

Fire Protection Within the Town of Mendon

A Factual Report on the Status of Fire Protection from a Community Perspective
Considering: Governance, Operations and Community Needs
Together with a Recommendation for Sustainment

Prepared By: The Citizens Advisory Committee, appointed June 13, 2022 (Town
Board Resolution 22-150)

Respectfully Submitted: March 1, 2023

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PREFACE

In early 2022, HFFD Chief Cory Trewer and (then) MEND Chief Peter Kester, met with Mendon Town Supervisor John Moffitt, to express an emergent need for membership in both Departments. They conveyed that active membership rosters in both Departments continue on a downward trajectory while their respective call volumes trend upward. As documented in Report data sets and graphics, this pattern is decades in-the-making; however, the Chiefs' impressed they have reached a critical point in Department initiatives to meet community expectations and to ensure a safe working environment for Department volunteers who answer emergency calls.

Both Departments are vested in providing Emergency Services within our community as demonstrated by each across 100+ years of dedicated response to emergency calls. The Departments have evolved to meet the ever-growing demand for training requirements and the expansion of "expected" call types as our community landscape becomes less rural and more suburban while, at the same time, the reality associated with our demographic profile brings fewer volunteers to Department ranks.

At their June 13, 2022 meeting, considering this message from the Department Chiefs, the Mendon Town Board established a *Citizens Advisory Committee to consider and recommend sustainable Fire Service practices within the Town of Mendon together with a supportive jurisdictional authority (Resolution 22-150)*.

The chapters within this Report: outline the governance of Fire Protection within the Town; define Department operations and resources cross-referenced with a Town-wide needs assessment; and, consider national, state, regional and local trends affecting the delivery of Fire Protection. As our community grows, as emerging opportunities present, and/or as administrative requirements evolve, the Committee recommends a governance model with authority to sustain local Fire Protection capacity, and whose single focus is the continuity of Emergency Services.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful thanks for your value-added contribution to this report:

Committee Members:

Mendon Town Board – Supervisor John Moffitt and Karen Jenkins
Mendon Fire District Commission – Ryan Wilsey
Village of Honeoye Falls Board of Trustees – Gerald Lonchair
Mendon Fire Department – Peter Kester and Mike Arman
Honeoye Falls Fire Department – Cory Trewer and Anthony Militello
Mendon Fire Protection District #1, Resident – David Smith
Mendon Fire District, Resident – Steve Tschiderer
Honeoye Falls Village, Resident – Robin Stewart Ha
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Village of Honeoye Falls: Administrator, Brian Anderson

Honeoye Falls Fire Department: Pete Henry

Mendon Fire District: Administrator, Dale Sweet

Monroe County Environmental Services: GIS Division, Scott McCarty

Monroe County Fire Bureau: Fire Coordinator, Steve Schalabba

Monroe County Office of Emergency Management: Administrative Assistant, Debi Altemari and
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Monroe County Public Safety Communications Staff

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Ontario County Emergency Management: Director, Jeff Harloff

Special thanks for support throughout the Committee process:

Denise Zimmermann – central point-of-contact for communications and records

Bonnie Toomey – recording and producing Meeting Minutes

Danny Bassette – Technical Support at meetings and Report publication

And, to community members who attended Committee meetings and followed the Town Website.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Community Survey
AVET	<i>Accident Victim Extrication</i> (Fire Training Course)
CON	Certificate of Need (NYS Department of Health authorized territory for Ambulance Service)
C of O	Certificate of Occupancy (a document)
DOH	Department of Health
EMS	Emergency Medical Service
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EOC	[Monroe County] Emergency Operations Center
EPOD	Environmental Protection Overlay District
EVOC	<i>Emergency Vehicle Operations</i> (Fire Training Course)
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FASNY	Firemen’s Association of the State of New York
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
HF	[Village of] Honeoye Falls
HF-L	Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District
HFFD	Honeoye Falls Fire Department
HV/AC	Heating, Ventilation [and] Air Conditioning
ISO	Insurance Services Office, Inc.
M/A	Mutual Aid
M/Asst.	Mutual Assistance (automatic dispatch)
MCWA	Monroe County Water Authority
MEND	Mendon Fire Department
MVA	Motor Vehicle Accident
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NYOSC	New York [State] Office of the State Comptroller
NYS	New York State
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
NYSHSES	New York State Homeland Security and Emergency Services
RG&E	Rochester Gas & Electric
RTB	<i>Rescue Technician Basic</i> (Fire Training Course)
ROC	The Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport
WWTP	Waste Water Treatment Plant

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

In his 1993 Annual Report to the Village of Honeoye Falls Board of Trustees, then HFFD Fire Chief Tom McGory expressed his concern for “a lack of manpower,” the increasing use of Mutual Assistance/ automatic dispatch from other Fire Departments, and “costs of equipping a Fire Department and its fire fighters [that] is steadily increasing” (p. F). In 1995, the Town of Mendon appointed a Fire/EMS Advisory Committee and hired consultants to assess the current state of Fire and EMS Services within the Town and prepare a *Fire/EMS Master Plan*. Their mission was to better understand the capacity for service delivery and to determine a planning strategy commensurate with forecasted/ future needs and expectations. They recognized a need to improve “better coordination” among the three (3) governance boards; “However, whenever the opportunity presents itself, a single agency structure should be pursued as aggressively as possible” (ISSUE #4, p. 27).

These two documents, together with later studies and reports continued a focus on the governance and delivery of Fire Protection Services. They were accompanied by correspondence and community meetings about Fire Service, all suggesting that our configuration of jurisdictions deserves thoughtful review and evaluation to determine how to meet the demands of that day’s community demographic profile and the service needs of our built landscape.

And now, this Citizens Advisory Committee is appointed by the Town Board to review and verify Fire Protection capacity in 2022-2023, and determine if late 1800 and 1930’s Fire Protection delivery models remain sustainable.

This Report is respectfully submitted to you, the Mendon Town Board, as a tool to assist with decisions about today’s delivery of Fire Protection in our community. It is a factual compilation of research and data that is basic for the organization, governance and function of the Fire Service. The references are credible sources affiliated with our Fire Departments, The Village of Honeoye Falls, the Mendon Fire District and the Town of Mendon along with their municipal staffs and Monroe County departments, together with Legal Counsel and other professionals representing various aspects of Fire Protection services.

The Report is organized in Chapters that fulfill the Committee’s Charge as outlined in the Town Board’s Resolution on June 13, 2022 (*Resolution 22-150*), **Figure 1-1**. The original Committee meeting schedule, **Figure 1-2**, was extended by the Town Board on December 12, 2022 (*Resolution 22-253*), **Figure 1-3**.

PART I. GOVERNANCE and DELIVERY

Every emergency is local. An emergency occurs at a specific location, at an ascribed time, and affects a person or people.

Chapter 2. AUTHORITY and JURISDICTION

Emergency Services may be structured a number of ways. State Law prescribes structural organization and operational authority, but reserves decisions about functional capacity and service delivery to the local governing body of each organization. New York State Consolidated Laws offer options to local elected officials who are vested with the authority to deliver Emergency Services including Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Service, Centralized/Special Services and Emergency Management (Meisenzahl, 10.12.16).

AUTHORITY

Local governments, New York's counties, cities, towns and villages, "look to the State Constitution and the state statutes for the basic law which provides for their structure, powers and operational procedures (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 46). These are 'general purpose' units of local government, and are by law, 'municipal corporations.' In addition, local government also includes a number of other specialized districts and entities, such as fire districts [and authorities], which usually provide a single service in a limited area" (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 45).

Elected officials have authority to take actions through local laws, resolutions and other means to ensure delivery of services to protect resident health, safety and welfare at county, town and village levels. General purpose governments and a number of special districts and authorities currently engage to structure and deliver Fire Protection services within the Town of Mendon.

In addition, there is, "... a significant amount of joint service sharing authorized under General Municipal Law...for inter-municipal cooperation for related fire protection activities" (Parshall, p. 21). Some of these examples are noted on [Figure 2-1.](#), "Municipal Resources & Contracts for Service." State Statutes recognize that some emergency services are better suited in a structure that spans municipal boundaries and/or territorial jurisdictions of local fire and EMS agencies. For example, counties are authorized to provide special services that may be centralized to offer universal support for local Emergency Services:

- “Establish and maintain fire training schools to train firefighters
- “Establish and maintain a central fire alarm system
- “Create a county fire advisory board
- “Create the office of county fire coordinator
- “Coordinate interoperable and emergency communications...including those related to public safety land mobile radio communications
- “Establish and maintain a mutual aid plan
- “Develop a plan for arson investigation
- “Develop a plan for hazardous materials incident response, and establish an emergency response team
- “Establish, maintain and supervise municipal-wide and inter-municipal specialized emergency response teams
- “Coordinate Emergency Management planning, response and recovery

Note. The preceding bullet points are respectively noted in *New York State*:

- *County Law*, Sections: 225.1.(g) and (h); 225-a.; 326; 327; 328; and, 328-b. (FASNY, pp.22-23, 24-26)
- *General Municipal Law*, Sections: 209; 204-c; 204-f; 209-j; 209-y; and,209-bb (FASNY, pp. 256, 245-246, 266, 269, 260)
- *Executive Law*, Article 2-B, Section 23 (FASNY, pp. 70-71).

“The traditional purpose of the public authority has been to construct, operate and finance a specific type of improvement.” An Authority is, “[a] ‘public benefit corporation’ [which] more precisely defines the many special purpose agencies in this category (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 135). Public Authorities have direct and indirect roles with Emergency Service providers.

As described in its 2021 Report, and in accordance with its purpose to supply, treat and deliver water within its prescribed regional territory, the [Monroe County Water] Authority “produced and delivered an average of 60 million gallons of water each day...” (MCWA 2021 Report, p. 1), including its contracts with the Town of Mendon and the Village of Honeoye Falls.

Village of Honeoye Falls: (sales in 1000 gallons) 65,833 to 861 customers

Town of Mendon: (sales in 1000 gallons) 127,851 to 1937 customers (2021 Report, p. 12)

Customer billing is separate from local municipal fees. Authority-wide charges and consumption/usage fees are billed directly to its customer base.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE for FIRE PROTECTION

New York State authorizes the organization of Fire Protection services as, "... a function of cities, village governments, and town special districts. State law...prohibits town and county governments from offering fire protection as a municipal function. As more densely populated places, fire protection was assigned as a municipal responsibility under General City and Village Law. In towns...the provision...was accommodated through the creation of special districts within the town, allowing costs to be assessed to areas based on need of services..." (Parshall, p. 6).

As described in the illustration below, fire protection jurisdictions authorized by New York State statutes are:

Figure 1					
Summary of Fire Protection Services by Type of Municipality					
Municipality	Fire Protection Entity	Formation	Administration	Paid Career or Volunteer	Main Source of Funding
City	City Fire Department	City Charter	Varies according to charter	Mostly paid career	City funds department in its budget. City may receive revenue from contracts to provide services outside city boundaries.
Village	Village Fire Department (usually) (See note below*)	Article 10 of the Village Law	Appointed Board of Fire Commissioners or Village Board of Trustees together with Council of the Fire Department	Mostly volunteer	Village funds department in its budget. May receive revenue from contracts to provide services outside village boundaries.
Town outside of villages	Fire District (See note below*)	Article 11 of the Town Law. Separate political subdivision created by Town(s).	Elected Board of Fire Commissioners	Mostly volunteer	District adopts a budget after a public hearing. Almost all funding is from property taxes levied on properties within the district; district may receive revenue from contracts to provide services outside district boundaries.
Town outside of villages	Fire Protection District	Article 11 of the Town Law. Special district created by Town(s).	Town board contracts for fire protection with city, village, or fire district, or with an incorporated fire company located outside a city, village or fire district.	Depends on composition of fire department and/or company providing coverage under contract(s) with Town Board.	Town budget includes funding for fire protection contract(s). Budget may also include funding for firefighting equipment and apparatus to be used to provide fire protection in district.
Town-Village	Joint Fire District	Article 11-A of the Town Law and Article 22-A of the Village Law. Separate political subdivision created by Town(s) and Village(s).	Elected or appointed Board of Fire Commissioners.	Mostly volunteer	District adopts a budget after a public hearing. Almost all funding is from property taxes levied on properties within the district; district may receive revenue from contracts to provide services outside district boundaries.

Source: Office of the New York State Comptroller (OSC) and New York State Department of State.

* A village or fire district may also contract for fire protection services with any city, village or fire district, or with an incorporated fire company having headquarters outside of the respective village or fire district.

NOTE: The source for Figure 1, above, is the New York State Comptroller's Report, *Fire Protection in New York State: How Is It Provided in Your Community?* p. 3.

Villages

“In New York [State]...villages are required to provide fire protection services as a municipal function... . That protection is provided on a...village-wide basis by a municipal fire department. Village fire departments are established under Village Law, Article 10 and are administered by an appointed board of fire commissioners or the village board... . Village departments may also be contracted to provide fire services to areas of their embracing town(s) that are outside the village boundaries. Another option for villages is to form a joint [fire district] (Parshall, p.7)...which operates similarly to an independent fire district. Municipal fire departments...are funded by the general tax levy of the city or village” (Parshall, p. 9). Fire protection contract revenue is a general revenue source.

The Village Board of Trustees is a five-member board comprised of a Mayor who has separate and distinct Executive authority by New York State statutes together with Legislative authority, and four Trustees who have Legislative authority. These are all compensated, four-year term positions. Regular Honeoye Falls Village Elections are held in odd-numbered years on the third Tuesday in March.

The Village Fiscal Year is prescribed in New York State Village Law, Section 5-500.4 and is June 1st through May 31st (FASNY, p. 749). And, the Official Village Year, “...begins at noon on the first Monday in the month following the date of the general village election” i.e., April (Village Law, Section 3-302.1).

“The 2022 local government entities list, published by the Office of the State Comptroller, indicates there are 1,084 municipal and incorporated fire departments” in New York State (Parshall, p. 12).

Towns

[Towns were] “...involuntary subdivisions of the state, constituted for the purpose of the more convenient exercise of governmental functions by the state for the benefit of all its citizens. Towns were finally granted full membership in local government partnership...when they were constitutionally granted home rule powers [by the State Legislature]...in Town Law, Article 1, Section 2: A town is a municipal corporation comprising the inhabitants within its boundaries, and formed with the purpose of exercising such powers and discharging such duties of local government and administration of public affairs as have been, or, may be conferred or imposed upon it by law” (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 99).

“Virtually all of a town’s discretionary authority rests with the town board. [The supervisor’s executive power], is granted by specific statute or by the town board. The town board, therefore, exercises both legislative and executive functions, which accounts for the variance in

authority of the Supervisor as Chief Elected Official for a town, and a village mayor with specific Executive authority as Chief Elected Official” (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 102).

The Supervisor and four (4) Town Board members comprise the Mendon Town Board. The Town Clerk, Highway Superintendent and two (2) Town Justices also have authoritative roles that intersect with the town’s responsibility for Emergency Services. All are compensated, elective offices with designated terms. General Town Election is held the first Tuesday of November in odd-numbered years. The Town’s Official Year, and its Fiscal Year are concurrent with the calendar year: January 1st through December 31st.

