalf of the municipality.

- Establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention; and,
- Provide such other fire protection services as it determines may be necessary in accordance with its needs and circumstances.

The Claresholm Fire Department is a Volunteer Fire Service providing an all-hazards response capability to natural and human caused events from one station. Based on the direction from Council and CAO the Members and Officers provide the following services:

- Public Fire Safety Education and Prevention;
- Fire Safety Standards and Enforcement; and,
- Emergency Response.



BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW:

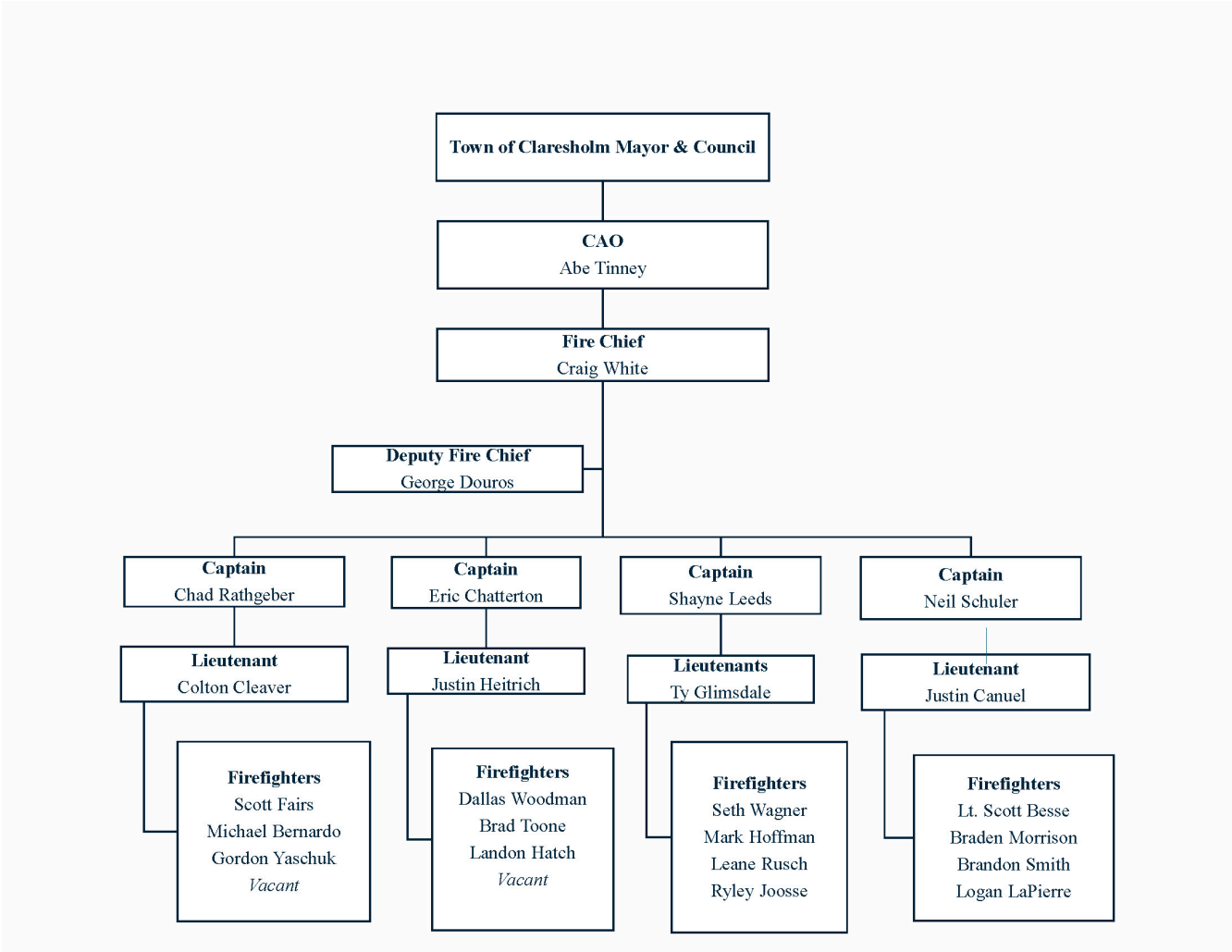
Claresholm Town Council has a bold vision to be the community of choice for families, businesses and industry. Council intends to achieve its vision by offering quality family living and encouraging economic prosperity through innovative and progressive thinking. The Claresholm Fire Department is committed to helping Council realize its vision and has consequently created this Business Plan to ensure the service remains viable, effective and efficient for those who choose to live and do business in Claresholm.

