

Monday, August 18,

25

The Bainbridge Township Board of Trustees met in a special meeting at the Bainbridge Township Service Department on August 18, 2025. Those present were Trustees Dr. Michael Bates and Mrs. Kristina O'Brien and Fiscal Officer Mrs. Janice Sugarman. Dr. Bates presided and called the meeting to order at 5:01 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Bates made a motion to recess the special meeting and go into executive session for the Employment and Compensation of Public Employees per Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1).

Mrs. O'Brien seconded the motion. Roll call vote followed: Mrs. O'Brien, aye; Dr. Bates, aye. Motion carried.

The trustees recessed their regular meeting at 5:01 P.M. to go into executive session.

Chief Lou Ann Metz was invited into executive session at 5:01 P.M. and she left at 5:25 P.M.

The trustees returned from executive session and reconvened their special meeting at 5:25 P.M.

Since there was no further business to come before this special meeting of the Bainbridge Township Board of Trustees, Dr. Bates made a motion to adjourn with a second by Mrs. O'Brien and the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice S. Sugarman,
Fiscal Officer, Bainbridge Township

_____ Date

_____ Date

_____ Date

Minutes Read: _____

Minutes Approved: _____



Bainbridge Township Fire Department

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Lou Ann Metz, OFE
Fire Chief

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Fax: 440-543-9091

2025 STAFFING PLAN

PURPOSE: To set priorities, costs, and timeline for returning staffing to an effective and efficient level while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Bainbridge Township has chosen to service the community needs with a combination fire department. This type of fire department utilizes a strong balance core of full-time Firefighters as the foundation. The full-time members establish policies and procedures that provide for safe, effective and efficient operations for the size of the department. Establishing The Bainbridge Way is important because how we do things in the department is based upon our resources, capabilities, mutual and auto aid agreements and the needs and expectations of the residents and businesses of the Township.

Township Fire Departments are fixed income agencies funded by voter approved property tax levies. All but one of the levies funding our department are continuous, fixed-rate levies. The remaining levy is a 5-year renewable levy. These levies do not change with property values. The funds are collected and dispersed in February and July of each year. It is essential that the department carries over enough funding for first quarter operations until levied funds are dispersed. The fire department receives no general fund money.

Personnel costs account for approximately 83% of the department's operating budget. Careful hiring and budgeting practices are essential to staying within the funding received. To cut costs, the department augments its full-time staff with part-time personnel. These part-time personnel are more budget-friendly because they do not receive pension or healthcare. The township and part-time employees each pay into Social Security and Medicare at a rate of 7.65% of their earned wages. The Township pay an amount equivalent to 24% of the employees' earned wages to Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund and 1.45% to Medicare. Full-time employees also get employer provided healthcare.



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GOALS:

1. Schedule six personnel each shift.
2. Reduce overtime
3. Reinstigate services cut due to the failure of the levy
4. Reassign Nate Liptak to 40-hour maintenance slot

TARGET STAFFING LEVELS:

FULL-TIME

- (5) Full-time FF per shift
- Fill the 40-hour maintenance position

PART-TIME DEPENDABLES

- (9) Dependable Firefighters
 - (3) assigned per shift
 - Scheduled 1460 hours per year
 - Required to work 1,388 hours per
 - Allowed off (6) 12 hour shifts per year (non-compensated)
 - May trade shifts with other Dependable Firefighters to achieve hours

PART-TIME NON-DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTERS

- (9-12) Fill Firefighters
- Dependent upon availability

PROJECTED TIMELINE

IMMEDIATELY

- Promote Greg Savel to a Full-time FF position
- Begin Recruiting & taking applications

HIRING

- May 2025
 - (3) Full-time Firefighters
 - (3) Dependable Firefighters
 - Target Date to count as minimum staffing: September 1, 2025
- September 2025
 - (2-4) Part-time
 - Target Date to count as minimum staffing: December 1, 2025



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- December 2025
 - Hire 3-4 Part-time
 - Target Date to count as minimum staffing: April 2026