Fire Protection...“Is not a town function, since it can only be provided in towns through the medium of districts...” (Cuomo and Shaffer, p. 108). Fire Protection outside the corporate limits of a Village is authorized in Town Law, Article 11 and Article 11-A. (FASNY, pp. 626-669). “This service may be provided by one or more fire districts, fire protection districts, or – not uncommonly – a combination of both” (NYSOSC, p. 5).

“These districts are used for the provision or the contracting of fire services, allocating the costs to property owners served by that district. The creation of either...can be initiated by a town board...or via a citizen petition signed by residents owning real property...within the proposed district, subject to town board approval. While the terms are similar and often used interchangeably in popular reference, an independent fire district and a fire protection district are legally different entities...” (Parshall, p. 8).

Fire Districts. New York State Town Law, Section 11-170, authorizes Town Boards to establish a fire district,” ...provided, however that any such district or extension shall be outside of any incorporated village...or existing fire protection district” (FASNY, p. 626).

“Independent fire districts are public corporations created by a town (or towns jointly). Once incorporated, fire districts are autonomous and independent entities, or district corporations, under the New York State Constitution with the independent power to levy taxes and incur debt. They are special purpose, rather than general purpose governments, but [they] are distinct local governments. [They] are subject to state statutory taxation and expenditure limitations, including New York State’s property tax cap. They are not, however, subject to constitutional debt or tax limits.

“...They have an independently elected governing board – a five-person board of commissioners. The commissioners adopt rules and regulations governing all fire departments and companies within the district. Fire district elections are annually held the second Tuesday of December, off-cycle from town and village elections” (Parshall, p. 11). Town Law, Section 176 enumerates the “powers and duties of fire district commissioners” (FASNY pp. 640-650).

A fire district, “may contract with a city, village, fire district or an incorporated fire company headquartered outside the district for fire protection services. A fire district may also provide coverage outside the district pursuant to contract or a call for assistance.

“Generally, a fire district can levy taxes and incur debt without approval from any other government. It is responsible for adopting an annual budget...and, once approved, the district budget is filed with the town. The town board cannot change a fire district budget. As a rule, the town must attach the fire district budget to its own budget and submit them to the county. The county then levies the fire district tax, and the tax is collected by the town and turned over to the fire district” (NYSOSC, p.5).

The 2022 local government entities list, published by the Office of the State Comptroller, indicates there are 902 fire districts in New York State” (Parshall, p. 11).

Fire Protection Districts. New York State Town Law, Section 11-184, authorizes the Town Board to establish a fire protection district and provide fire protection within the district. These are not separate units of government and they are not political subdivisions of the state (DiRaddo, Chapter 23:10). “As with other types of town special districts (water, lighting), a fire protection district is an administrative area of the town” (NYSOSC, p. 8), and, “their parent town retains the authority to create, alter, or dissolve them...” (Parshall, p. 12).

Fire protection districts, “...are established for the sole purpose of providing fire protection by contract...to provide fire protection to the district (Cuomo and Shaffer, pp. 134, 135). “A town board can create a fire protection district, consolidate adjoining fire protection districts, alter the boundaries of a fire protection district, or dissolve a fire protection district on its own motion or by petition” (Dallessandro, p. 17).

Section 184 also considers Fire Protection Contracts – the process, length, terms and payment (FASNY, pp. 660-661). The town board may contract, “with any city, village, fire district or incorporated fire company” for both firefighting equipment and personnel to operate the equipment (DiRaddo, 23:10). “Towns contract for fire protection services within these districts at the expense of the property owners in that district” (Dallessandro, p. 16).

“Any contract must specify a ‘definite sum’ for all services rendered under the contract and must be for a definite period of time...” (NYSOSC, p. 8). Most contracts are reviewed annually and can be renegotiated and can be amended by the town board. Still, the operational details are not in their direct control” (Parshall, p. 12).

The cost of the contractual services, together with certain statutory liabilities of the area arising from the furnishing of fire protection, is then levied against the properties of the district on the annual tax roll” (Cuomo and Shaffer, pp. 134, 135). Fire protection district contract costs, “are

included within the town's property tax cap levy...and, must be uniform across the entirety of the fire protection district.

"The 2022 local government entities list, published by the Office of the State Comptroller, indicates there are 887 fire protection districts... in New York State" (Parshall, p. 12).

The cost of fire protection for residents of Fire Districts and Fire Protection Districts is disparate as Districts and Fire Contracts are both separately determined by their respective Authority. **Figure 2-2.** illustrates the cost for residents of Monroe County who receive Fire Service from Districts and Contract delivery.

Joint Town-Village Fire Districts. "Another option for towns and villages is to create a joint fire district under Town Law 11-A and Village Law, Section 22-2210. These may be established when deemed in the 'public interest' by a joint resolution of the village and town boards, following public hearings, and subject to approval at referendum. Establishment requires the dissolution of any existing fire districts or fire protection districts in the joint district territory. Joint fire districts must have contiguous territory. [They] operate similarly to independent fire districts. Their budgets are adopted by an elected board of commissioners (subject to public notice and hearing requirements). As with independent fire districts, joint village-town districts are independent municipalities that must comply with state financial reporting and auditing requirements" (Parshall, pp. 16-17).

JURISDICTION

The **Village of Honeoye Falls** was Incorporated by an Act of the New York State Legislature in March, 1838. In response to the need to formally organize fire protection, a municipal Fire Department was created in 1885. Originally comprised of four (4) companies, it is now consolidated as one Department: the Honeoye Falls Fire Department (HFFD).

HFFD provides Fire Service to residents:

- within the Village;
- by contract with the Town of Mendon for Mendon Fire Protection District #1; and,
- by contract with the Town of West Bloomfield for the North Bloomfield Fire Protection District.

Mendon Fire District #1. (Referred to throughout this Report as Mendon Fire District.) At a Special Meeting on March 7, 1935, *...in accordance with sections 170 and 171 of the Town Law, the Town Board Resolved - That the creation of a Fire District as asked for under said petition is for the public interest and that the owners of property included in the district are benefitted*

thereby and that we approve of the boundaries of said district as shown on map filed. The Board also resolved to appoint five (5) residents as officers and one (1) additional resident as Treasurer of the newly created *Mendon Fire District #1* (Minutes of Meeting, pp. 188, 189).

Appendix, 2-1.

And, at a Regular Meeting on November 7, 1935, *...it was voted to raise the following amount for [Mendon] Fire District #1...\$500.00* (Minutes of Meeting, p. 217).

As a political subdivision, the district has all authority granted by state statute, including taxation, and governance through its elected Fire Commissioners who determine an annual budget and set the tax rate (Shaughnessy, Part XI). NOTE: **Figure 3-32.** indicates this taxable assessment for the Fire District from 2000 through 2023.

Emergency and general ambulance service are contracted [within District territory] by the Town of Mendon, pursuant to a Home Rule request for special legislation from New York State.

The District engages with other elected Commissioners and authorizes its officers and employees to attend professional meetings and seminars conducted by organizations that advocate for the Fire Service and their mission. Examples are the: New York State Association of Fire Districts; and, the Monroe County Fire District Officers Association. Across many years Mendon Fire District Officers have assumed leadership roles with these organizations and their affiliates, including President of both the County Association and the State Association.

The Mendon Fire Department has been serving the District since its creation, and protecting the Hamlet of Mendon and its surrounds before 1935.

Town of Mendon Fire Protection District No.1. As previously stated, New York State Town Law, [now] Section 184, authorizes the Town Board to establish a fire protection district and “provide for the furnishings of fire protection within the district” (FASNY, p. 660). Fire protection districts are not separate units of government and are not political subdivisions of the state. They are created and controlled [i.e. governed] by the town board.

At a Regular Meeting of the Mendon Town Board on October 16, 1939, *It is hereby resolved – that this Board find and determine upon the evidence given at such hearing [September 18, 1939]; that it is in the public interest to establish the said fire protection district. And, it is further resolved – that, pursuant to [then] Section 171 of the Town Law, State of New York, there be and hereby is established a fire protection district within the Town of Mendon, to be contained in and embrace the following boundaries to wit: ...* (Minutes of Meeting, p. 368).

Appendix 2-2.

At a Special Meeting of the Mendon Town Board on November 14, 1939: *The Supervisor stated that the meeting was called to approve or disapprove of the [prepared] Contract between the Village of Honeoye Falls and the Mendon Fire Protection District for Fire Protection to be furnished by the Honeoye Falls Fire Department. The Contract as prepared is as read to the meeting by the Town Attorney...* (Minutes of the Meeting, p. 375). And on December 11, 1939, the Town Board executed a contract with the Village of Honeoye Falls for the Honeoye Falls Fire Department to provide its full menu of services to this territory. The Meeting Minutes and the original Contract are in [Appendix 2-3](#).

Since Fire Protection District #1 was created, the Town of Mendon has contracted with the Village Board of Trustees for fire protection with the HFFD. And, based on the Taxable Assessed Value of the Fire Protection District provided by the Assessor at the time the Budget is adopted, the Town Board determines the tax rate for Fire Protection District #1 in its annual budget and collects the district tax on its annual property tax bill. NOTE: [Figure 3-33](#). indicates this taxable assessment for the Fire Protection District from 2000 through 2023.

[Figure 2-3](#). is a map of the Town of Mendon depicting the three (3) Fire Protection jurisdictions.

Chapter 3. FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS and RESOURCES

There are *three limiting factors for capacity to properly protect life and property and have a positive outcome of fire related incidents: (1) number and size of department pumper apparatus; (2) firefighters available to provide the attack force; and (3) available fire water flow from the community water system* (Dallessandro, p. 44).

OPERATIONS

Staffing

Both HFFD and MEND maintain active rosters with volunteers who are trained and credentialed to varying levels in fire protection services.

Figure 3-1. is a table quantifying HFFD members by number and by functional assignment from June 2009 to June 2022 (HFFD, 11.7.22). As defined at our Committee meeting on November 9, 2022, “Probationary” is the status assigned to a new firefighter for a 12-month period to assess basic skills comprehension and evaluate functional performance. As represented on the line graphics, the total active force is declining, while “Interior and Exterior” staffing fluctuates.

Figure 3-1A. is a similar table quantifying MEND members by number and by functional assignment for years 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017 – 2022. The Total Active Force and Exterior Firefighters fluctuate, but Interior Firefighters trend downward as depicted in the line graphs reflecting the table data. The table extension provides additional detail:

- The number of Interior Firefighters as a percentage of the active membership has dropped from more than half in 2002, 2010, 2015, 2017 and 2018, to mid-30% in 2019 – 2022.
- From 2019 – 2022, there is an overall deficit in the number of Interior Firefighters recommended for Mendon’s call volume. The data highlighted in red, on the center portion of the table, states the deficit ascribed by MEND.
- Response to EMS calls is sporadic as expressed in this Figure and on **Figure 3-8.**

Both Departments employ a battery of recruitment tools, e.g. social media, community events hosted by the Departments, public fire service demonstrations, “Recruit New York” week-long activities, member word-of-mouth, recruitment “bounties” for members, school activities, fund drive promotional material, Explorer Scouting programs and Fire Service booths at festivals among others. **Figure 3-2.** shares a table that reveals “Cumulative Recruitment from 2009 –

2022” for HFFD. With the exception of year 2022 (as noted through June 1st), each year has gained firefighters. However, retaining these recruits is a different story. As indicated the average retention of members for “years of operational service over the last five (5) years is 2.01” (HFFD, 11.7.22), and 2.42 for MEND. At our November 9, 2022 meeting, Department members attributed retention to multiple influences including: aging-out; mobility; career and family obligations; academic pursuits; local housing options; cost-of-living; training requirements; and, social changes.

Figures 3-3. (HFFD) and **3-4.** (MEND) are historical perspectives on Department retention of active firefighters with notes on their functional assignments as “Interior” and/or “EMT” (HFFD, 11.7.22).

New York State and State-credentialed Monroe County Instructors, deliver training to firefighters in addition to extensive Department-led training requirements. **Figures 3-5.** (HFFD) and **3-6.** (MEND) provide more detail on individual member training achievement and functional status. The table highlights member training achievements with these credentials:

- *Fire Fighter 1*...128 hours
- *Fire Fighter 2*...42 hours
- *Emergency Vehicle Operations (EVOC)*...18 hours
- *Pump Operations*...24 hours
- *Aerial Operations*...24 hours
- *Accident Victim Extrication (AVET)*...20 hours
- *Rescue Technician Basic (RTB)*...24 hours
- *Surface Water*...16 hours
- *Ice Water*...16 hours
- *Hazmat Operations*...16 hours (NYS Fire Training Programs, Course Catalog, 11.21.22)
- *Fire Officer 1*...63 hours
- *Fire Officer 2*...40 hours
- *Fire and Emergency Service Instructor 1*...40 hours
- *Fire and Emergency Service Instructor 2*...40 hours (NYS Fire Training Programs, Course Catalog, 12.8.22).

The “Red NMX” reporting system used by both departments is a data entry platform that captures information about Department response across multiple call types. Departments utilize this reporting system for logging activity and for file retrieval to observe data profiles and patterns of behavior associated with any reportable field of entry. Both HFFD and MEND have researched years of Red NMX reportable data for Committee review and use.

Red NMX reporting catalogs calls for service across a Series of nine (9) titles, which are then further detailed and numbered for identity. Both Departments agreed to consolidate the Series titles into generic call types and upload their average Department staff response to these call types from 2105 – 2022. As described at our Committee meeting on November 9, 2002, “Hazardous Condition,” is a non-fire condition that may include Carbon Monoxide, natural gas and/or noxious fumes.

Figures 3-7. (5 pages) and 3-8. express tables and graphs for HFFD and MEND response to five (5) general types of calls for the years 2015 – 2022: Structure Fires; EMS; MVAs; Alarms; and, Hazardous Conditions. The column titled, “M/asst Request,” represents critical incident planning within the Department to secure the number of personnel they want to integrate with their Department in response to these call types (HFFD, 11.7.22 and MEND, 11.7.22).

Mendon’s average staffing response on Figure 3-8. is a statistical analysis and reveals that the overall staffing level has decreased and that the EMT response has been steady. This “skews the numbers making it [appear that] more EMTs are responding when in reality it is the same long-term Department members” (Meeting Minutes, 11.9.22).

Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance

A pioneer of mutual aid fire response since 1941, the fire service in Monroe County has a renowned history of collaboration and cooperation. Each department recognizes the value of a reciprocal exchange of resources in times of need (Monroe County DRAFT, p. 1).

As defined on both pages of Figure 3-9., Monroe County’s Plan organizes the local departments into five Battalions, keeping the City of Rochester as a separate and distinct department. Each department within the five Battalions is identified by a department number. And, numbers 0-9 are assigned to fire apparatus and Command personnel as recognizable standards for use in radio communications and as apparatus labels for ease of identity in the field with Public Safety operations.

For example:

- HFFD is in the 5th Battalion, Department #6; and,
- MEND is in the 3rd Battalion, Department #6 (Monroe County DRAFT, pp. 18, 19).