One of Councils' Strategic Priority Areas is to create a livable community for a vibrant, healthy quality of life. As an indispensable element of community safety, the Fire Department has a special role to play in this priority area. As you will read below, this Plan lays out our Core Services and Activities, the Challenges and Opportunities associated with them, and the Projects and Initiatives that will ensure the service remains viable and effective.

Council also identified several Core Values in its Strategic Plan; our Business Plan speaks directly to the values of Community Pride , and Healthy, Active Living . Indeed, the Fire Department is proud to serve Claresholm and to be part of the town's public safety net. We will seek to strengthen our community through training and recruitment of officers, and replacing and upgrading our equipment and infrastructure in an efficient and coordinated manner. We will seek funding and partnering opportunities wherever possible to ensure a cost-effective service.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ CURRENT ORG CHART:



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► CORE ACTIVITIES:

Core Services:

- **Public Education** activities that promote public fire safety in the community.
- **Inspection & Enforcement** activities add value to our services and ensure compliance with the provision of the Alberta Fire Code, as well as local QMP.
- **Emergency Management** activities related to preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery such as public education, staff training and scenario based exercises.
- **Emergency Response** to all natural and human-caused emergencies.

Public Education:

- Programs and community special events such as hall tours, school and vulnerable occupancy visits to promote fire safety to students, families and seniors.
- Jr & Sr High school Risk Reduction
- Fire extinguisher training.

Inspection and Enforcement:

- Commercial and residential inspections that assist owners in maintaining fire safe facilities.
- Town of Claresholm annual facilities Fire Safety Codes inspection to ensure fire safe buildings
- Plans review.

Emergency Management:

- Other such services as directed and approved by Council.
- Compliance with and participation in the Town's Emergency Response Plan
- Compliance with AEMA Directives

Emergency Response:

- Fire suppression.
- Emergency patient care in support of AHSEMS and Medical First Responder Program
- Technical rescue including but not limited to auto extrication, ice/water, low angle, farm animal rescues.
- Hazardous materials response.
- Training including but not limited to operational, technical, behavioural and leadership training.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN:



Challenges:

Service Levels

- Maintain service levels to the community that reflect our Inter-municipal Fire Services Agreement
- Implement new technologies & monitor best practices to enhance response effectiveness and safety

Equipment & Facilities

- Ensure fleet and facilities are maintained and continuously upgraded in a cost-efficient and forward-thinking manner

Staffing

- Recruitment & retention of volunteer / pay-per-call members
- Increasing call volume is stressing existing staff
- Maintain focus on and expand (where available & appropriate) mental health and post-traumatic stress programs for fire service family that are structured to support emotional/mental wellness, and build resilience and encourage a healthy workplace.

Opportunities:

Use of technology, which includes, but is not limited to:

- FirePro2 software, to improve record keeping to support presumptive legislation, as well as provide reliable data to stakeholders.
- 921Docs - is a software that allows for the compilation of fire investigation reports that are robust and proven to standup to scrutiny.
- Replacement of the departments many software programs is currently being explored as more complete "all-in-one" software options are now available. These options would include the ability to alert members to events, map crews, complete inspections/investigations, as well as complete billing and record keeping all in one program; all from a mobile tablet device.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ WORKPLAN:

