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Board of Selectmen
Town of Wayland

March 8th, 2018

Town of Wayland Selectmen
41 Cochituate Rd
Wayland, Ma 01778

Honorable Board of Selectmen,

First, I would like to say thank you for taking the time to read this letter. The health and safety of the residents and employees of, and commuters through the Town of Wayland is extremely important to us. Part of that health and safety relies on properly staffing our Fire Department.

Previously I had written you supporting Chief Houghton's request for four additional Firefighter EMT/Paramedic positions. To our knowledge, it has been decided by the Town Management to support the hiring of two additional positions. We, the firefighters of Local 1978, do not support or encourage this decision. As we have been told on multiple occasions "we will support two to prove the need for additional personnel, and eventually we can get another two (four total)." But there has been no guarantee those second two will ever come. The need for four additional personnel has been proven through our increase in call volume, growth in population and business, and lack of increase in operational staffing since 1970! In fact, with the dissolution of the on-call department, one could argue we have had a reduction in operational force. Our service is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. To increase the staffing by one person we must account for 168 work hours per week. Two firefighters operating 42 hours per week (our current weekly hours) only covers half of that time. The solution of town management is to put the two firefighters on a day schedule only. This has the potential to cause a host of problems. We have seen other departments do this. We have heard the troubles they have retaining staff on a schedule separate from the rest of the department. And while the numbers show day-time may be our busiest time on average; it doesn't mean the extra person isn't needed at night. Just a few weeks ago The Wayland Fire Department responded to a fire, a baby delivery, and another serious medical call back to back to back. The ONLY reason those second and third calls didn't require an outside agency and/or ambulance was because we were lucky enough to have additional personnel covering the station due to the fire.

In May of 2011, the first full-time Firefighter/Paramedic was hired on the department. The goal was to attain 24/7 advanced life support. Just shy of seven years later we haven't succeeded in that goal. Watching our neighboring town appropriately add additional staff who are paramedics and attain 24/7 advanced life support coverage, YEARS faster than Wayland, has been frustrating. It's a commitment the leadership of this town made. It's frequent we encounter residents who aren't aware that commitment hasn't been fulfilled. Moreover, with the plan to add only two additional positions and continue gaining through attrition, there is no foreseeable point in the near future we will attain that goal. Furthermore, with no guarantee the town will add the

second two positions in the future, it's as if we are repeating the mistake we made when transitioning to ALS. We were told if those 3rd and 4th positions are never approved then the 1st and 2nd new positions will be terminated.

If the Town Management cannot commit to hiring the four personnel at this time; we urge you to consider doing an independent study to determine the needs of the Wayland Fire Department. Instead of approving the money to hire two personnel, who we may or may not keep, get the funding approved for a study. Allow the residents to be informed of the need to increase staffing and by how much. Then, once there is independent data, make the commitment to do what is necessary.

To be clear; the Firefighters of Local 1978 support the necessary increase in operational staff. This means running a full shift at seven personnel and a minimum of six personnel when necessary. Currently We run a full shift at six people but will run as few as five. Managements plan, as we know it, is to run seven during the day, six at night, and still a minimum of five. This plan is what we do not support.

Again, we urge the Town Management to consider a study of our staffing needs to guide this decision-making process. We feel confident a study would substantiate our claim for a necessary staffing increase. We feel strongly this would be better accomplished by committing to the full complement of additional staff instead of the piecemeal approach that has been proposed.

Thank you again for your time and consideration on this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or for a conversation.

Respectfully,

Will Tyree
President, Wayland Firefighters
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