Mutual Aid is initiated in concert with the Monroe County 9-1-1 Center. Fire Command requests “Mutual Aid” response for additional staff and/or apparatus. Dispatch conveys this request and responding departments(s) become part of the requesting department’s assets as defined by NYS General Municipal Law, Section 209 (FASNY, pp. 256-269).

Mutual Assistance...varies from Mutual Aid in that it is not a temporary, one-time request for assistance. It is a planned approach prescribing pre-determined, automatic response from another department incorporating their resources to augment local department staff and/or apparatus. It is established by agreement and considers specific call types, time-of-day, department staffing patterns, and/or department experience with response times and equipment requirements. For example, "Mendon has a Mutual Assistance (automatic dispatch) agreement with Fishers Fire Department to cover the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. for overnight EMS calls because of a number of unanswered EMS calls by the Mendon Fire Department" (Meeting Minutes, 11.9.22).

Both HFFD and MEND have established Mutual Assistance agreements with neighboring departments. These operations are standing protocol assignments with the 9-1-1 Center for dispatch on their respective call types. **Figure 3-10.** is a table depicting Mutual Assistance arrangements for both Departments naming the involved departments, the prescribed arrangement and the governing jurisdiction for each assisting department.

Figure 3-11. depicts both Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance calls for HFFD and MEND as shared Fire Service calls within the (municipal boundary) of the Town of Mendon.

Figure 3-12. depicts Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance, both given and received by HFFD for 2015 – 2022. The number quoted for "Aid Given" on this Figure, represents one (1) truck, whereas the "Aid Received" number represents the total number of units responding to the request for assistance (Meeting 11.9.22).

Figure 3-13. depicts Mendon's data for the same period of time. The original data used to create the table is **Appendix 3-1.**

Given that Mutual Assistance is a prescribed protocol establishing an agreed automatic dispatch by the Departments, Fire Service jurisdictions, and some counties, may require a formal, written agreement to stipulate the arrangement and define jurisdictional responsibilities for liability, compensation and other administrative needs associated with contractual services. Jurisdictional authority may be necessary to ensure the Department's expectation for continuity of assistance.

Apparatus and Equipment

Apparatus identified in the accompanying Figures is assigned to call types based on its primary purpose and the equipment it carries. Functional capacity, maintenance and financing are all part of the calculation in determining life expectancy of fire apparatus. In many cases, the cost of apparatus must be financed: the loan period can not exceed the probable useful life of the vehicle.

Figure 3-14. is an apparatus roster and equipment inventory for HFFD that provides the unit number together with the vehicle's functional capacity and special equipment. Financial information about purchase, life-expectancy for its use and a replacement estimate are also recorded. Further details on each unit are provided on subsequent pages of this Figure.

Figure 3-15. is a similar format for MEND. Mendon indicated the sale price of the previous unit when it was retired and replaced.

Calls For Service

Dispatch and Radio Communications. Both HFFD and MEND are subscribed by their respective jurisdictions for primary dispatch services from the Monroe County 9-1-1 Center:

- Village of Honeoye Falls, March 20, 1995 (Meisenzahl, 10.12.16); and,
- Mendon Fire District, September 13, 1995 (Fish, 2.15.23).

When an emergency call for fire service within the Town of Mendon is received, the fire department assigned to the location is alerted and dispatched. Based on the call type, fire department response may be accompanied by law enforcement and/or ambulance service. A companion document subscribes both Departments to full service access to Public Safety Communications (radio transmissions):

- Village of Honeoye Falls for HFFD, August 31, 2000 (Fish, 11.14.22); and,
- Mendon Fire District for MEND, July 11, 2000 (Sweet, 10.26.22).

These documents are the: *Monroe County 9-1-1 Subscriber Agreement* and *Fire/EMS Radio Communications Municipal Cooperation Agreement*, respectively.

Radio communications between the Dispatcher and responding units proceed per protocol established in the, *Rules and regulations governing fire service communications within Monroe County as authorized by the Federal Communications Commission, the Monroe County Fire Advisory Board and the Monroe County Fire Coordinator's Office.*

The Fire Service Communications plan provides a uniform directive for fire-based radio system communications, and addresses the operation of...[all] systems that are used to facilitate public safety radio operations in an all-hazards environment.

The proper and professional use of the radio and our ability to have clear and concise communications...is paramount in today's modern fire service. Our ability to communicate resource needs and situational updates is imperative to our ability to maintain an atmosphere of control and stability.

Our collective approach to public safety communications in Monroe County includes other relevant documents that guide Emergency Service deployment and interoperable communications (Monroe County DRAFT, p. 1).

Call Types. As previously stated, both HFFD and MEND have defined their Call Types, and both have graphed their “Fire, Rescue and Total Calls.” HFFD [Figure 3-16](#). and MEND [Figure 3-17](#). chart these calls from 2015 – 2022.

Time of Calls. The total numbers of calls are further defined by each Department according to:

- Month of the year, [Figure 3-18](#).;
- Day of the week, [Figure 3-19](#).; and,
- Time of day, [Figure 3-20](#).

Box #s/Emergency Service Zones. Each Department divides their bounded protection territory to plan their response protocol. They consider “Natural and Target” features in each zone, together with anticipated staffing response and travel time to establish each zone. As provided by each Department:

- [Figure 3-21](#). is the HFFD territory and its geographic assignments for Box/Zone numbers; and,
- [Figure 3-22](#). is the MEND territory and its geographic assignments for Box/Zone numbers.

Call Locations. Both Departments reported their number of calls to each of their Boxes/Zones:

- [Figure 3-23](#). charts HFFD response from 2015 – 2022 to each area and the number of hours ascribed to these calls.
- [Figure 3-24](#). summarizes these calls for their jurisdiction and their contract territories with an additional entry specific for Mendon Ponds Park. Mutual Aid given by the Department is noted as a separate category.
- [Figure 3-25](#). ascribes Mendon’s call volume for the same period of time, with the addition of data for 2000, 2005 and 2010.

Response Times. “Response Times” as a general category is a subjective measure, and must be defined for its specific use. NOTE: The “Average Onscene Time” columns in [Figures 3-26](#). and [3-27](#). below, are from the time of dispatch.

[Figure 3-26](#). is HFFD “cumulative averages for enroute and on-scene times” to Village and Mendon Fire Protection District alarms. The “Average Response Times” table is calculated using the Village and the Mendon Fire Protection District tables.

Figure 3-27. is similar data for MEND. NOTE: Based on the Village location of the Ambulance Base, and the inherent travel time to the Mendon Fire District, MEND is dispatched for first response on EMS calls.

Response times are affected by Department member proximity to their fire house. A closer proximity to the fire house is beneficial for response times. Figure 3-27A. is a map titled, "Drive Time from Honeoye Falls Volunteers to the Honeoye Falls Station." The map plots generalized locations of member residences and the HFFD fire station. Color fields are overlaid using GPS drive time data in one minute intervals to depict presumed response times to the fire house for each member. Figure 3-27B. is a similar map titled, "Drive Time from Mendon Volunteers to the Mendon Station."

Figure 3-27C. titled, "Drive Times from Mendon & Honeoye Falls Fire Stations" illustrates the second aspect of response: the time of response on staffed apparatus from each fire house to the scene. Using Department enroute times as the bench mark start time, this illustration plots HFFD and MEND data using overlaid color fields on the Town of Mendon map to express onscene times from both fire houses. NOTE: These maps were created by Monroe County GIS using Department information to illustrate the concepts.

RESOURCES

Every emergency is local.

The majority of fire service calls to 9-1-1 are considered "High Risk – Low Impact," meaning they may present a high risk to an individual or a small number of people, but the adverse impact is a small scale footprint, i.e. one building, one property, without consequence to the greater community surrounding the scene. These are what the Departments' describe as "Routine Calls" – they have members who are appropriately trained for response to these call types, and they have apparatus specifically designed and equipped for response. As verified by Department data, these calls are the majority of their total call volume.

Fire Protection assets are augmented when the nature of the call type exceeds local staffing and/or apparatus capacity. This is already apparent in Department standard operating practices for Mutual Aid requests and with automatic dispatch for Mutual Assistance.

There are additional levels of assistance available to local Departments to integrate specialized resources based on the call type, the duration of the response, the impact of the call beyond the immediate scene, the impact on the financial resources of the community, the lingering

period of time required for community recovery from the incident, and the magnitude of the call on social and economic resources.

Special Operations Teams

Teams are available from the County, the Region and New York State to respond with assistance: specialized equipment, situation experts, asset coordination, Incident Command Staff, communications, staffing for shift change continuity and public information interface are among other aspects that may be necessary for a safe and effective response.

We are familiar with these resources as they have assisted us across at least three decades with:

- County Special Operations teams for HAZMAT, Swift Water and Ice Water Rescue, Lost Person searches, air crashes;
- County-wide resource availability through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for community-wide response and asset management, mostly for weather-related events;
- The “NYS Fire Mobilization and Mutual Aid” Plan empowering the State Fire Administrator to implement the Plan and move fire protection assets within the state (FASNY, p. 261);
- New York State asset assistance with National Guard deployment and other State department resources, i.e. NYS Police, DOT, Health; and,
- Federal assistance, primarily with recovery efforts that focus on monetary reimbursement to public treasuries, and sometimes individual assistance with uninsured losses and business recovery.

Water Supply

The Monroe County Water Authority (MCWA) sources Hemlock Lake and Lake Ontario for our local public purposes, provides any treatment and distributes the water via a system they maintain and expand including hydrants for fire suppression. **Figure 3-28.** is a MCWA map of water mains and hydrants in the Town of Mendon, including the Village.

Community Fire Protection. The same system of water mains, pumps and storage tanks that reliably provides clean tap water to your home also provides excellent fire protection for the community. We are proud to provide this important service to our entire customer base.

Always at the ready. While firefighters primarily handle hydrants in an emergency, MCWA takes responsibility for day-to-day hydrant operation and maintenance. This means keeping clean water flowing — at the right pressure — to working hydrants around the clock all year long.

An extensive challenge. In MCWA's service area, we properly tend to more than 27,000 public fire hydrants strategically placed along our 3,400 miles of water mains. Having a hydrant relatively close to a home or building can be a factor in fire insurance premiums (MCWA Website, Fire Protection, 9.11.22).

New York State Town Law, Section 198.3.(b) authorizes, "The town board [to] contract with any person or corporation, municipal or otherwise, or with a town or county on behalf of a water district, for a supply of water, for a term not to exceed forty years" (FASNY, p. 670). The current "Retail Lease Agreement for Operation of Water Districts" between the Town of Mendon and the MCWA, expires in March, 2042 (MCWA Agreement, p. 1).

The Town of Mendon has one water district - District #1, with separate and distinct sub-areas for capital costs and consumption billing. They are known as: "District #1, Extension 1; District #1, Extension 2; District #1, Extension 3; District #1, Extension 4; and, District #1, Extension 5" (Parmelee, 8.23.22). The MCWA owns, operates and maintains a Reservoir in the Town of Mendon as part of its supply and distribution system (Gates, 8.23.22). All capital costs are typically financed by a 30-year Bond secured by the Town of Mendon, with annual principal and interest charges reimbursed by each District property owner. This charge appears as a separate "Water District" line item on their annual Town/County Property Tax Bill.

The Town Board is vigilant in its role with public water supply as a Public Health measure and to benefit fire protection. The most recent MCWA extension study is a May, 2018 update to previous studies. In its *Preliminary Construction Water Main Estimates Town of Mendon* report, LaBella was commissioned to, "Estimate the cost of District extensions...by road, geographic area...including installation costs, rate projections and financing costs" (May, 2018). At the time of this Study, Labella "Estimated 425 lots [households]" were not served by a public water supply (page not numbered for reference).

New York State Village Law, Section 11-1100 authorizes the Board of Trustees to, "...contract, in the name of the village, with an individual or corporation for supplying water to the village for extinguishing fires or for other public purposes; but such contracts shall not be made for a longer period than forty years" (FASNY, p. 759). The current "Retail Lease Agreement for Operation of Water Districts" between the Village of Honeoye Falls and the MCWA, expires in August, 2042 (MCWA Agreement, p. 5).

Per the Agreement, Section 2.6.e., "Extensions to the existing Village distribution systems by a developer or others, at no expense to the Village, will be owned by the Authority upon completion of the installation" (MCWA Agreement, p. 5).

Finances

Assessment. Property value is the basis for the community's municipal tax levy and therein, its capacity to support and sustain public services. In the 1980's, the Town of Mendon was established as a single Assessing authority for the Town and the Village of Honeoye Falls. In accordance with NYS Law and regulations, the Town Assessor determines property values, establishes parcel assessments, authorizes exemptions, applies equalization rates in computations and adjudicates the appeal process with the Town Assessment Review Board. All actions follow calendar requirements that are determinate dates impacting municipal budgets, exemption filings, and property tax payment schedules.

The property tax levy is calculated at a rate per thousand determined by dividing the municipal budget by the total taxable assessed value of the municipality. The Tax Roll closes on July 1st each year and establishes the Real Property Assessments for the tax levy beginning January 1st of the next year. For example, the Final Roll established July 1, 2022 is the basis for the 2023 levy.

The Mendon Assessor aligns property parcels within their designated Fire Protection boundaries to ensure the tax levy for the service areas are accurately assigned:

- The Mendon Fire District provides its annual budget to the Town. The County calculates the rate per thousand on the taxable assessment and then, on behalf of the District, the Town levies the tax on its Real Property Tax Bill.
- The Village proposes its annual Fire Contract to the Town Board for Mendon Fire Protection District #1. When the Town authorizes the contract, the Assessor calculates the rate per thousand on the taxable value of the Protection District, and the Town levies the revenue on its annual Property Tax Bill to cover the cost of the Contract.

Both Town and Village tax levies are guaranteed by Monroe County, meaning that neither municipality collects back taxes, nor are they responsible for the procedural process associated with collections. The County guarantees payment on both municipal Tax Warrants (Town Clerk, July 18, 2022).

Real Property Tax Exemptions in the Town of Mendon are established by New York State and by Local Law. These Local Laws are in [Appendix 3-2](#). For FY 2023, Allowable Exemptions are enumerated on [Figure 3-29](#) for the Town, and on [Figure 3-30](#) for the Village. Wholly Exempted parcels are quantified by number and value on [Figure 3-31](#).

Fire Protection Budgets. Revenue source estimates support, and must balance Appropriation estimates for contractual and personnel expenses within the municipal Fiscal Year (FY): January 1 to December 31 for the Town of Mendon and the Mendon Fire District; and, June 1 to May 31

for the Village of Honeoye Falls. Annual budgets are presented and proceed to adoption by their respective Legislative authority according to legal procedures and calendar requirements. Property tax levies on residents in the Mendon Fire District, Mendon Fire Protection District #1, and the Village of Honeoye Falls are noted respectively on [Figures 3-32.](#), [3-33.](#) and [3-34.](#)

Cost considerations include administration, equipment, staffing, property and building maintenance among others. Each governing authority has autonomy and control of its budget within the State's legal parameters, i.e. Constitutional Tax Limitations, Debt Limitations and the State 2% Tax Cap on municipal budgets.