Project / Initiative	Description	Division Lead	Key Outcomes	Strategic Alignment	2024 Update
1. Facility Expansion & Upgrade	Facility is over capacity. Portions of facility no longer meet needs of having full-time staff on site. (Office spaces, etc.) As a result of facility assessment and due to replacement and addition of apparatus, expansion and upgrades are required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration CAO Finance Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary repairs as outlined in WSP documentation Expansion of facility to accommodate additional apparatus as well as clean, safe, and HVAC controlled administration, meeting & training areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible & Sustainable Growth Livable Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFEP application denied. Alternate sources of funding investigated and none were available. Return to Council for direction, and this project was placed in the 2026 capital budget
2. Apparatus Replacement	Town owned Engine 13-1 is nearing the end of its NFPA operational life as well its operational life as outlined by Town of Claresholm Asset Management Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration CAO Finance Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply chain challenges makes repairs a challenge. We are now at a point where certain parts are not available. Apparatus does not meet current safety requirements Purchase of aerial-engine type apparatus vs. pumper-engine to be considered – short term needs vs. long-term vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible & Sustainable Growth Livable Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of this apparatus was completed in October of 2024. Truck was showcased at Southern Alberta Fire Training Conference in Lethbridge. October 17-20 2024

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ WORKPLAN (continued):



Project / Initiative	Description	Division Lead	Key Outcomes	Strategic Alignment	2024 Update
3. Recruitment & Retention Strategies	Explore new recruitment strategies or staffing and deployment models that better reflect increasing call volume and acuity. These would be comparable with like sized communities & call volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Fire Administration • CAO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved ability to respond to emergency incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible & Sustainable Growth • Livable Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief was successful in getting the Firefighter Tax incentive program passed. This will allow for members to receive up to \$1000 off the municipal portion of their taxes. • Recruitment activities are ongoing. Currently, the department sits at 2 vacancies.
4. Peer Support / Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue training in-house Mental Health Peer Support Team • Extend program to member's families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Administration • CAO • Finance • Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of signs of distress in first responders / their families. Allowing for earlier intervention and recovery. Lessening long-term impact to operations and continued impact on members mental or physical health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible & Sustainable Growth • Livable Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late 2022 the internal CISM program was expanded to include members and their families. • No update for 2024 - member usage of the program is not tracked (for obvious reasons), but anecdotal evidence suggests positive interactions with the program.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ WORKPLAN (continued):

Project / Initiative	Description	Division Lead	Key Outcomes	Strategic Alignment	2024 Update
5. Emergency Management	Continued review and updating of emergency management program to meet Provincial requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are able to perform their roles as outlined in the Incident Command System Program An emergency plan that assists in minimizing the effects of an emergency on the Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve & expand partnerships, collaborations, and relationships Strengthen internal operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Staff trained to ICS-300 level Chief participates in scheduled emergency management exercises as scheduled by DEM
6. Fire Education	Building on existing fire & life safety program in increase fire and life safety awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration Prevention Public Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication to vulnerable communities / groups to reduce injuries or fatalities from fires, or emergency events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livable Community Improve collaborations & relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to in-person Fire Prevention Week activities with school aged children In community engagement sessions (e.g. MOPS group) Seniors & Low-income housing fire safety inspections Participating in seniors congregate living facility fire drills and education sessions.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ WORKPLAN (continued):

Project / Initiative	Description	Division Lead	Key Outcomes	Strategic Alignment	2024 Update
7. Social Media	Continue to utilize social media to ensure public is aware of department activities, events as well as informed in case of an emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration Public Education Communications Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More informed community Enhanced engagement with department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livable Community Improve Collaboration & Relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Facebook & Instagram Pages launched in 2022. Potential for website to be integrated with Town website as grant funding opportunities are realized.
8. Fire Services Agreement	Review & Renewal of Fire Service Agreement contracts with neighbouring municipalities. Ensure alignment with applicable bylaws, act, and Town's Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration CAO Town Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish appropriate contracted emergency services, and associated cost recovery for the provision and receipt of these services Ensure compliance with determined levels of service and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve & Expand Partnerships, Collaborations & Relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current agreement expires in April 2025. Negotiation meetings have been scheduled for Q1 - 2025

FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ WORKPLAN (continued):