OPTIONS

- Full-time Firefighters
- Part-time Dependable Firefighters
- Non- Dependable Firefighters

BUDGET

- Working: \$2,650,000 (Fire)
- Reserve: \$300,000 (EMS)

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Providing fire service is expensive, but it is a critical service. Protecting the lives and property residents, business, and visitors is our mission. A good fire department can play a big role in not only quality of life, but economic development as well. Balancing the staffing can be complex. Several factors must be considered. Among those factors are:

1. Service Expectations for the community
2. Costs to provide the expected level of service
3. What additional services contribute to community risk reduction
4. Apparatus and equipment need, service life and costs
5. Facility needs and their costs
6. Personnel necessary and the costs of wages, benefits, training, personnel protective equipment and replacement
7. The number and type of incidents the department responds to

Our calls for service have steadily increased. In 2024 we responded to 2170 calls. The projected number of incidents is on pace to be 2300. The growth that Bainbridge is experiencing will bring more requests for service. In addition, our number of multiple calls has grown every year. It is not uncommon to experience 3 or 4 calls in an hour. All of the construction has increased to work for Fire Prevention. Two part-time personnel have moved from shift work to performing inspections. In 2023 there were 1523 fire prevention events; in 2024 that number went up to 1824 events. The amount of events year to date is significantly ahead of last year at this time.



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Based upon all of these factors, the Bainbridge Fire Department needs 6 personnel per shift. That allows us to staff 3 ALS ambulances for EMS, a Fire Engine and either a tanker or aerial apparatus.

The department is part of an automatic aid system and utilizes and provides mutual aid as necessary. Response times are important. Fire doubles every 60-90 seconds, and we rely on hauled water in the majority of the Township. EMS response times can often mean the difference between life and death.

Achieving the desired level of staffing has been researched and the combination of full and part-time personnel was found to be most sensible. The Township had an all-part-time department and could not maintain consistent staffing. A study was conducted by the Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association who recommended hiring a full-time Fire Chief and some full-time staffing. The system has met the community's needs well.

A failed levy attempt resulted in staffing reductions. The department lost full and part-time members. Mutual Aid usage skyrocketed. Mutual aid response times averaged 12.5 minutes and EMS billing revenue saw a decline. Voters approved a 2.75 mill levy and it is time to begin rebuilding our staff and get back to a staffing level of six.

HIRING CHALLENGES

There are several ways we can proceed. Hiring is difficult due a decline of people wanting to enter the fire service. This has led to lateral transfers, a spike in wages and operating costs. Firefighter jobs are plentiful, and Fire Departments are competing for qualified candidates. Employees are shopping around for higher wages and better benefits.

The fire service has always been a dangerous business, but now EMS personnel are being attacked and infectious diseases like Covid have increased. Departments are having to provide more personal protective equipment, vaccination, decontamination and sterilization equipment, cancer screenings and more training. All of which are expensive. This plan looks at different options for staffing our department.



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CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS

- (15) Fulltime Personnel with 5 assigned per shift

A-Shift	B-Shift	C-Shift
Lt . Bolt	Lt. Anders	Lt. Riley
Darrel Rose	Bill German	Nate Liptak
Dave Cooley	Jon Bixler	Paul McClintock
Jim Arnold	Jeff Stanczyk	Kristen Kiryk
Greg Savel	Eric Johnson	Sullivan Staub

- The 40-hour maintenance position has been temporarily vacated

- (6) Part-time Dependable Firefighter Personnel

John Dobies	FF I / EMTB	Owens a business
Brian Dezman	FF I / EMTB	Owens a business/Auburn
Todd Kirkpatrick	FF II / EMTP	FT. @ North Olmstead FD
Jason Pitre	FF II / EMTP	FT. @ Violet Township
Alex Black	FF II ? EMTP	Employed with his father
Michael Cardaman	FF II / EMTP	Buron and Middlefield FD