Indebtedness. Beyond daily and routine operational requirements there is expense associated with capital investment in equipment and property.

Mendon Fire District does not have debt expense. Unlike the sales revenue from Village fire apparatus which is deposited in the General Fund, the District Commissioners can directly apply the sales revenue of their apparatus to the replacement unit. MEND reports that, "the District averages 38% return on investment" of their apparatus (Meeting Minutes, 11.9.22).

Town debt service and Village debt service are expressed for their respective 2023, and 2022 – 2023 Budgets on [Figure 3-35.](#) Note:

- The quoted Village Bond for fire equipment was a \$500,000 loan with principal and interest payments totaling \$720,190.97 ("Final Dunbar Register, 6.7.13," Village File). NOTE: The loan period for a vehicle can not exceed its probable useful life as defined for financing purposes.
- The quoted Village Bond for the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) was a \$270,000 loan with principal and interest payments totaling \$337,913.89 ("Final Dunbar Register, 6.7.13," Village File).
- The quoted New York State Loan for the WWTP Filter was \$180,000. The Interest payments over the period of the loan were subsidized reducing the interest amount to the Village. There are no interest payments required from the Village for FYs 2022-23, and 2023-24. The final payment in FY 2023-24 will be on the remaining principal balance of \$30,000.00 and will satisfy the obligation (Anderson, 11.7.22).
- The quoted Town Bond for the Library was a \$1,350,000 loan with principal and interest payments totaling \$2,052,726.56 (Parmelee, 10.19.22 and 10.24.22).
- The capital expenses for Water Districts within the Town of Mendon are bonded by the Town and repaid by the Town across the life of the Bonds (Parmelee, 11.7.22). But, the cost of the loans is not a Town-wide property tax obligation. The respective Water District property owners are billed for the annual principal and interest cost thereby reimbursing the Town for the cost of these Bonds. Because the cost is not Town-wide,

these Bonds are not included for Town indebtedness on [Figure 3-35](#). NOTE. Town indebtedness is not directly attributable to fire protection service: Town debt is included in this Report to convey financial obligations as they relate to each of the three (3) governing jurisdictions.

The Village Bond and Loan payment schedules are in [Appendix 3-3](#). The Town Bond payment schedule for the Library is [Appendix 3-4](#).

Municipal indebtedness is limited by New York State Local Finance Law. As expressed on [Figure 3-36](#), it is a prescribed, finite calculation utilizing the most current Assessment Roll (7.1.22), and four preceding Rolls to establish an average amount; and, then uses a percentage to establish allowable debt at 7%, 3% and 5% as shown on the Figure. This total allowable indebtedness is the sole responsibility of the jurisdiction's taxpayers. They alone are responsible to satisfy the obligation. Please note that the loan amount may or may not include other costs associated with the debt, i.e. Bond Counsel, bank fees or other financial fees necessary to establish credit.

NOTE: "Total Assessed Value" of the jurisdiction is required for the calculation. This dollar amount was not available for the Mendon Fire District. Since the District does not carry debt, [Figure 3-36](#), utilizes the District's "Taxable Assessment" for illustrative and comparison purposes only.

Revenue. Other than real property tax, revenue sources may include: interest and earnings on investments, contracts, rentals, sales, refund of expenditures, gifts/donations, state and/or federal aid, transfers from Capital and/or Reserve Funds, grants, and sources available to the Town and the Village such as utilities receipts, payments in lieu of taxes, penalties on real property taxes, franchise fees, Court fees, shared services fees, ambulance service receipts, mortgage tax, and license and permit fees (Adopted 2023 Town and 2022-2023 Village Budgets).

Grant revenue is awarded on a case-by-case basis. The Mendon Fire District and the Village/HFFD have success with various public and private sources as represented on [Figures 3-37](#), and [3-38](#).

Reserve Funds. The Town, the Village and the Mendon Fire District each maintain Reserve Funds. Their annual budgets identify the specific entitlement of each fund, designate appropriations from these funds for expenditure and identify transfer amounts for deposit. The Town does not have Reserve Account status for Fire Protection as it does not have Fire Protection assets; however, the Town does have a Reserve Account for the Ambulance Facility as it shares ownership of the building with the Village. The monetary balances in the Village and Mendon Fire District Reserve accounts are represented from their respective 2022-2023 and 2023 Budgets on [Figure 3-39](#).

Contracts are mutually agreed by the participating parties and they generally involve the exchange of money or other tangible value for a service. For example: purchase orders to obtain goods and services; property and/or vehicle lease/rental for a specific purpose and designated time; and, for the Town of Mendon, an annual review and renewal of two long-standing contracts for Fire Protection and Ambulance Service with the Village.

Each contract document is prepared by the Village according to the joint Agreement adopted by the participating Legislative bodies. Each of these contracts proceeds through Town Board review and Public Hearing prior to authorization. Our focus is the Fire Protection Contract (2023 Contract is [Appendix 3-5](#)).

The Property Tax Levy expressed on [Figures 3-34](#) and [3-33](#), reflect the Village's all-inclusive cost to provide Fire Protection service within its corporate limits and within Mendon Fire Protection District #1. NOTE: The contract value (cost) is based on the previous Village FY expenditure with adjustment for overage and shortfall considered as credits and/or debits to the contract parties and the Village taxpayers. The Village Fire Protection Contract for the years 2000 – 2023 is represented on the update of a table originally prepared for another report and now represented in [Appendix 3-6](#).

Although the Village FY does not coincide with the calendar year, the Fire Protection and Ambulance Contracts are written and subscribed for a 12-month period beginning January 1st of each year.

Real Property Assets. The Village of Honeoye Falls, the Mendon Fire District and the Mendon Fire Department, Inc. own real property within the Town of Mendon. These parcels and any improvements to the property, i.e. Fire Stations and ancillary buildings, support fire protection and/or fire department purposes as indicated on [Figure 3-40](#). (LeGrette, 11.9.22). The Town Assessor report on each of these parcels is in [Appendix 3-7](#). (LeGrette, 11.9.22).

Other. The New York State Comptroller issues annual "Fiscal Stress" and "Environmental Stress" scores for local governments. For FY 2021, both the Village of Honeoye Falls and the Town of Mendon received "No Designation" scores for both reports (NYS Comptroller, 10.24.22). The "Fiscal Stress" reports are in [Appendix 3-8](#).

PART II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Chapter 4. DEMOGRAPHICS, EXPOSURES and EXPERIENCE

Decision makers must minimize the [adverse] consequences of emergencies by aligning fire department resources with community risks/hazards (Urban Fire Forum, p. 11).

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Mendon was organized in 1813 and annexed from Ontario County when Monroe County was formed in 1821 (Town of Mendon Website, 10.5.22).

Approximately 39 square miles, the Town of Mendon has contiguous boundaries with both Ontario and Livingston Counties. Mendon is bordered on the north by the Town of Pittsford, on the west by the Towns of Rush and Henrietta, on the south by the Towns of Lima (Livingston County) and West Bloomfield (Ontario County) and on the east by the Town of Victor (Ontario County).

Like the Village of Honeoye Falls, there is no direct access to the Town from an Interstate highway. Regional access is provided by Interstates 390 and 490, and then via NYS, County and local roads. The New York State Thruway (I-90) passes through the northeast corner of the Town. NYS Routes 64 and 251 intersect at the 4-corners of the Mendon Hamlet.

The Village of Honeoye Falls, located in the southwest portion of the Town, has the highest density in the Town and is a retail center. The Hamlet of Mendon, on the east side of the Town, also serves as a commercial and residential area. Both areas are the historic centers of population and commerce (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 2).

The Village of Honeoye Falls was Incorporated in March, 1838 by an Act of the New York State Legislature. Named for the waterfall on Honeoye Creek, it is 2.6 square miles within the Town of Mendon, in southeast Monroe County. Regional access is provided by Interstate 390. In the greater Rochester Metropolitan area, access to the 4-corners at the center of the Village is via NYS Routes 15A, 65 and 251.

Basic demographic information is relative in discussions about Fire Protection. These factors are rated by the New York State Comptroller's 2021 *Environmental Stress Report*. Both the Village of Honeoye Falls and the Town of Mendon achieved a score titled, "No Designation" (NYS Comptroller, 10.24.22), meaning there is no problem with the action of either local government. The *Environmental Stress Reports* are in [Appendix 4-1](#).

Several categories included in the scoring rank are relevant for our consideration. They influence our collective ability to sustain community expectations for Fire Protection Services. In this chapter, we detail factors related to:

- Staffing...population, age
- Equipment; and,
- Financing...poverty, tax base, income, unemployment, State and Federal Aid.

Population and Age



“Population history for the Village was obtained from the Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and the 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) as shown [above]. The Village’s population has been relatively steady since 1980 and is expected to remain steady over the next few decades. By comparison, the Town of Mendon’s population nearly doubled between 1980 and 2010. From 2010 to 2019, the Town of Mendon’s population continued to increase from 8,982 to 9,203. Unlike many local villages, Honeoye Falls has nearly 450 undeveloped acres within its corporate limits. Based upon the available land and the desirability of the community, it is reasonable to assume there will be additional growth in the number of residents living in the Village over the next decade” (2022 Village Comprehensive Plan, p. 17).

“Population: Village of Honeoye Falls, 2000 – 2019”

Age	2000	2010	2019	New Change	% Change
19 and under	679	734	700	+ 21	+ 3.1%
20 – 34	373	365	435	+ 62	+ 16.6%
35 – 54	817	829	690	- 127	- 15.5%
55 – 64	245	340	396	+ 151	+ 61.6%
65 and over	481	406	538	+ 57	+ 11.9%
TOTAL	2,595	2,674	2,759	+ 164	+ 6.3%
Median Age	41.2	41.9	41.2		

Source: US Census (2022 Village Comprehensive Plan, p. 18).

Excluding the Village, the Town of Mendon is currently home to 6,498 people. Population within the Town (excluding the Village) increased 12.2 % between 2000 and 2010, but remained fairly stagnant between 2010 and 2017, while the Village population steadily increased by 6% between 2000 and 2017 (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 10).

These numbers are estimated by the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council and reported in the 2021 Town of Mendon Comprehensive Master Plan, p.11:

U.S. Census			
Year:	1990	2000	2010
Town outside Village	4,505	5,775	6,478

The U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 and 2010 SF1 Decennial Censuses, and the American Community Survey 2013 – 2017, report the Median Age of Residents (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 11):

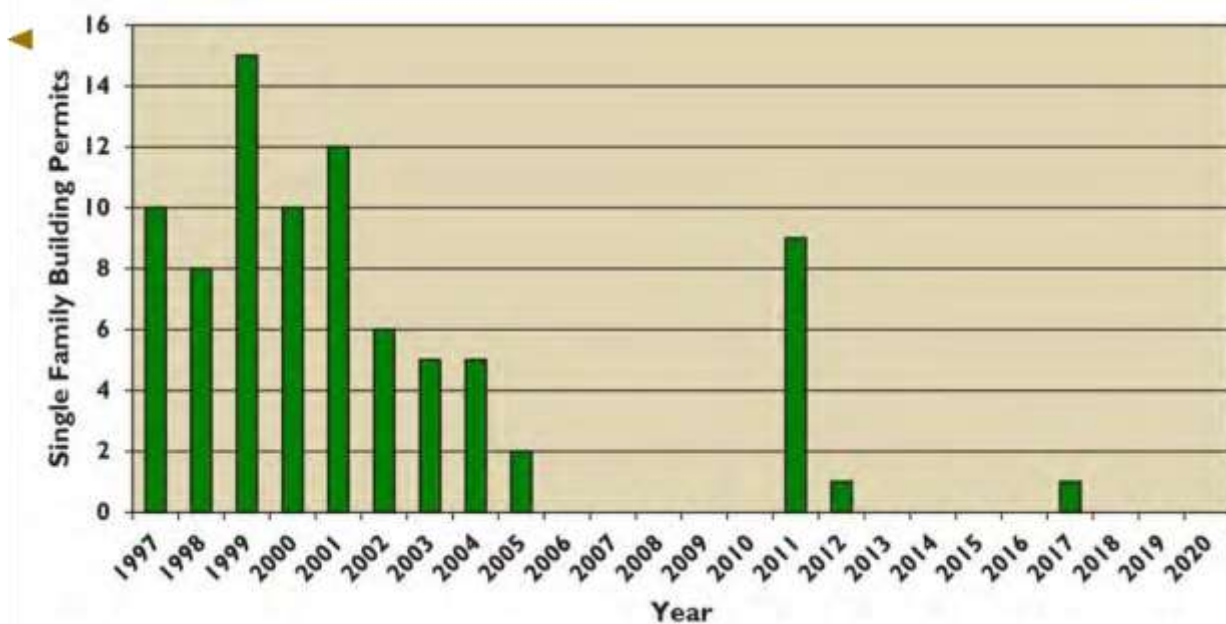
Median Age of Residents			
Year:	2000	2010	2017
Town outside Village	39.8	43.6	45.8

Housing Stock

The majority of the housing stock in the Town outside the Village (52.6 %) was built after 1979. In the Village of Honeoye Falls, the majority (51.2 %) was built in 1959 or earlier. These are the American Community Survey, 2013 – 2017 estimates (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 18):

Percentage of Housing Stock by Age					
	1939 or earlier	1940 -59	1960 - 79	1980 – 99	2000 or later
Town outside Village	27%	5.3%	15.1%	36.8%	15.8%
Village of HF	33.1%	18.1%	26.5%	15.9%	6.4%

Residential building activity is administered independently by each local government. Pending and projected development should be considered in real time by parties directly involved in discussions about Fire Protection as land use impacts exposures relating to apparatus requirements and staffing complements.



As indicated in the graph above, the Village “has issued a total of 84 permits for new homes from 1997 to 2020. The number of permits issued started a five year decline in 2002. This decline continued through 2006, when the number of permits issued dropped to zero. This inactivity continued for four years from 2006 through 2010.

“There were a total of 10 Certificates of Occupancy (C of O’s) issued by the Village for single-family homes from 2003 to 2013. Only one was issued from 2006 through 2010. C of O’s differ

from building permits in that they are an indication of homes built and occupied. Whereas, the issuance of a building permit does not necessarily mean construction was realized“ (2022 Village Comprehensive Plan, p.20).

Similar information for the Town of Mendon, outside the Village, is expressed on [Figure 4-1](#). (Gates, 10.12.22).

Financial Capacity

Residential income is a valid indicator of the population’s ability to sustain local government services and should be a priority consideration as the Town discusses Fire Protection. The majority of revenue for the delivery of Fire Service is the property tax levy and summary data across multiple years of the NYS Comptroller’s annual “Environmental and Fiscal Stress” reports may suggest trends and indicate patterns related to our population’s age and income.

[Figure 4-2](#). is the Real Property “Classification Listing” (LeGrette, 8.29.22).

[Appendix 4-2](#). contains detail for the Village on the aggregate and individual Assessed Value of these parcels: by their Major Classification Type; by their individual Classification Number; for County/Town, School and Village Tax levies; and, for certain Exemptions. [Appendix 4-3](#). is a like presentation for the Town outside the Village (LeGrette, 8.29.22).