Project / Initiative	Description	Division Lead	Key Outcomes	Strategic Alignment	2024 Update
9. Asset Management	Ongoing assessment of department assets, including: depreciation and replacement costs. Factoring in years of service and legislative and best practice requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration CAO Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an asset management system that tracks initial cost, depreciation and replacement. It must also align with established replacement benchmarks – Town Policy, NFPA standards, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound, Responsible Governance and Strengthening Internal Operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the FirePro Software System, Town Fire Department assets have been inventoried, including costing and depreciation. This allows for more thorough budget planning
10. Fiscal Responsibility	Developing a business plan for the department will assist in alleviating the past practice of just-in-time capital and operating expenses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Administration CAO Finance Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure both Operating and Capital budgets are considering both short- and long-term expenses and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy & Planning for Responsible, Sustainable Growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the second update to the Clareholm Fire Department Business Plan. Knowledge gained since its inception have been used to guide this version.

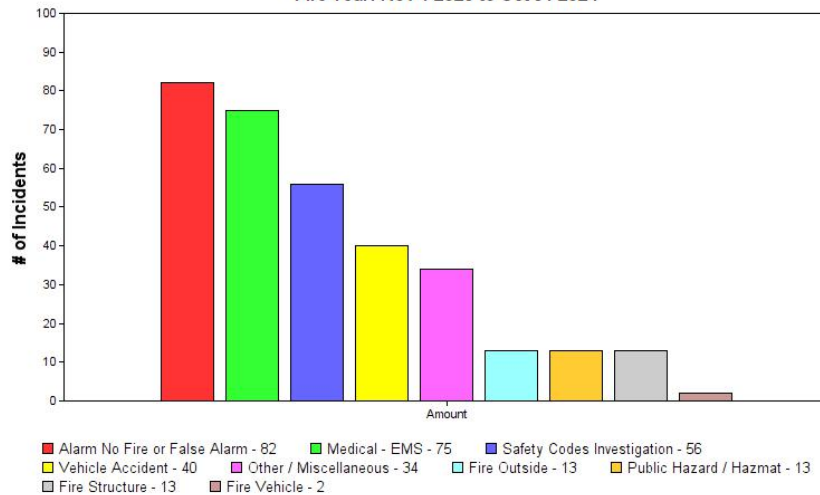
FIRE DEPARTMENT

STAFFING IMPACT & RESPONSE STATISTICS:

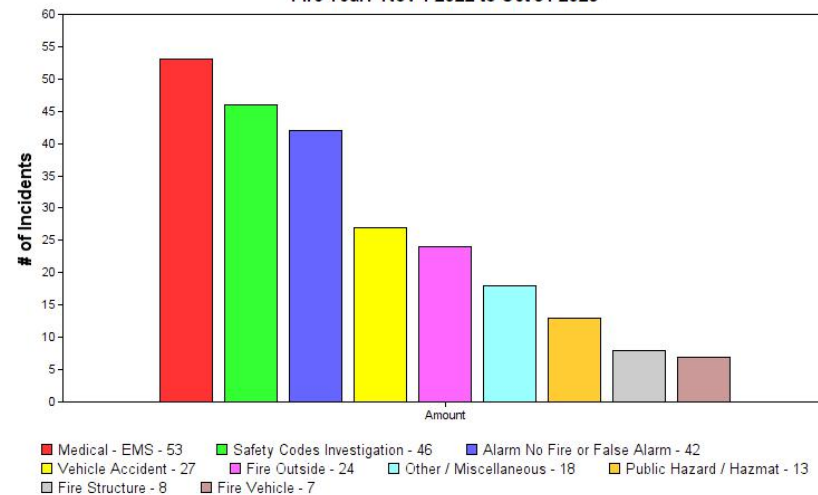


	+/- FTE Estimates	Service Delivery Area
Full Time	0	Currently 1 FTE (Chief) position. Sufficient for current call volume and requirements.
Volunteer	-2	Currently 23 volunteer Firefighters & Officers, with two vacancies as of January 10, 2025 We have currently finished our highest call volume year ever (328 events) which is taxing the membership.
Other	+2	If call volumes & requirements continue to increase - a change in staffing model will need to be considered.