- (6) Additional Non-dependable Part-time Personnel

Peter Anders	FF II / EMTP	FT. Aurora FD
Brandon Cole	FF II / EMTP	FT. Aurora FD
Jack Dorsky	FF II / EMTP	FT. South Euclid FD
John Korzenko	FF II / EMTP	FT. Kent FD
Bill Measures	FF II / EMTP	Retired Cleveland Hts. FD
Vanessa Zelle	FF II / EMTP	FT. Shaker Hts. FD

- (2) Part-tie Firefighters at risk of separating

Brian Harting	FF II / EMTP	Chief of Bedford FD
Dave Horvath	FF II / EMTP	FT. Aurora FD

These firefighters have not scheduled hours. In April, we reinstated the requirement that part-time personnel must work 180 hours in a 4-month period. The end of August will be the first 4-month period.



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- Markus Holzer is interested in coming back in a couple of months due to changes in his life.

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTERS

SULLIVAN STAUB - Actual

• Wages:	\$65,915.75	
• Pension:	\$15,819.78	
• Medicare:	\$955.78	
• Workers' Compensation	\$1,342.23	*PLUS PAID TIME OFF
• Clothing Allowance.	\$1,400.00	
• Turnout Gear	\$4,500.00	
• Healthcare (Single Plan)	<u>\$18,514.00</u>	
TOTAL COST	\$108,477.54	

ERIK JOHNSON & GREG SAVEL - Actual

• Wages	\$76,893.18	
• Pension:	\$18,454.36	
• Medicare:	\$1,114.95	*PLUS PAID TIME OFF
• Workers' Compensation.	\$1,614.76	
• Clothing Allowance.	\$1,400.00	
• Turnout Gear	\$4,500.00	
• Healthcare (Family Plan)	<u>\$50,836.00</u>	
COST [Each]:	\$154,813.25	
TOTAL COST [2]:	\$309,626.50	

PART-TIME DEPENDABLE COST (2025) [1,460 HOURS PER YEAR]

• Wages:	\$32,554.35	
• SS & Medicare	\$472.04	
• Workers' Compensation	\$683.64	* <u>NO</u> PAID TIME OFF
• Clothing Allowance	\$600.00	
• Turnout Gear	<u>\$4,500.00</u>	
COST [Each]:	\$38,810.03	
TOTAL COST [5]:	\$194,050.15	



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PART-TIME NON-DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTER [540 HOURS PER YEAR]

• Wages	\$12,042.00	
• SS & Medicare	\$897.13	
• Workers; Compensation	\$252.88	
• Clothing Allowance	\$600.00	
• Turnout Gear	\$4,500.00	
COST [Each]:	\$18,292.01	* <u>NO</u> PAID TIME OFF
TOTAL COST [6]	109,751.06	

TOTAL HIRING COSTS:

3 Full-time Firefighters	\$418,104.04
5 Dependable Firefighters	\$194,050.15
6 Part-time Firefighters	\$109,751.06
	\$721,905.25

OVERTIME COSTS

• Overtime Rate	\$88.00/hour
• YTD Overtime hours	1400 hours
• Overtime Costs	\$123,200.00

OVERTIME VERSES MORE EMPLOYEES

The Cost of an additional full-time firefighter	\$154,813.25
Total Cost of Overtime in 2024	\$148,500.00
Difference	- \$6,313.25

OVERTIME REDUCTION

Overtime is not always a bad thing. Paying overtime rather than hiring full-time employees is sometimes a fiscal necessity. Full-time employees require pension, healthcare and other benefits. These are very expensive. For a Full-time employee every \$100.00 in wages, it cost the Township an additional \$27.55. This includes pension, Medicare, and Workers' Compensation. Healthcare, life insurance, disability insurance, liability insurance, uniform allowance are all on top of that.

Overtime does become a problem when personnel are working so much that they become exhausted, mentally stressed, or it interferes with quality of work, safety or



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family life. As a government agency dependent upon levied property taxes, we are constantly evaluating our overtime, personnel and quality of work.