Demographic factors have a role in determining a community’s capacity to functionally delivery and sustain effective Fire Protection services. “Community demographics such as employment types and availability, population age and makeup, population density, tax base, and other local factors define what particular incentives may elicit and sustain increased numbers of volunteers from a given community” (NYS DHS, *Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment & Retention Task Force Report*, p. 12).

Land Use

“Residential and agricultural land uses dominate the Town of Mendon landscape. Together, these two land uses account for 71 percent of the land use within the Town by acreage. Outside of the Village, the only commercial center is in the Hamlet, and just 0.4% of land within the Town is classified as commercial. Commercial and mixed-use properties are clustered within the Hamlet and generally include a variety of small scale independently-owned shops, restaurants, and office space. Together, vacant land and wild / parkland (including Mendon Ponds Park) account for just over 25% of land use.

“The land uses are based on real property data from Monroe County and can be described briefly based on information from the New York State Office of Real Property Services and sourced to Monroe County GIS. The quoted percentages include the Village:

- “49.7% Residential – property used for human habitation (single family, multi-family housing) but not including hotels/motels.
- “21.6% Agricultural – property used for the production of crops or livestock.
- “14.9% Vacant Land – property that is not in use, is in temporary use, or lacks permanent improvement.
- “10.5% Wild/Parkland – Reforested lands, preserves and private hunting/fishing clubs.
- “3.3% Other – all other uses, including commercial and industrial uses, that represented a small share of land acreage in the Town” (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 19).

With few exceptions reserved to New York State, land development and Plat division is governed by Local Law. **Figure 4-3.** is a map of the *Town of Mendon Zoning Districts* (Gates, 10.12.22). **Figure 4-4.** is a map of the *Village of Honeoye Falls Zoning Districts, Adopted August 19, 2019* (Village website, 12.16.22).

EXPOSURES and EXPERIENCE

The Committee identified and developed a menu of likely and potential risks associated with our natural and built landscapes. We label them in two (2) categories: Target Features and Natural Features. The Committee did not prioritize the risks. We name them, define them for our purpose, state their exposure and identify the service demand required to terminate the inherent emergent condition(s).

Our local Fire Departments are trained and equipped to respond to emergency calls associated with these risks. Their capacity can grow through Mutual Assistance agreements, Mutual Aid, Special Operations Teams, and/or municipal forces as prescribed in Department protocol, at the request of the (Department) Incident Commander, or the Chief Elected Official with A State of Emergency Declaration.

Target Features

Our built landscape includes “Target Features,” defined simply as generally acceptable risks incorporated in our everyday routine and valued as necessary to support our lifestyle. Examples are noted in transportation modes for people and products, population centers like schools and retail centers, and in workplace environments associated with manufacturing and business locations.

“Built” into our landscape as areas for: drainage retention/detention; recreational pursuits; and, reservoirs for specific purposes, water has a prominent presence in the Town of Mendon as both a Target and a Natural Feature.

The Target Features considered as risks by the Committee are presented in a brief narrative and, in some cases, supported by accompanying data to quantify emergency response and/or measure the emergency response. Response experience is also useful to gauge the probability of adverse exposures related to the feature. **Figure 4-5.** follows the narrative ordering with a graphic, summary account of these features, the exposures they present and the emergency resource response capabilities defined by the Committee.

Target Features are:

A. Transportation Systems

1. Highway Corridors:

- Roads
- Intersections
- Bridges
- Culverts

Figure 4-6. is a Highway Corridor map for the Town of Mendon, including the Village of Honeoye Falls (Gates, 8.11.22).

Figure 4-7. is the *Village of Honeoye Falls Street Map, Revised October 19, 2005* locating: schools, Public Safety facilities, Village and Town Halls, Churches, Cemeteries, and the corporate boundary (Village website, 12.16.22). The Village road system, “... is the most important component of our transportation needs for not only our residents and visitors, but also for economic development. The Village has 14.2 center line miles of roads.” The Village’s roads are a combination of [nine] 9 center line miles on:

- *New York State Rights-of-Way:* Route 65 - North Main Street and Ontario Streets; Monroe Street; and,
- *Monroe County Rights-of-Way:* West Main Street, East Street and Maplewood Avenue.
- The remaining 5.2 center line miles are Village Rights-of-Way (Village 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update p.24).

Outside the Village, the Town has a similar combination of State, County and Town roads:

- *New York State Rights-of-Way:* 24.32 center line miles (includes Village);
- *Monroe County Rights-of-Way:* 36.68 center line miles (includes Village); and,

- *Town Rights-of-Way*: 44.12 center line miles (Caschetta, 10.17.22).

The table below indicates “Commuting Patterns in 2015,” provided by the U.S. Census Bureau *OnTheMap, 2015* (Town of Mendon Comprehensive Plan, p. 16), as an example of motorist travel related to work-related use our local highway system.

	Commute Into	Live & Work in Town (including Village)	Commute Out
Town of Mendon	2,610	669	3,957
Village of HF	1,536	211	1,182

To aid night-time travel, the Village highway system has street lights to illuminate the roads and sidewalk systems. The Town has a Lighting District in the Hamlet. There are overhead lights at many intersections throughout the Town to improve driver safety. And, there are numerous public and private sites that are lit at night.

Most of our highway corridors intersect as north-south meet east-west motorists. Traffic control devices include: 1-way STOP signs – mostly at “T” intersections; 2-way and 4-way STOP signs; YIELD signs to merge with oncoming traffic; a “Round About” at the intersection of NYS Routes 251 and 65; a flashing red STOP light signal in the Hamlet at the intersection of NYS Routes 251 and 64; and two conventional Traffic Signals (the Village 4-corners, and the intersection of NYS Route 15A and West Main Street).

Figure 4-8. is a New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) table, *Reported Crashes [Motor Vehicle Accidents] in the Town of Mendon*, from 2013 to May 31, 2022. These crashes are reported by Law Enforcement agencies and have occurred on any highway jurisdiction and/or intersection (NYSDOT, 9.21.22). The Freedom of Information request to NYSDOT, and their reply to the Town Supervisor is **Appendix 4-4**.

There are three (3) bridges on New York State Route 65 within the Village. They cross Honeoye Creek on North Main Street, East Street and Ontario Street.

Outside the Village, bridges cross:

- Honeoye Creek on Sibley Road and Plains Road;
- Spring Creek on Honeoye Falls #6 Road, NYS Route 15A and Monroe Street; and,
- Irondequoit Creek on NYS Routes 251 and 64 in the Hamlet of Mendon, and then with box culvert crossings on tributaries throughout the Town.

- The NYS Thruway (Interstate 90) has three (3) overpass bridges in the Town: West Bloomfield Road, Pittsford-Mendon Road (NYS Route 64), and Mile Square Road (refer to [Figure 4-6.](#)).

Culverts are pipe conveyances engineered to preserve the flow of water when the natural pathway is obstructed. They appear on public and private property across the geography of the entire Town, and convey drainage and small tributaries along their respective pathways assisting drainage beneath driveways, trail systems, parking lots and other travel corridors.

Some culverts are defined by the State’s Municipal Storm Water Management regulations as “Outfalls.” This program is administered by the Town Building Department. [Figure 4-9.](#) is a map of the Outfall Locations in the Town of Mendon, outside the Village (Gates, 10.12.22).

2. Trails.

In conjunction with Monroe County, the Town of Mendon constructed the Lehigh Valley Trail which follows the former Railroad Right-of-Way in a linear pathway east and west across the mid-section of the Town. Various paving products define its pathway. There are multiple at-grade intersections with the highway system and overpasses at water crossings. It is used by hikers, bikers, equestrians and snow mobiles as conditions permit. There are parking areas as points-of-entry and there are various accommodations primarily in the Hamlet and at Rochester Junction. Both Fire Departments are familiar with this trail system and have off-road apparatus and equipment to facilitate emergency response.

“Norton Trail” parallels Honeoye Creek from Harry Allen Park in the Village center to Rotary Park. There is a grade crossing with North Main Street (NYS Route 65). The trail is used for access to Honeoye Creek, to hike, for Nature and Environmental Classroom study, and as an optional pedestrian access to both parks. HFFD is familiar with this trail and the exposures it presents.

3. Flight Pathways.

The Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC), the National Guard Flight Facility and the (private) flight facility on Scottsville Road, bring a compliment of passenger, cargo and Military air traffic to the skies over the Town of Mendon.

ROC features a modern two-story terminal, enclosed parking garage and a two-level roadway with separate avenues for arrivals and departures. It is a small hub airport which handles approximately 120 flights per day with 19 non-stop destinations, serves approximately 2.4 million passengers annually, and houses the operations of 6 commercial air transportation providers and their affiliates (rocairport.com/info, 12.16.22). The Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) manages operations for air traffic control. Our geography is in the flight path for small fixed wing craft, private jet service, commercial jet service for passengers and freight transport, Military air assets and helicopter traffic.

The former private air strip on West Main Street in the Village was the site of several private plane crashes. HFFD was the First Response on each occurrence, assisted by Mutual Aid and Monroe County Airport Crash Rescue Fire resources. To the best of our knowledge and belief, there are no remaining private air strips in the Town.

4. Pipelines:

- Water
- Natural Gas
- Drainage
- Sanitary Sewer

The universal number 8-1-1 is tagged “Call Before You Dig.” It is a subscriber service for underground carriers and functions as a central answering point for the public and contractors who are planning to dig. The service alerts underground carriers to dispatch field representatives to identify their respective mains, curb box interfaces and lateral structure feed lines in an attempt to restrict utility disruptions, infrastructure damage and emergent conditions during excavation.

As shown on [Figure 3-28](#), the MCWA owns and maintains public water mains and a hydrant system in the Village and in portions of the Town. There are also yard hydrants and standpipes for Fire Department use. And, there are private water connections to various sources.

[Figure 4-10](#) maps Natural Gas transmission from National Fuel and RG&E within the Town (*Town of Mendon Utilities Master Plan*, p.2.7). The Empire Pipeline is also shown on this map. They have a transfer facility located in the Mendon Fire District. Liquid Propane is also used as a fuel source for home and business purposes and above ground storage tanks dot the landscape.

Underground drainage systems in the Village are indicated by the presence of drop inlets and catch basins in road rights-of-way. These systems generally convey storm run-off and ground water to prevent road damage from ponding water and the freeze-thaw cycle. Retention ponds to eliminate inundation of downstream systems are recent additions to some of these drainage systems. Underground drainage systems are also part of the Town’s infrastructure although most storm water collection is open, ditch-style conveyance from the roadway shoulder or via concrete gutters at the edge of the paved travel lane.

By Inter-municipal Agreement, the Town of Mendon is a participant in the Monroe County *Stormwater Management Program Plan* (Adopted, 8.20.09), and is a member of the County’s “Stormwater Coalition” whose mission is “to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent possible. “NYSDEC regulates stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems. This Plan provides policy and management guidance to Coalition members. The purpose is to maintain or improve water quality” (*Plan*, p.1). This Plan is functionally administered by the town’s Building Department for interface with developers, Engineers and the Town Planning Board (Gates, 8.29.22).

Sanitary Sewers are part of Village infrastructure. Sewer mains, manholes and pump stations are owned and maintained by the Village. All connecting laterals are owned and maintained by the property owner. Maps of the system are available from the Village. This system is separate from the Storm Water collection system, although it is susceptible to ground water infiltration. The Village routinely tests the system to eliminate water infiltration that does not require sanitary treatment. The Village has a Local Law for appropriate use, connections to the system and a user fee schedule.

B. Population Centers

1. Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District.

As depicted on **Figure 4-11**, the HF-L campus comprises three (3) academic buildings (Elementary, Middle and High Schools), a Transportation/Fleet Center and extensive Athletic Fields (Town of Mendon Comprehensive Plan, Town website, 12.17.22). Campus acreage is located in the Village and in the Town outside the Village. School driveways and parking facilities are accessed from Church Street, East Street and Paper Mill Streets in the Village, and from Quaker Meeting House Road in the Town. The original 1927 building that fronts East Street is three stories. The remaining High School building is a combination of two-story and one-story sections. The Elementary and Middle School buildings are one-story. Both the High School and the Middle School have Auditoriums. All buildings have gymnasiums, and there is a swimming pool at the High School. Each building has a main entrance with additional points-of-entry. Building occupancy varies by day of the week, time of day and the school calendar of holidays and events. The buildings and athletic fields are occupied year-round with community uses.

Public spaces are rated by the Municipal Fire Marshal for occupancy limits. School District land development and site plan review are outside local government jurisdiction: oversight is through the NYS Education Department. The District’s Board of Education is the local authority, and the District Superintendent is responsible for daily operations and community interface.

2. Retail Centers:

- Village
- Mendon Hamlet

The Village and the Hamlet of Mendon are the traditional centers of retail trade within the Town.

The business center of the Village is concentrated at the 4-corners, with several store fronts across the East Street Bridge. Some store fronts are occupied at street level, with residential occupancy on the upper floors. Some of the buildings are “Blocks” meaning they share adjoining walls while others are individual, side-by-side, single structures. Their construction is a mix of brick, wood-frame and cut stone. They have masonry foundations of concrete block, cobblestones and cut stone. Some foundations sit on bedrock, and some basement spaces extend under the sidewalk with hatch openings to facilitate delivery below the street grade. The “Blocks” are separated by alleys and/or driveways. Access is not available to all buildings on all sides. A few of the structures along Honeoye Creek are built to the stream bank and/or over the natural bank, leaving their “C” side exposure inaccessible to direct access by apparatus.

Beyond the business center, and the adjacent residential neighborhood, there is a plaza surrounded by individual retail and commercial buildings that front on West Main Street. This area has become the “hub” of retail business within the Village. This area is built to accommodate motorists with traffic configurations designed for vendor deliveries, customer parking, drive-up services and the movement of consumer purchases from store to home. Building code requirements for fire detection & suppression systems, standpipe connections, fire-stop construction, perpetual access to “Fire Lanes” and other fire safety measures act in concert with design features that offer multiple points of vehicle ingress and egress, wider travel corridors, marked parking spaces and paved surfaces surrounding the buildings that afford greater fire protection measures and better site characteristics for fire suppression operations.

The 4-corners of the Hamlet has a concentration of individual buildings zoned for business. They are a combination of former residential houses, stores/buildings constructed for commercial purposes, and retro-fits that have survived several iterations of commercial enterprise. They are a mix of old and new construction, one and two-story, wood-frame and various masonry products. Like the Village center buildings their foundations and basements, HV/AC, electric and plumbing systems are a mixture of products and mechanics across a time line of building practices, Municipal Building Codes and Inspections, and maintenance practices by the owners/occupants. Similarly, fire protection devices, suppression systems and building congestion present restrictions that challenge fire fighter operations.

The plaza/mall center, and the business development that surrounds it, are newer construction with features that support fire detection & suppression systems and have construction and design characteristics to facilitate the delivery of fire services.