Claresholm Fire Responses - Grouped by Type
Fire Year: Nov 1 2023 to Oct 31 2024



Claresholm Fire Responses - Grouped by Type
Fire Year: Nov 1 2022 to Oct 31 2023



For the 2023-2024 Fire Year Claresholm Fire responded to 328 separate events. This is a **37% increase** in call volume year over year. Medical calls (first & co-response make up 23% of our responses.

For the 2022-2023 Fire Year, Claresholm responded to 238 separate events. Medical calls (first & co-response made up 22% of our responses. Responses were down 12.5% compared with the 2021-2022 fire year*. The 2021-22 fire year included the March 28 wildfire events

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▶ PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

Operational	Target	2024 Update
Effective personnel management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing review of volunteer model. - Consider change in staffing model if call volume and demands continue to increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active recruiting has brought new and younger members to the hall whom plan on being in the area and department for the foreseeable future. • Anticipate increased recruitment & retention with new tax initiative.
Accurate performance data reflecting international standards and industry best practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total number of calls for service - Track turnout time - Track travel time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compare with 2021 baseline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While call volume is up, we've been able to reduce our chute time (time from receipt of call to response of apparatus) by an average of 40seconds! • Calls for service have increased year over year by 37%
Safe and highly trained first responders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total training hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a baseline for 2023 onward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training offered is reflective of Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework – Fire Services Agreement.

Quality of Life	Target	2024 Update
Better educated public regarding fire safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of messages delivered digitally • Number of visits or hits on these platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain current or increase as need / request arises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Change to report.

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▶ 2023-2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS/SUCCESSSES:



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- Receipt of new Town of Claresholm Engine and placed into service October 2024.
- Ongoing recruitment of volunteer firefighters
- Firefighter Tax Incentive Program approved by council.
- Ongoing professional firefighter training including NFPA 1001, 1002, 1006, & 1051
- RFP & Selection of contractor for facility upgrade. Phase 1 completed and Phase 2 has been placed in 2026 Capital budget
- Claresholm Fire was successful in applying for the Community Foundation of Lethbridge & Southwestern Alberta grant for \$15,000. These funds enabled the purchase of 1/3 of our electronic extrication equipment! Thank you to CFLSA!!
- Annual Fundraising Golf Tournament raised over \$13,000 that completed the purchase of electronic extrication equipment
- Fire Prevention Week activities saw many school site visits and fire hall tours
- Continuation of training to meet level of service identified in the Fire Services agreement.



FIRE DEPARTMENT

▶ 4 YEAR OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET & PROJECTS:

- Capital Project Information sheets have been updated to reflect current project status

FIRE DEPARTMENT	2024 BUDGET	2025 INTERIM BUDGET	2026 PROPOSED BUDGET	2027 PROPOSED BUDGET
Fire Department Revenue				
MD contribution	(9,000)	(9,000)	(9,000)	(9,000)
Fire/Emergency response fees	(20,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)
Total Fire Department Revenue	(29,000)	(34,000)	(34,000)	(34,000)
Fire Department Expenses				
Wages and benefits	153,058	160,410	164,310	168,305
Equipment, fuel, etc.	25,240	23,100	24,150	25,275
Training	6,500	7,500	6,000	6,000
Materials, supplies and operating costs	47,991	49,280	49,700	50,200
Internal Transfer	5,202	15,306	15,412	15,520
Reserve transfer	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Amortization	17,610	20,897	20,897	20,897
Total Fire Department Expenses	275,601	286,493	290,469	296,197
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	246,601	252,493	256,469	262,197