The department has taken the following actions taken to reduce overtime:

1. Instituted a new time-off policy through Labor Management
 - No more than one full-time employee to take a major holiday, as listed in the Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual, off unless it falls within a vacation. A person on EDO counts as that one person
 - Limits vacation to one full-time employee
 - Returns the full-time minimum on duty to three personnel
 - Extended the time to complete trades to one year
2. Reinstated the Overtime Policy
 - Vacancies in the fifth or sixth slot can be filled by part-time personnel
 - Vacancies will be paged out to the part-time personnel first
 - Full-time overtime will not be utilized until staffing drops below four personnel.
 - Vacancies will be paged out to part-time personnel fill first.

BENEFIT VERSES LIABILITY

BENEFITS OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

1. Staffing consistency
2. Performance consistency
3. More loyalty to Bainbridge
 - Healthcare, pension, education, training
 - Employee centered management
4. Discipline is more effective
5. Develops ownership and pride

LIABILITIES OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

1. Cost of wages and benefits are high
2. Accrued time off can cause scheduling/staffing issues
3. More willing to grieve issues
4. More willing to sue
5. Tougher unions
6. Retirement cash out



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BENEFITS OF DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTERS

1. Commit to a specific shift
 - Easier to schedule family time and other employment
 - May work 12-hour or 24-hour shifts
2. Committed to 1,388 – 1,460 hours per year
 - No competition for hours
 - Guaranteed hours
3. Consistent Operations
 - Work with the same personnel
 - Knowledge of the department is keen
4. Develops greater pride and ownership
5. Able to trade shifts with other dependable firefighters

LIABILITIES OF DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTERS

1. Loyal to full-time employer first
2. Discipline less effective than with a full-time employee, but greater than With a Part-time Non-Dependable Fire Fighter
3. Higher marketability for a full-time position elsewhere

BENEFITS OF PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

1. Lower cost for wages and benefits
2. No paid time off
3. No cash-out at retirement
4. If hired full-time position later:
 - Is known to the organization
 - Trained in The Bainbridge Way
 - Knows the organization and the organization knows him
 - Quicky integrates and counts for minimum staffing if hired full-time
 - Knows the organizational expectations, protocol and SOPs, so there is no operational pause
 - Has turnout gear- saves \$4,500.00

LIABILITIES OF PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

1. Lack consistent hours
2. Loyalty
 - Full-time Employer or a higher paying part-time job
3. Last minute call offs usually create overtime



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4. Limited Availability
 - Other employment
 - 1500-hour limit per law
5. Discipline is least effective
 - Willing to leave and go elsewhere
 - Many part-time jobs are available
6. Retention
 - Part-time jobs are plentiful
 - Average PT employee stays 5 years

POSITIONS, SCHEDULES AND ASSIGNMENTS

FULL-TIME FIREFIGHTER

Full-time Firefighters are assigned to one of three shifts, A, B, or C-shift. They work 24 hours on and forty-eight hours off. In order for Full-time Firefighters to achieve a 48-hour work week they must take one day off every three weeks. This is referred to as an Earned Day Off (EDO) because every third week he is scheduled to work three days in that week as opposed to only two. This cycle repeats.

To achieve the 48-hour work week the firefighter chooses a day of the week, and he never works that day of the week. For example, every three weeks he is scheduled to work a Friday. If he chooses Friday, he will never work a Friday. He keeps this day as long as he is assigned to the shift. However, if he changes shifts someone may already have a Friday and he will need to choose an open day. Per the Fair Labor Standards Act he generally, cannot be mandated for overtime when he is on EDO. EDOs are restricted to Monday thru Friday.

The three-week cycle allows his open shift to be posted for the year, so that a part-timer can fill. Non-Dependable Part-time personnel choose their shifts one month ahead and all Full-time Firefighter time off is available for part-time personnel to fill.

DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTER

Dependable Part-time Firefighters are assigned to A, B, or C-shift as well. They can only work 1500 hours by law as a part-time employee. There are two Dependable Firefighters per shift. They can agree to work 12 hours every third



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day, or they can agree to work a 24-hour shift every sixth day. So, if Todd works 12-hour days, then Mike must work 12-hour nights every third day. However, if they agree to work 24-hour shifts they work every other shift. Dependable Firefighters are scheduled 1,460 hours per year and must work at least 1,388 hours per year. If they fail to meet the 1,388 hours, they can lose their Dependable spot. We hired two Dependable Firefighters after getting our levy money. We have six Dependable Firefighters.