3. Multi-Family Occupancy:

- Village apartment and condominium complexes
- Pinehurst Senior Living Center

Across the Town, there are multiple family dwellings: duplexes, single family houses converted into apartments, apartment units above retail and commercial spaces, In-Law apartments and others. However, multi-family occupancies defined for our purpose are multiple apartment units contained within a single building, either accessible through a common exterior entrance with separate access doors to each dwelling unit, or with each unit having private access from the exterior. These individual units are conventional apartment rentals and privately-owned condominiums within the Village. The buildings are two and three-stories. Individual units are either one level or townhouse-style two-story with a basement lower level. Some buildings are masonry and some are wood-frame construction. One development has separate garage structures while all others are outdoor parking only.

The Pinehurst Senior Living Center is part of a continuum of residential options within the Episcopal Senior Life Community. The two-story, brick building houses one and two-bedroom apartments for independent seniors. There is a common reception area for indoor access to all units. The first floor apartments have outdoor access at ground level, and the second floor apartments have outdoor balconies (most without exterior access to the ground level). The backside of the building above the underground parking garage is higher in elevation, giving the appearance of almost three stories. This area has some exterior staircases that serve multiple unit balconies. Each unit has a fully equipped kitchen, but rental fees require and include a daily evening meal prepared in the commercial kitchen and served restaurant style by wait staff in a large, common Dining Room. There is also outdoor parking for resident vehicles and visitors, a building generator and a loading dock. There is one elevator in the central reception foyer.

4. Gathering Venues:

- Churches/ Church Halls
- Restaurants
- Municipal Buildings
- Event spaces: indoor and outdoor
- Parks
- Recreation

The venues enumerated above appear throughout the Town. They are private and public operations with various amenities geared to their primary purpose(s). All indoor spaces where the public gather are rated for maximum capacity by the Village or Town Fire Marshal. And, some have required, annual, fire safety inspections by the Municipal Fire Marshal or the Fire Department.

Some of the Churches have “Halls” in their basement space, some are separate buildings on their property, and some are constructed additions to their sanctuary space. One church is in a former private recreation building, and one former church and its hall are a privately-owned Wedding Chapel and party venue. Several halls are used by the community for pre-school, fund-raising, and/or to augment amenities during festivals, concerts and other events.

The food service/restaurant businesses are diverse in menu options, dining space capacity, indoor/outdoor accommodations, business hours, take-out, curb service and delivery options. Some offer single food products, like ice cream or pizza, some are seasonal, and some have a Liquor License. These businesses occupy buildings that share the same fire safety components already presented.

Municipal buildings include Town Hall, Village Hall, two Fire Stations, the Public Library, the Mendon Youth Center, the Community Center, the Ambulance Base, the Museum, the Village Public Works and Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Town Highway Garage. (The School District buildings were presented separately.) These buildings house administrative offices and functions for the municipal governments and the Mendon Fire District. Some are also operational headquarters for personnel and equipment that deliver public services. The structures accommodate personnel needs associated with office requirements, house equipment and apparatus, and provide maintenance/repair facilities. Some have public meeting space, specialized communication equipment and various modes of technical infrastructure to facilitate their respective operations.

Event spaces are privately owned – some indoor and some outdoor. Aside from parks, outdoor spaces include the Mendon Carnival site, the HFFD Training Ground (leased from the Village), the pavilion at the Community Center and the Mendon Youth Baseball Fields in the Hamlet. The majority of indoor spaces are covered in other sections.

Parks are owned, managed and maintained by the Village, the Town, the County and in one park by a private organization, the Mendon Foundation. As shown on [Figure 4-12](#), the *Village of Honeoye Falls Parks/Open Space Map, October 8, 2013* (Village website, 12.16.22) Village Parks are:

- **Harry Allen Park**, in the Village Center featuring a Gazebo, the Scout Hall, School House and a playground with access to the Norton Trail;
- **Monroe Street Village Park**, outside the Village, with athletic fields, restrooms and a skateboard facility;
- **Clover Meadows Park**, at the corner of Clover Street (NYS Route 65) and Cheese Factory Road, is naturalized except for an area that is rented to residents for garden spaces; and,
- **Rotary Park**, off North Main Street along the Creek with athletic fields, a pavilion and other amenities. The winding driveway access may present a challenge to large vehicles. This property is within the flood plain.

As shown on **Figure 4-13. Town of Mendon Parks and Recreation** (map), Town facilities include:

- **Dreisbach Park** (Semmel Road), adjacent parcels both east and west of the Highway Garage, with athletic fields, tennis courts, a new Splash Park, and a Military Memorial;
- **Mendon Center** featuring tennis courts;
- **Great Bend Park** (Plains Road), featuring nature trails and scenic vistas; and,
- **Mendon Station Park**, in the Hamlet, and **Rochester Junction Park**, both along the Lehigh Valley Trail.

Monroe County Parks within the Town include:

- **Mendon Ponds** with extensive wild areas, multiple water features, trails, picnic spaces, open pavilions, cabin venues, grassed meadow spaces for year-round use and maintenance buildings for Parks personnel and equipment. The park also features an historic cobblestone house, a Nature Center, and the stable for the Sheriff's Mounted Unit.
- The **Lehigh Valley Trail** crosses east- west from border to border of the Town. It is a linear trail on the old Lehigh Valley Railroad Right-of-Way. The trail surface has a variety of surfaces and multiple grade crossings with the road system. It is used rear-round. It connects with other trails and has multiple points-of-entry with parking accommodations. There are amenities at two primary locations – in the Hamlet at Mendon Station Park and at Rochester Junction. There are bridge crossings with Honeoye Creek on the west side of Town and Irondequoit Creek in the Hamlet area. Park maintenance is substantially assisted by the Mendon Foundation.

Private recreation venues vary. Among them are:

- a Bowling venue in the Village;
- private horse stables and riding facilities;

- Sibleyville Nature Preserve;
- Mendon Racquet & Pool Club;
- Mendon Conservation League;
- Mendon Youth Baseball Fields;
- Mendon Country Club; and,
- The former Markus Park (*Town of Mendon Comprehensive Plan*, Town website, 12.17.22).

Water features are used for ice skating in the winter, and snowmobiles use trails and highway corridors as legally permitted. All recreational pursuits have the potential to require Emergency Services. And, depending on the activity and the location, factors associated with response time and access may be challenging.

C. Business & Manufacturing:

1. Mining
2. Fuel Storage
3. Hazardous Materials
4. Solar Farms
5. Agriculture

Gravel deposits have attracted mining operations on private property, but most sites are closed and naturalized over time, or more recently closed and restored according to NYSDEC regulations. Hanson Aggregates New York LLC, offers gravel, stone products, and asphalt materials to area contractors and Municipalities. This property is located in both the Town of Mendon and the Town of Rush, prompting dispatch of both HFFD and the Rush Fire Department to Fire Service calls.

Above and below ground fuel storage is regulated by NYSDEC. Sites include agricultural use, gas stations in the Village and the Hamlet, and Municipal facilities.

Hazardous Materials are present in chemicals used by local manufacturers, auto repair shops, gasoline and service stations, agriculture and in many household products. Most problems present in the storage and/or use of large volumes of these products. Federally regulated Hazardous Material users are required to file annual reports which are shared with local Fire Departments for response planning. **Figure 4-14.** is the *Town of Mendon EPOD #6, Waste Disposal Site Protection Overlay District* locating Municipal and privately owned waste disposal sites.

Solar Farms are applying for building permits and site plan review. There is an installation in the Town, accessible from Quaker Meeting House Road.

Agriculture use is prominent on tillable acreage within the Town. The number of farms continue to dwindle, but farmlands remain in active production through land rentals. In addition to traditional crop farms for grains, beans and hay production, there is a vineyard venue in Town, and fruit and vegetables in-season at local farm stands.

D. Water (built features):

1. Drainage Storage
2. Recreation
3. Reservoirs
 - Potable Supply
 - Dams

Engineered as a protective measure for downstream properties, storm water storage in Retention and Detention Ponds is primarily engineered for use in subdivision developments in both the Village and the Town. They are more prevalent on the Town's rural landscape. [Figure 4-15](#) is a map of the "Town of Mendon Retention Ponds." The roster of locations is [Appendix 4-5](#). (Gates, 10.12.22).

Recreation activity focused on water is pursued rear-round. Detention Ponds can be filled with water and attract nature observers, ice skaters and others. As with natural water features, there is exposure to dangerous ice and water conditions; and, because these ponds are part of a drainage system, there are outlet structures and flow conditions to consider.

The MCWA has a reservoir at the highest elevation in the Town. It is covered with a tarp, reducing exposures to MCWA employees who are trained in appropriate facility inspection and maintenance practices. MCWA property is off-limit to public use.

NYSDEC classifies, inspects and regulates dams. [Figure 4-16](#) is a 3-page roster of these dams noting their hazard classification and engineering specifications for storage capacity and discharge (Manning, 7.28.22). Please note that the dam structure locally referred as the "Lower Falls" on Honeoye Creek in the Village, is no longer viable for water storage, slightly increasing the flood potential on Hyde Park (Village Right-of-Way, one-way street) and for downstream properties.

Some of the dams on the roster are functional parts of drainage systems and are defined as "dams" by NYSDEC because the engineering and operational use of the containment is consistent with NYSDEC "Dam" regulatory identification and function (Manning, 7.28.22).

Natural Features

As with the Target Features, Natural Features also present a risk factor to the Committee. They too are identified with brief narratives and, in some cases, supported by accompanying data to quantify emergency response and/or measure the emergency response. Response experience is again useful to gauge the probability of adverse exposures related to the feature. [Figure 4-17](#). follows the narrative ordering with a graphic, summary account of these features, the exposures they present and the emergency response capabilities required by these calls.

Some Natural feature are tracked, cataloged and calculated for the degree of risk they present to the public. Information and real-time data is gathered from weather stations, gauges, spotters and Emergency Responders for reports to Meteorologists and other agencies that assess conditions and assign a level of risk for public awareness and suggest appropriate action to minimize adverse exposure. We are most familiar with National Weather Service assignments for these conditions and their delivery by broadcasters as “Advisories, Watches and/or Warning” messages.

The history of Natural Feature emergency events for Monroe County and the Town of Mendon are catalogued, monetized and discussed in the *Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan, adopted May 9, 2017*, and currently under review and revision. Chapters 9.14 for the Village of Honeoye Falls and 9.16 for the Town of Mendon are [Appendix 4-6](#). and [Appendix 4-7](#). respectively.

Aside from the emergency threat potential, several of these features are identified as natural resources with local legislative protection designed “to provide special controls over land development in sensitive environmental areas to protect vital features and resources.

“[In the Village], the rules and regulations protecting these areas were enacted in 1991, updated in 2019 and are in Article 23 of the Zoning Code (Chapter 190 of the Village Code)” (2022 Village Comprehensive Plan, p.34). The extent and location of these five (5) Environmental Protection Overlay Districts (EPOD) is mapped on [Figure 4-18](#). (Village map dated 3.4.22).

The *Town of Mendon Open Space, Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Adopted 1.8.01)*, is an inventory of natural resources and features that provides a base for the Town’s EPOD designations and regulations. The EPOD Maps reflect local legislation to protect sensitive environmental areas. These maps each represent an individual feature and are noted in the narratives below.

Natural Features are:

A. Water

1. Streams & Tributaries:
 - Honeoye Creek
 - Irondequoit Creek
 - Spring Creek
2. Wetlands

The streams and tributaries within the Town flow north to Lake Ontario. As depicted on [Figure 4-19](#), there are two watersheds within the geography of the Town: the Genesee River and Irondequoit Bay Watersheds (Town of Mendon Comprehensive Plan, Town website, 12.17.22). As natural features, these water courses are used for recreation by children and adults for activities such as hiking, fishing, ice skating, observing nature and watercraft adventure. These uses are accessed from the shores of both public and private properties. From season to season these courses change by volume and by current characteristics. These changes can be dramatic with rain swells, snow melt and ice thaw. Primary Fire Department calls are for rescue. Some calls become recovery events.

[Figure 4-20](#) is the “Town of Mendon, EPOD #3 *Watercourse Protection Overlay District*” map (Gates, 8.11.22).

Wetland features attract bird watchers and other nature observers who are also subject to risks associated with the presence of water.

[Figure 4-21](#) is the “Town of Mendon, EPOD #1 *Wetland Protection Overlay District*” map (Gates, 8.11.22).

B. Flooding

1. Flash Flood
2. Waterway Flooding:
 - Flood Plains
 - Floodways

Flash Flooding is a rapid occurrence when a surge of water presents in an unexpected location and poses a danger. For example, an ice jam or debris tangle on a stream interrupts the downstream flow, diverting water above the natural bank until the jam is breached and the water returns to the stream corridor. The major threats are to motorists along roadways that parallel the stream corridor, especially at night, and to children who may be drawn to the presence of water in an unusual location. Although the flooding inflow may seem to creep in elevation, the outflow of water can be swift and overcome a wader’s footing.

Waterway Flooding is more predictable given the usual occurrences of weather and local drainage behavior that feed the volume of our stream corridors. When there is too much water for containment within stream banks, our built retention and detention ponds, and/or for soil absorption, we experience degrees of flooding. Agricultural flooding varies with soil conditions as depicted on [Figure 4-22](#). the “Town of Mendon, EPOD #9 *Soils Susceptible To Ponding Overlay District*” map (Gates, 8.11.22).

Floodways and Flood Plains are determined and mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). [Figure 4-23](#). the “Town of Mendon, EPOD #8 *Flood Damage Prevention Overlay District*” map (Gates, 8.11.22), consolidates FEMA’s multiple map segments for the Town and targets the local threat potential for life safety, property damage and environmental harm. Please note that Honeoye Creek is tagged as a “USGS Stream,” meaning there is a Federal Gauge Station that continuously monitors and records the stream elevation. Stream elevations have downstream implications and they are considered by Hydrologists in calculating and predicting potential flood conditions. Readers should also be aware that the Lower Dam on Honeoye Creek no longer exists to provide storage capacity as a viable protective factor for the downstream landscape.

Flooding is New York State’s #1 hazard. Although events can be predicted, properties, agricultural production and businesses can be insured for loss, mitigation projects can be built to protect property, and public alerting and warning outreach is deployed, human behavior is a major determinate for life safety outcomes. Human behavior is the key to successful outcomes in every emergency condition.

C. Weather

1. Blizzard
2. Ice Storm
3. Wind
4. Hurricane

Significant weather events typically involve local municipal resources that may work in concert with Emergency Services to clear transportation corridors, other public rights-of-way and/or easements to allow access for Fire Departments and other First Responders.

Some of our weather events are seasonal and others can occur year-round as weather patterns present. “Blizzard” conditions are defined by the National Weather Service. Ice Storms and Wind events vary in magnitude and range anywhere from nuisance conditions to major events with power outages, prolonged debris clean-up and/or infrastructure restoration.

Aside from Hurricane Agnes (1972), our local experience with Hurricanes is generally fringe exposures to precipitation and wind.

Presidential Disaster Declarations deploy FEMA assets to affected areas. [Figure 4-24](#). quantifies these declarations by Region and County from 1954 to September 2021. [Figure 4-25](#). monetizes these declarations for Monroe County from 1992 to April 20, 2009 with a note about the March 1991 Ice Storm.

