

City Councilmembers, Staff, and Members of the Public

As a resident committed to ensuring effective, transparent governance, I want to speak to the October 2024 Fire Department Report and make recommendations for more comprehensive, actionable public information.

Firstly, the monthly report, while covering basic statistics and noteworthy calls, could better serve the public and decision-makers by providing greater detail in a few areas. Specifically, I recommend the following improvements:

1. **Detailed Incident Analysis:** Breaking down the monthly statistics to indicate how many incidents were related to emergency medical services, fire suppression, hazardous conditions, or false alarms would help residents and city leaders better understand the types of demands our fire department is handling. For instance, knowing that medical incidents outnumber fire-related incidents may inform different resource needs or highlight community health patterns.
2. **Response Times and Outcomes:** Including data on average response times, the time crews spend on-site, and any unique challenges faced during specific incidents would give a clearer picture of our fire department's efficiency and operational effectiveness. Understanding how quickly and effectively our fire crews respond to incidents is essential, especially when justifying resource needs or improvements.
3. **Impact of Community Engagement and Outreach:** The public education and outreach sections would benefit from additional context, such as the number of attendees for each event or feedback received from participants. Demonstrating the impact and reach of these programs reassures the public of the department's commitment to safety education and shows us where more community resources might be allocated.
4. **Comparative Analysis with Previous Periods:** Comparing this month's statistics with data from prior months or years, especially for specific incident types, would identify trends and help justify any shifts in budget or staffing. If we see an increase in overlapping calls or longer response times, we can take that information to proactively address underlying causes before they impact service levels.
5. **Operational Challenges and Resource Needs:** Including any known challenges, such as staffing shortages or equipment needs, within the monthly report would offer transparency and help the public understand the pressures faced by the department.

Additionally, we request that any meetings held by the Fire Ad Hoc Committee be documented in future reports. Summarizing key takeaways or recommendations from those meetings would promote transparency and keep the public informed of ongoing discussions regarding fire services.

In a time when the city is considering consolidating fire services and potentially placing the financial burden of fire protection on homeowners, the need for transparency and community engagement is paramount. It is crucial that we have an informed understanding of what these shifts might entail. Residents deserve to know the financial implications of district consolidation, as well as assurances that any changes to service funding are justified by clear, understandable data.

Moving forward, we ask that these reporting improvements be integrated into future fire department reports and that a clear plan is outlined for public engagement on the consolidation matter. Only through open dialogue and comprehensive, data-informed reports can we make decisions that ensure the safety, financial fairness, and long-term viability of our fire services.

- Kyle Falbo