NON-DEPENDABLE FIREFIGHTER

When the levy failed, staffing was to cut to four personnel per shift, there were not enough hours for the part-time personnel. The 180-hour minimum was suspended. Some part-time personnel went other places and some retired. We have six Non-Dependable Firefighters. These part-time firefighters are required per the collective bargaining agreement, to work a minimum of 180 hours every four-month period or 540 hours per year .

PRE-LEVY FAILURE STAFFING:

1. Five Full-time Firefighters
2. Two Dependable Firefighter
3. Part-time Non-dependable Firefighters to bring staffing up to six

POST LEVY PASSAGE

1. Hire three Full-time Firefighters
2. Hire five Dependable Firefighters
3. Hire six Non-Dependable Firefighters

POST LEVY PASSAGE STAFFING RECOMMENDATION

1. Five Full-time Firefighters
2. Three Non-Dependable Firefighters
3. Return Nate to the 40-hour maintenance position



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FOLLOW-UP

In May two Part-time Dependable Firefighters and three Full-time Firefighters were added to the staff. One Full-time Firefighter resigned on June 17th. The chart below summarizes daily shift staffing since their hiring. From 2023 through 2024, the department staffed the with four personnel per shift 77% of the time.

STAFF	MAY	%	JUNE	%	JULY	%
4.0	1	3%	4	13%	6	19%
5	7	23%	5	3%	4	13%
5.0	5	16%	15	50%	13	42%
5.5	11	35%	8	27%	5	16%
6.0	7	23%	2	7%	3	10%
TOTAL	31	100%	30	100%	31	100%

As is illustrated in the chart above. With these hirings and increased funding, staffing is on the rise and is about what was expected. These months, along with August are the most difficult to staff due to it being summer and personnel are taking vacations; there are two major holidays, and our part-time personnel work a lot of overtime at their full-time jobs limiting their availability.

One Full-time Firefighter is off every weekday due to an EDO. With transitioning to three Part-time Dependable Firefighters per shift will help cover full-time scheduled time off. The Dependable Firefighters are locked in for more hours, know their schedule for the year and can plan around their schedules more easily. The plan is to add two more Dependable Firefighters in the next month a continue to increase daily staffing and reduce overtime significantly. The last round of hiring should be December.

RECRUITING

Recruiting and retention are a major issue in the fire service nationwide. People are not getting into the service. Data shows that we have done a good job educating people to the risks of cancer, infectious disease, violence against us and the potential for serious injury and death.

Departments are competing in a small pool of candidates. The quality of candidates has changed. Work ethic has changed. The desire to have more family time has changed. Departments have to sell themselves because there are more jobs than candidates. Lateral transfers have become the norm now. Due to the large number of



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vacancies, part-time firefighters are getting hired full-time. Most part-time personnel work two to three departments, so availability is reduced. The shortage also presents lots of overtime possibilities. Dropping the tax on overtime is expected to boost people's willingness to work more overtime. This is driving wages and benefits. People are not just looking for a job anymore, they are looking at the entire employment package.

It is important to hire the right people for our organization. They need to reflect our core values and believe in our mission. This is not just a job; it is a commitment.

There are many recruiting options available.

1. Paramedic Programs
2. Firefighter Programs
3. Fire Departments
4. Personal Referrals
5. Media Announcements
 - Newspapers
 - Digital formats
6. Job Fairs

History shows that the best candidates come through personal interaction. Newspaper and digital media get a lot of candidates, but many are people unhappy with their current employer(s) and not necessarily the candidates we are looking for. Talking regularly with fire and EMS program directors and instructors allows us to screen candidates and the ability to contact those promising newcomers. Interacting with other fire departments and firefighters is very beneficial. They generally know the candidate's work ethic, morals, and whether they will fit with our organization.