And, [Figure 4-26](#). catalogs activations of the Monroe County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from 1992 to January 12, 2010 to indicate Natural and Target Feature-driven emergencies that require significant local, County, State and Federal resources across the spectrum from readiness (planning, training, exercising), response, recovery (built and natural landscape restoration, monetary reimbursement) and mitigation (installation of protective measures, revision to readiness measures based on experience). This Figure also contains a chart that separates the duration of the EOC activations for Natural and Target (“Technological”) Features. Readers should note that of the recorded 544.45 hours, 496 hours were in response to Natural Feature emergencies, while 48.45 hours responded to Target Feature emergencies. Although generally predictable, the Natural Features tend to be widespread and require cooperation and coordination of multiple public and private resources. Three of the six noted Target Features were local alarms with Special Operations Team request or protocol-driven EOC activation. The other three activations were requested by the County Executive (Monroe County OEM, 8.1.22).

D. Earthquake

Monroe County, and our local landscape, have measured Earthquake activity. We have not suffered widespread damage, but there has been glass breakage and foundation disturbance in some older buildings. Seismic activity is detected and registered locally by sensors at sensitive structures and at one of our Universities.

E. Woodlots/Woodlands

[Figure 4-27](#). is the “Town of Mendon, EPOD #7 *Woodlot and Timber Harvesting Protection Overlay District*” map (Gates, 8.29.22).

These features overlay private and public property. Public access is usually via parkland and the trail system. These features draw people for recreational pursuits and they may be co-located with other Natural Features like stream corridors for example. The emergent conditions can be human needs like EMS or rescue, and/or fire sparked by natural causes, “wires down” or human behavior.

Chapter 5. RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

When you call 9-1-1 for help, you expect qualified responders and equipment will respond in a timely manner (Committee Meeting Minutes, 12.14.22).

The shortage of volunteer staffing and its challenges is the emergent aspect that led the Town Board to create this Citizens Advisory Committee and examine Fire Protection services within the Town. Staffing, together with other resources, must be considered if Fire Protection services are to remain viable and sustainable for our community.

The number of active members on both Department rosters influence the capacity of timely and effective response and may adversely impact the purposeful intentions of our governing authorities and the volunteers who serve our community.

RE: Staffing.

We know that:

- membership numbers are trending down...**Figures 3-1 and 3-1A.**; and,
- that recruitment numbers do not equate to retention...**Figure 3-2.** As indicated, in the last five (5) years, the average retention for HFFD has dropped to 2.01 years, and 2.42 years for MEND.

Figures 3-7. and 3-8. share a consistent, reliable and predictable response from both Department memberships across their five (5) call types, with the average response below the “Effective Manpower Response” recommended by NFPA and/or the Departments. In all cases, the percent of active member response to any of the call types is below 22% as calculated by the Departments. There are a number of critical tasks that must be accomplished on each call for a safe, effective response. Industry standards are guidelines that suggest the number of trained responders required for an effective response for the respective call type. In no situation does either department believe it is safe or appropriate for any member to respond on their own to any type of emergency.

Responder turn-out can be attributed to a number of factors, but training is an objective measurement in having an appropriate number of responders to emergency calls. As shown on **Figures 3-5. and 3-6.** not all responders are cross-trained on every functional operation or command position. Aside from functional firematic training, there are training requirements for members who wish to achieve Officer ranks. “When compared with the memberships’

training certification and the staffing standards suggested for call response, there are ‘serious concerns as to who will have the necessary knowledge to be Chief of the [HFFD] Department in ten (10) years’ ” (Meeting Minutes, 11.9.22).

As noted from Department data on [Figures 3-16.](#) and [3-17.](#) calls for service are trending in an upward direction. Given that call volumes are rising and the number of active members continues in a downward trend, Department leadership recognizes a need to bridge their staffing gaps to fulfill community expectations. They have focused on critical incident planning and strive to attain additional staff by engaging:

- [conventional] Mutual Aid...a request for temporary assistance on a one-time basis; and,
- Mutual Assistance...planned and agreed automatic dispatch from an assisting department. The data on both of these strategies is on [Figures 3-12.](#) and [3-13.](#)

The Departments indicate that assistance employing these means are trending upward both for the assistance they give and receive. The use of Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance bring an increase in response times as neighboring departments face similar member shortfalls. The use of Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance may bring varying standard operating procedures and there is an inherent expectancy factor that is not predictable as these measures rely on another department’s availability and training. Although these arrangements may increase the number of responders, they generally do not decrease the response time for arrival at the scene of the emergency.

[Figure 3-10.](#) indicates the Departments typically assisting HFFD and MEND on their calls. HFFD and MEND assist each other across their jurisdictions on calls within the Town of Mendon.

[Figure 3-11.](#) indicates the shared calls per this arrangement more than doubled from 2021 to 2022.

Mutual Aid requests bring additional personnel and apparatus that integrate with the requestor’s assets. New York State “Mutual Aid” statutes define legal and liability parameters associated with this practice. Mutual Assistance is pre-arranged mutual aid and its agreement entails an automatic dispatch of the other department’s assets. As planned, deliberate requests, this arrangement is contractual and the governing authorities should review these procedures with their respective Attorney to assure administrative approval and process.

HFFD data on [Figure 3-26.](#) provides a baseline of response time using apparatus response. And, [Figure 3-27.](#) indicates Mendon’s response times are trending upward. Response time is consistently listed as a major factor in the outcomes of emergencies. The time it takes for members to assemble and deploy to an incident has a direct impact on an effective response

for individuals and our community. For both Departments, decreasing membership and increasing reliance on assistance from other departments equates to longer response times.

Committee members representing Elected Officials noted:

Another significant draw on manpower are EMS calls. Ambulances are taking a significant amount of time to arrive to a call, [and] there is the concern of how much time the call takes a volunteer away from home and things they have to do (Meeting Minutes, 12.14.22).

As indicated on **Figures 3-7.** and **3-8.** both Departments respond to EMS calls. NOTE: Our Charge does not specifically relate to Ambulance Service, but since both Departments respond to EMS calls, EMS concerns may be relevant as the Committee considers “Modeling” and the Town Board considers sustainable Fire Protection services.

The lack of public water supply in some areas of the Town presents a major challenge to contain and suppress fire. In order to establish a temporary water system for fire suppression, significant additional responders are required as a “tanker task force.” One (1) “Tanker Task Force” response has both HFFD and MEND with pre-arranged Mutual Assistance requests for 5-6 additional pieces of apparatus.

RE: Apparatus and Equipment.

Figures 3-14. and **3-15.** enumerate and define apparatus fleets for both HFFD and MEND. **Figures 4-5.** and **4-17.** illustrate how equipment and apparatus are assigned to community needs. Committee consensus is that our equipment and apparatus inventories are appropriate for community needs identified on both the Target and Natural Feature figures.

Both Department fleet inventories have a predictable and practical life expectancy. Maintenance is driven by testing requirements and signs of wear from normal and usual use. Expendables are replaced as needed.

Maintenance and replacement require financial capacity. Both Departments have annual budgets determined by the Village and the Mendon Fire District for usual and necessary operations. **Figure 3-39.** illustrates the Capital Reserve Funds established by both authorities. Aside from these Reserve Funds, neither authority has a formal Capital Budget for apparatus replacement.

RE: Financial Capacity.

Real property tax is the major revenue source for both the Village and the Mendon Fire District. As shown on [Figures 3-32., 3-33. and 3-34.](#) the rate per thousand cost ratio is almost 2:1 for the Mendon Fire District measured with the Village and the Fire Protection District.

New York State determines the maximum indebtedness for a Village, Town and Fire District. [Figure 3-36.](#) calculates this amount for our Committee purpose only. Please note, the numbers expressed on this table are not in real time, although they are reasonable for our purpose and illustration. [Figure 3-35.](#) shows the current indebtedness for the Town and the Village, and [Appendices 3-3. and 3-4.](#) are the Bond & Payment Schedules for the Village and the Town.

Both the Village and the Fire District solicit Grants to augment appropriations. [Figures 3-37. and 3-38.](#) inventory the awards and their use for the Mendon Fire District and the Village.

The Village, the Mendon Fire District and the Mendon Fire Department have Real Property assets as shown on the inventory, [Figure 3-40.](#)

The New York State Comptroller rates “Fiscal Stress” for local governments. The 2021 Report is [Appendix 3-8.](#) Scores for both the Village and Town are ranked, “No Designation,” as aligned and evaluated using the Comptroller’s Fiscal Stress factors.

RE: Governance and Jurisdiction.

Staffing concerns expressed to the Mendon Town Supervisor, led the Town Board to create this Citizens Advisory Committee. The Committee’s research aimed to address the Board’s assigned Charges. As we progressed through the process, we noted similarities and disparities in the approach to administering and providing Fire Protection service within the Town’s boundary.

Chapter 2 identifies the three (3) general purpose local governments providing Fire Protection services within the Town of Mendon: the Village of Honeoye Falls; Mendon Fire District; and, the Town of Mendon, as the Town Board is the governing authority for Mendon Fire Protection District #1. This configuration endows fifteen (15) Elected Officials with administrative authority, five (5) representing each separate jurisdiction. Their approach varies for policy, finances and other decisions related to Fire Protection within their separate territories.

The whole of the Town’s geography is served by two (2) Fire Departments: HFFD and MEND. HFFD is a municipal department of the Village and serves the Village and two (2) fire protection districts under contract with the Town of Mendon and the Town of West Bloomfield. MEND serves the Mendon Fire District.

Local government authority to provide fire protection, and the current capacity to deliver service based on local needs, focused Committee attention on our collective ability to meet community expectations.

RE: Community Expectations.

A review of comprehensive plans and studies for the Village and Town generally lack meaningful focus for this Committee. Emergency Services are considered in specific, single-purpose documents as they were contracted by the Village, Town and/or Mendon Fire District and enumerated on [Figure 5-1](#).

Comprehensive plans reveal that the community's preference for Mendon's rural character remains steadfast. Remarks recognize that technology has changed the way we live and that Demographic shifts evolve with time (Mendon Comprehensive Plan, Introduction).

From the Village 2014 Comprehensive Plan – “Key Relevant Recommendations” include:

- “Increase a variety of living options available to senior citizens
- “Ensure new residential development fosters interconnected street patterns
- “Ensure adequate infrastructure to accommodate new and existing commercial and industrial uses
- “Support efforts to increase amount of locally produced food available to residents
- “Focus stewardship efforts on the health of Honeoye Creek
- “Strengthen relationships with surrounding municipalities to pursue common goals” (as expressed in the Mendon Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2.8.21, p. 8).

Among the documents on [Figure 5-1](#). that consider Emergency Services are various models of authorities, recommendations for consolidations of services, suggestions for apparatus and equipment inventories, and considerations for financial priorities and capital improvements.

Given the lack of focus on Emergency Services in the Comprehensive documents, and recognizing that our status quo remains intact despite recommendations offered in the documents that consider Emergency Services, the Committee focus remains committed to the opening statement at the top of this Chapter, engaging our research and data to guide recommendation(s) for Town Board consideration.

As the Committee reviewed the research data and the information available to us from HFFD and MEND, we objectively observe:

- Similarities in staffing patterns – decreasing membership and retention.
- Common call types with upward trends in the number of each of the five general (5) types identified by the Departments.
- An increase in response times.
- Department movement to standardize specifications for personal, firematic equipment, e.g. air packs, allowing ease of function and facilitating resource sharing on the fire ground.
- Comparable apparatus inventories in number and function of the vehicles. Distinct apparatus, e.g. ladder truck, tanker/tender, augment each Department’s inventory for resource sharing and reduce duplication.
- A “joint” approach to training. The Departments are scheduling more opportunities to work together to gain familiarity among their memberships, and to gain confidence in each other’s abilities allowing smooth interface as they assist each other’s calls.
- More reliance on Mutual Aid and Mutual Assistance/automatic dispatch.
- Response to each other’s calls on a more frequent and routine basis as demonstrated on emergency calls within the Town which more than doubled from 2021 to 2022.
- A community needs assessment that indicates parallel Natural Features across the jurisdictions, and similar Target Features with exception mainly in the Village setting that has more “urban” features associated with infrastructure, housing stock and commercial sizing.
- The Mendon Fire District does not incur debt in its usual approach to capital purchases.
- A 2:1 ratio on the cost of Fire Protection services within the Town’s border.
- Although the Property Tax Exemption available to volunteers is adopted by both the Village and the Town, other financial incentives for the volunteer memberships are disparate, e.g. LOSAP (a financial retirement plan).
- Both the Village and the Fire District employ a day-time worker with assigned administrative responsibilities.

The Committee Charge to “Identify the current capacity to deliver Fire Protection within the Town” is complete.

PART III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Decision makers must minimize the [adverse] consequences of emergencies by aligning fire department resources with community risks/hazards (Urban Fire Forum, p. 11).

Chapter 6. TRENDS and PROJECTIONS AFFECTING FIRE PROTECTION

The volunteer staffing decline expressed to Mendon Town Supervisor, John Moffitt by our Department Chiefs is not unique to us, our neighboring communities, our region, New York State or the nation. Our experience is documented in previous chapters, echoed by others and chronicled throughout a literature review.

From 1998 to 2021, the number of volunteer firefighters in New York decreased from 110,000 to 75,000, a 31% drop. More than three-quarters of volunteer fire departments have fewer firefighters than they did two decades ago. During that same period, calls increased by 29%. John D'Alessandro, secretary of FASNY, told THE CITIZEN that the complexity of the calls is also increasing and there are other demands for service. 'While all those things are happening, we're being asked to address it with less and less people... .' Riley Shurtleff, Cayuga County Emergency Services Director...explained that the decreasing number of volunteer firefighters occurred 'as economic changes and social model shifts have caused many people to be less inclined to serve their communities at all, let alone for no pay as a volunteer in a position that is both physically and emotionally taxing' " (Harding, D & C. 1.21.23).

The trends described in this newspaper article are not new, but they are severely impacting most volunteer Departments across New York State, to the point "...wherein the lack of capacity is affecting emergency response capabilities. Today, volunteer fire departments are struggling to recruit new members and retain existing ones, a challenge further compounded by increased operational responsibilities beyond fire protection to include vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, hazardous material spills, and weather-related rescue operations. The training necessary to safely and effectively perform these responsibilities has increased as has the time commitments expected of a volunteer. ...The lack of available volunteer firefighters across the state has real public safety impacts - jeopardizing the protection of people and property in our local communities. Many fire departments across New York State are struggling to maintain minimum staffing levels and are routinely relying upon mutual aid assistance to respond to emergencies safely and effectively." (NYSHSES, 12/2022, p. 3).