2023-24 Capital Project Information

Project No. CFD 2023-001	Project Name Town Engine Replacement		2023 Budget Reserve: \$200,000
Department Fire Services		Division Suppression / Operations	Project Manager Craig White
Service Category Fire Services		Funding Sources Capital Reserves & MSI Funding	
Target Start Date January 2024		Amount \$750,000	
Target Completion Date July 2024			
Future Period Capital Requirements Operating Impact		Project Phase Study/Design Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Construction Phase <input type="checkbox"/>	
		\$ 700,000	
Description			
Scope:	<p>This project involves replacing the current Town owned engine as it is approaching the end of its NFPA & Town Policy mandated life cycle. This truck utilizes a cab that does not incorporate current safety features such as airbags, electronic stabilization or occupant crash protection enhancements.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to: sources of funding, grant opportunities, as well as long term use of apparatus. Consideration on type for type replacement vs. increasing level of service (i.e. aerial - engine type apparatus) which would serve both the current and future needs of the community.</p>		
Deliverables:	<p>Primary deliverables of this project are to provide a safe and reliable emergency vehicle to respond to emergencies and support fireground operations.</p> <p>Project tender awarded fall 2022, construction of vehicle to start early Q1 2024 with an anticipated delivery date of July 2024</p>		
Benefits:	<p>Benefits include reduced down time for repairs and reduced maintenance/repair costs due to apparatus being covered by manufacturer's warranty. Meets Nation Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1901 Standard for automobile firefighting apparatus , Canada/ULC S515 Standard for automobile firefighting apparatus</p>		
Risks If Not Implemented:	<p>As is the case with any vehicles, breakdowns and maintenance costs escalate as they age. Repairs render the apparatus Out Of Service and parts become harder to source resulting in long periods of down time. We have limited redundancy in our fleet and cannot risk having a vehicle unavailable for fire protection in the Town. This apparatus provides first run response within the Town. Not having reliable apparatus can result in added response times or the need to rely on neighboring municipalities to respond. In addition, the Fire Underwriters Insurance Grading for the town can be impacted by the use of older apparatus and result in a downgrade of the Public Fire Protection Classification (PFPC).</p>		
Additional Information:	<p>1.)TCA Capitalization and Amortization Policy. Policy #3.2.01 page 7/7 Vehicles → Fire Trucks 2.) NFPA 1901 Annex D</p>		

2025 Capital Project Information Sheet

Project No. CFD 2024-001	Project Name Fire Hall Repair & Addition		2026 Budget \$1.2M
Department Fire Services	Division Facilities		Project Manager Craig White
Service Category Fire Services		Funding Sources Capital Budget \$1,200,000	
Target Start Date January 2026		Grant Funding \$0	
Target Completion Date Fall 2026		Firefighter Foundation \$10,000 + in-kind donation	
Future Period Capital Requirements Operating Impact		\$0	Project Phase Study/Design Phase <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Construction Phase <input type="checkbox"/>
Description			
Scope:	<p>Claresholm Fire Hall #1 has reached and surpassed its capacity for storing fire apparatus, and housing the Fire Chief's office. Based on the WSP building analysis, there are approximately \$150,000 in outstanding repairs to be made to the facility - including roof, site grading, and water infiltration. Additionally, a mould assessment was completed with no significant mould found. Based upon these findings it is recommended that an addition is constructed that will house operations, administration offices, training and meeting room, as well as 1 or 2 apparatus bays to accommodate, at minimum 14' height apparatus. Building & fleet security would also be upgraded as a part of this project.</p>		
Deliverables:	<p>Apparatus deployment is streamlined, where by apparatus does not have to moved significantly to deploy other apparatus. Training, and Administration have a clean, safe and up-to-date space to work from</p>		
Benefits:	<p>Benefits include spatial separation between apparatus being deployed and the staff (or public) that are in the office, meeting spaces or training/workout facilities. This will increase our compliance with NFPA 1500 Ch.10 (facility safety), NFPA 1700 Ch.11 (operational hygiene at fire halls), and NFPA 1581 Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program.</p>		
Risks If Not Implemented:	<p>The following risks are identified if this addition and required repairs not undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Unable to house additional fleet as supplied by MDWC when required per schedule * Limitations on size and type of future apparatus for Town apparatus replacement * Continued exposure to exhaust and other contaminants by Chief (daily), and members when in the hall. * Continued degradation of facility by water infiltration, and tree root infiltration. * Administration offices currently not serviced by HVAC - heat/cold hazard <p>Phase 1 of the project (design) has been completed. Phase 2 (construction) is in the 2026 capital budget. Grant funding is not currently available for municipal infrastructure (such as fire halls), therefore, project funding will be reliant solely capital funds.</p>		
Additional Information:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WSP - Building Condition Assessment 2. ASE Services - Mould Assessment 		