There is familiarity with trends and projections affecting fire protection whether they are expressed and/or “studied” at a national, state, regional, county or local level. Fire Fighter associations, state departments, think tanks and other organizations advocate for various aspects of concern, revealing there is no “one size fits all” or single overlay solution. However, there are opportunities for assistance to improve staffing, address financial challenges and streamline administration. Committee members are familiar with many of the “improvement” initiatives suggested by these entities. Among these practices are those already visible within our Departments and utilized by the Town, the Village and the Fire District:

- Mutual Aid/Mutual Assistance (automatic dispatch)
- Monroe County delivery of NYS Fire Training Courses and Inter-Department training sessions
- Firefighter recruitment and retention benefits, incentives and programs, i.e. Town and Village property tax exemptions; Personal Federal tax credits; the LOSAP Program
- Multiple grant opportunities from national, state and private sector sources
- Compatible equipment purchases
- Volunteer duty shift assignments
- Paid, civilian employees for weekday assistance
- Community activities to engage the public and promote awareness of local service.

Yet, ...volunteer fire departments [struggle] to provide the same level of service with fewer volunteers. [And, they and their Officials] must balance the increased cost and need to maintain an appropriate, level service with the public’s expectation of service and cost. Many fire departments are facing a crossroad and should take a systematic approach to determining what is best for the public.

Exploration of consolidation and shared services may prove beneficial to identifying efficacies while assuring the delivery of quality service. Consolidation and shared services offer opportunities to increase cost-effectiveness by eliminating unnecessary and costly duplication of resources, maximize use of limited personnel, and improve response times while maintaining the efficient and effective delivery of services (NYSHSES, 12/2022, p. 11).

Figure 6-1. is a reprint of *TABLE 3* of Parshall’s Report (pp. 29-30). We use it to “summarize...fire district consolidation and fire protection [across New York State]. Most of these studies review the baseline of existing service delivery and consider a range of options from shared services (operational consolidation) to full, structural consolidation involving the consolidation and/or dissolution of fire districts. Such studies...typically identify the potential savings and pitfalls of a range of alternative service delivery options” (Parshall, p.28).

If we look at the governance of Fire Protection within Monroe County, [Figure 6-2](#) reveals:

- 23 Fire Districts - one of which is a Joint Fire District (Wheatland-Scottsville);
- 4 Municipal Departments (HFFD among them); and,
- 5 Fire Protection Districts (not including Mendon Fire Protection District #1).

A closer review of governance and administrative changes in Monroe County is provided in Parshall's Report:

"Ridge Culver Fire District.

"In 2019, the Center for Governmental Research (CGR) performed a consolidation study for the five fire districts serving the Town of Irondequoit. Among the various options considered was maintaining the status quo, creating a single fire district, the creation of two fire districts, or the creation of multiple fire districts (including the merger of Ridge Culver and Laurelton). The adjacency and mutual aid agreements of Ridge Culver and Laurelton had led to multiple consolidation conversations over the years. Both districts relied on a blend of paid and volunteer firefighters and were confronting similar challenges with fewer volunteers, declining assessed property values, and an aging membership. In 2022, both fire district boards enacted resolutions to make the consolidation official. The creation of the new Irondequoit Fire District is anticipated to result in 5 percent reduction in the aggregate operational budgets of the former FDs (saving \$1.9 million in FY 2023) and is anticipated to lower taxes for the residents of both former districts. Other advantages identified included a larger combined fund balance, reduced insurance and liability costs, reduced personnel and administrative costs, and greater decision-making efficiency for the area served" (p. 34).

"Town of Brighton.

"Fire protection services for the West Brighton Fire Protection District (WBFPD) had been the subject of multiple studies in 1993, 2001, and 2002. In 2009, Brighton received [a Local Government Efficiency, LGE]...grant from the state for additional study. The studies had flagged the rising costs, declining number of volunteers, and resulting dysfunction of the volunteer-based West Brighton Fire Department (WBFD). In 2011, when the town renegotiated with the WBFD, the contract stipulated that upon the contract's expiration, equipment and cash reserves of the department would transfer to the town. The WBFD challenged the contract as invalid, setting off what would be a years-long legal dispute between the town and fire department over money and control of apparatus/access to the station house.

"In 2012, the Town of Brighton terminated its contract with the WBFD as the primary services provider for the WBFPD (the protection district), opting instead to enter into an arrangement with the Rochester Fire Department (RFD). The arrangement added to the frictions with the WBFD, as volunteer firefighters, wishing to continue their service to their community, clashed with staffing of West Brighton station houses with full-time paid firefighters. In support, the

WBFD citizens initiated a referendum to dissolve the WBFPD that was approved by a margin of 459-78 on August 28, 2012. While the dissolution vote did not negate the contract with the RFD, it forced the town to reconsider fire protection services for the WBFPD. In February 2013, the town amended and approved a dissolution plan for the eventual dissolution of the WBFPD, with services being taken over by the adjacent Henrietta Fire District (HFD). However, implementation of the plan was stymied by the ongoing legal wrangling between the WBFD and the town, which only concluded in 2019 when the courts upheld the dissolution of the fire department under the Not-For-Profit Law.

“The consolidation of the WBFPD and HFD was finally implemented effective January 1, 2022, by action of the town board (dissolving the West Brighton Fire Protection District) and by resolution of the board of the Henrietta Fire District (expanding the boundaries to include the area of the former protection district). The expansion and growth of the HFD necessitated the hiring of additional paid firefighters to service the area. The former West Brighton Fire Protection District Station 2 is now Henrietta Fire District Station 7” (p. 35).

Hamlin Fire District.

“In 2013, the Town of Hamlin (Monroe County) consolidated three fire districts (FDs) into one, merging the former Hamlin, Morton, and Walker Fire Districts into the Hamlin Morton Walker Fire District. The consolidation was undertaken following a study conducted by the Rochester-based consulting firm, the Center for Governmental Research (CGR). The three voluntary fire departments that contracted with the former districts were not, however, dissolved or consolidated—as incorporated fire companies, they each retain their own officers, conduct separate meetings, and engage in separate fundraising activities. Follow-up reporting indicates that consolidation aided in necessary station house renovations, bolstered the recruitment and retention of volunteers, and inspired interest from neighboring fire districts. In addition to the original study grant (2009), the Hamlin Fire District was awarded \$321,595 to assist in the implementation of the merger and to maximize tax payer savings” (p.37).

Wheatland-Scottsville Joint Fire District.

The Wheatland-Scottsville Joint Fire District was created on August 4, 2020 by the Wheatland Town Board and the Village of Scottsville Board of Trustees.

There was consideration and a report conducted in 2009, a special advisory committee report in 2013 and the current 2019-2020 planning sessions. All these activities were driven by the concern in volunteer recruitment, increased costs of doing business and a long-range perspective of how to continue to provide service locally. In our Town and in our Village, one must also determine what is a reasonable response time to any emergency event whether it be fire or medical. The question became, how can we best continue to take care of ourselves in the most appropriate manner?

It was determined that we have the positive opportunity to continue to provide local service, with local volunteers, paid for by the same people who currently pay for the service. The only change is administrative. The current debt will eventually be transferred to the newly created district and out of the Village budget, the debt remains paid for by the same people as now, the equipment which was paid for by the same people is turned over to the district to serve the same people, the clerical services paid to the Village front office is instead paid to a district treasurer/secretary. Again, merely a 'redesign' and not a fundamental change. There is no impact on service delivery.

The newly created district answers directly to the people of the Village and people of the current Wheatland Fire Protection District without going through the Village government as is currently the process. The residents served by the joint district will vote on commissioners who develop the budget and plan for future needs.

Historically, fire departments across New York State are moving to the district model and not remaining under Villages. It is anticipated that the proposed joint district will provide increased accountability to the public, will be more transparent to the taxpayer (currently is within the Village budget and bills), is required to be audited by NYS annually (is not true in the current design), and better enable planning for the future (Dobson, 8.4.20, pp. 1-3).

NOTE: All Legal Notices and Public Hearings regarding the creation of this Joint Fire District are available in [The Sentinel](#) archives.

Both HFFD and MEND engage Mutual Aid Departments outside of Monroe County:

Town of Avon Fire District (Livingston County)...was created by the Town of Avon and changed the jurisdiction of previous service under contract from the Village of Avon, and a Fire Protection District with the East Avon Fire Department.

"Town of Victor (Ontario County).

"The Town of Victor had received an LGE grant in 2015 to fund a review of EMS and fire services in the village. Fire service protection was provided by the Village of Victor Municipal Fire Department, which covered the village as well as town-outside-of village territory through the Victor Fire Protection District. The Fishers Fire District (operating out of two station houses) covered other areas of the town.

"A proposal to create a joint town-village fire district was launched in 2017, attempting to build off the existing service sharing and joint purchase of equipment. The consolidation would have assisted in the recruitment of volunteers and equalized the tax assessments within the new district. In 2018, the board of commissioners of the Fishers Fire District voted against the merger, leaving the town and village in talks over a joint town-village fire district. While the town board and supervisor expressed support, the village board and residents (who would have

faced higher taxes) remained skeptical. The dissolution of the Village of Victor Fire Department and creation of the joint district was put to a referendum and approved by village voters, 210–94” (Parshall, p. 36).

“Regardless of the mechanisms or means, in order to continue to safely and effectively protect the communities it serves, the volunteer fire service of New York State must continue to evolve to address its staffing challenges” (NYSHSES, p. 13).

The cases cited in this chapter reflect affirmative actions by local Elected Officials and Fire Departments to create opportunities for delivering and sustaining Fire Protection services in their communities. Local people taking local actions to best suit and serve local needs.

Chapter 7. MODELING FOR SUSTAINABLE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Chapters 2 through 5, document Fire Protection governance, the resources in-hand to deliver Fire Protection services, the risks, vulnerabilities and exposures within the Town, and challenges to Fire Department operations for both HFFD and MEND. Chapter 6 highlights “Trends and Projections” affecting our neighboring communities together with their actions to preserve and sustain Fire Protection services for their constituents.

Our research and deliberation is chronicled in our Report. In Chapter 7, we use this information to fulfill *Resolution 22-150, #3*, and recommend a, “...*jurisdictional model that can expect to sustain a service level commensurate with the needs assessment* [identified for the Town].

New York State structures Fire Protection in four (4) jurisdictional options, as depicted on the illustration in Chapter 2:

- Municipal
- Fire District
- Fire Protection District
- Joint Fire District (OSC Report, March 2017 p. 3)

As depicted on **Figure 7-1**, our current model includes three (3) of these options each presenting Town taxpayers with independent, autonomous boards of Elected Officials; and, two (2) Fire Departments: Mendon delivering service within the Mendon Fire District, and HFFD serving the Village and two (2) Fire Protection Districts (Mendon #1 and North Bloomfield). Although the Town of West Bloomfield and its North Bloomfield Fire Protection District is not within Committee purview, models may consider integrating their Fire Protection District, or continue a contract-based service, if they opt to continue fire service delivery from our locale.

Both HFFD and MEND Departments have initiated Mutual Assistance/automatic dispatch agreements with neighboring Department Chiefs to expedite response and gain staff to improve the delivery of fire protection services throughout the entire Town of Mendon. The Departments have accomplished this and other firematic initiatives without a governance change, yet they remain stymied to gain Department membership to sustain a safe, effective response to emergency calls. Their fire protection gains are operational and confined to Department Officer authority.

The Town gives this Committee an opportunity to recommend a governance model(s) for Fire Protection with the capacity to improve resources and offer sustainable service delivery. While

structural change to our current governance model requires thoughtful deliberation and an associated legal process, there is opportunity to gain relief from emergent staffing challenges and current financial pressure, together with opportunity to position our community for the next evolution in Fire Protection Services.

The Committee recommends a Town-wide consolidation to create a single district for Fire Protection governance and Fire Service delivery.

The Town of Mendon, the Village of Honeoye Falls and the Mendon Fire District are autonomous, independent governments and cannot act of behalf of one another. Such change would require cooperation from each jurisdiction, and would become a “Joint Fire District” as authorized by New York State statutes for Towns, Villages and Fire Districts. This is the District terminology ascribed when Town jurisdictions and Village(s) consolidate their respective Fire Protection Services. As contiguous territories, the Town of Mendon, on behalf of their Fire Protection District, the Village of Honeoye Falls and the Mendon Fire District may consolidate as a “Joint Fire District.”

Figure 7-2. depicts the alternatives in a Town-wide District model in the same format as our current governance model, Figure 7-1. for cross reference and illustrative purposes.

Among other advantages, consolidation in a Town-wide District offers:

Administration.

- This recommendation achieves a single governance authority from the three (3) current governing authorities.
- Fire Protection is the single focus of the Elected District Officials.
- Districts have authority to merge and consolidate with contiguous Districts.
- A District structure has authority to expand a regional planning approach to address staffing and sustainable funding among other service delivery requirements.

Fire Service Delivery.

- There is no change in the territory served by the existing structure.
- Contracts for Fire Service can be extended to other jurisdictions or, conversely engaged for the District territory if desired.
- The Fire Department structure could be negotiated, e.g. HFFD and MEND could each become a Company serving the new District.

Financial Considerations.

- The District model aggregates the full assessed value of all property within the Town. NOTE: The District could establish one rate per thousand for all taxpayers, or: “A Fire District may differently assess taxation for fire services within the district...based on operational costs; [and,] properties may be assessed differently within the district to reflect differences in providing services to different areas of the district (Town Law, Section 176(27))” (Parshall, pp. 11-12). This option could address the current indebtedness for the Village and keep this expense with the properties currently within the Village and Mendon Fire Protection District #1.
- A District offers “cost-centered” transparency as monetary activities account revenue dedicated and balanced with Fire Protection appropriations.
- Consolidation removes the current Mutual Aid liability that currently exists when HFFD and MEND respond together on Fire Service calls within the Town.
- “As of 2022, state law allows fire departments to recover...the costs associated with providing EMS ambulance transportation” and, to practice third-party billing, “as a means of easing budget pressures” (Parshall, p. 9.).
- Legal Counsel should verify the corporate status of HFFD and MEND Departments.
NOTE: HFFD and MEND are both 501(c)(3) Corporations as documented in [Appendix 7-1](#).

[Figures 7-3.](#) and [7-4.](#) duplicate the same table format to express financial data from Committee research in further detail. Dollar amounts are cited for the current Governance model and projected for a Town-wide consolidation model. Descriptive information is defined as necessary, and source information is cited on each Figure. Please note the dollar amounts are accurate for Committee models only: real-time use of monetary quotation for Town purposes should be verified with Town, Village and/or Fire District Officials.

Thank you for your consideration.

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VOLUME 2: APPENDICES

The Appendices provide copies of source material and official documents cited in the Report.

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- 2-2: Mendon Town Board Meeting Minutes, October 16, 1939 RE: Mendon Fire Protection District #1
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- 4-2: Town Assessor's 2022 Real Property Reports: Parcels and Classification Summaries for the Village of Honeoye Falls

4-3: Town Assessor's 2022 Real Property Reports: Parcels and Classification Summaries for the Town of Mendon

4-4: Town of Mendon Freedom of Information Request, **FR4-22-002753** to NYSDOT

4-5: Town of Mendon Roster of Retention Ponds

4-6: *Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, April 2017, Jurisdictional Annex 9.14* for the Village of Honeoye Falls

4-7: *Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, April 2017, Jurisdictional Annex 9.16* for the Town of Mendon

Chapter 7. MODELING FOR SUSTAINABLE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

7-1: HFFD and MEND Corporation documents