

Subject: LONG BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

VOTE OF CONFIDENCE AND APPRECIATION.

To the Town of Long Beach:

In most places in America, when a fire breaks out, a volunteer shows up to put it out.

Federal, state and local officials would like to attract new volunteer recruits. The stakes are particularly high because volunteers not only save lives but also money — more than [\\$139.8 billion](#) annually for local governments, according to the National Fire Protection Association. The time and training needed to become a certified firefighter have [increased](#). Federal standards enacted to save firefighters' lives have unintentionally created a barrier for volunteer service: It now takes hundreds of hours to be certified, and new firefighters often must cover the cost of training. ----N.Y. TIMES

This year the Long Beach Volunteer Fire Department celebrates its 85th year of service to our community. I venture to say that every one of us knows of a neighbor or a friend that has been helped in time of need by the LBVFD. Many of us have had a personally rewarding experience. The help has been provided with compassion, professionalism and a true desire to support neighbors who are in need of help. We are fortunate to have the help and support of our friends, neighbors---local volunteers.

The LBVFD is a group of women and men that come together for a reason - to help make someone else's life a little better in a bad time. It's not the fire trucks or fire house that make the Long Beach Volunteer Fire Department great, it's the people.

Thanks for all you do for us. Great to see a group of women and men who literally care about our health and well-being.

To recognize the dedication, importance and value of the LBVFD I want to offer a VOTE OF CONFIDENCE in the Leadership and Volunteer Members of our fire and rescue team with the firm desire that you serve the Long Beach Community for many more decades. I ask the Town Council to join me in this vote of confidence.

Peter Byvoets
President, Long Beach Town Council.

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The following is a status report of our LBVFD to establish the importance and economic value of the service provided to the town of Long Beach.

LBVFD Statistics:

- # FF Members =27 certified FF1 and FF2 - 3 additional nearing certification
- #First Responders = 12
- Avg. Number of Medical Calls/yr. = 70
- Avg. Number of Fire Calls/yr = 51
- # Hours volunteered = 3400 /yr.
- #HH served = 1130 + Duneland 220

LB/MC Operational Expenses 2016 and Projected

	LONG BEACH	MCFD****
Annual fire protection contract with LBVFD	\$28,000	
Insurance	\$14,427	
Heat, Light Water	\$7,200	
Revenue Duneland Beach	-\$5,000	
Total**	\$44,630	\$5,977,510*
Current Annual Per LB Household	\$40	\$471
Annual cost of Truck and Station remodel @ 2.5% @Base cost of \$1,250,000	\$73,802	
Total Est. Annual Per Household***	\$108	\$471****

*Source + MC Controller @ 80% residential

**LB = 1,130 HH and MC = 12,700 HH

***This number does not include any allowance that MC would charge as a premium for service for LB, which at a minimum would be 15% (est.).

****MCFD is a 100% paid employee FD with an ISO rating of 3 covering broad geographic area and risks. LB is a Volunteer company with an ISO rating of 4 serving a primarily residential area.

Long Beach LBVFD

The initial task of the responding fire service is:

- Arrive quickly
- Assess the situation
- Develop the plan
- Request/deploy appropriate resources

LBVFD is fully trained and capable of performing this task

LBVFD Capabilities

- Metrics for ISO rating =4:
 - Response time
 - Water supply (fixed)
 - Training (all trained at FF1 and FF2 level)
- Structures and equipment
- LB has the highest ISO rating for volunteer fire depts.
- Of 1762 Indiana communities only 3% have achieved a higher ISO rating. Long Beach enjoys an ISO rating of 4. Nationwide we are in the top 6% Of all fire departments rated by ISO. A low ISO rating equates to savings for residents on their homeowner insurance policies.

The Local Knowledge Advantage

- Work with the Town Council to resolve specific problems/opportunities
- Knowledge of terrain and access
- State Fire Marshal Greeson identified lack of story/height limitation as a serious issue that has been resolved.
- Tradition of neighbors with local knowledge/compassion serving neighbors increases the sense of community.
- Ability to attract a sufficient number of volunteers is an option not available to MCFD because of the necessary scope of training (commercial, industrial, etc.) This is at the heart of any cost advantage.

The question of outsourcing:

The Michigan City Option:

- The MCFD is a “captive” fire company meaning that the force is a fully paid, unionized department with a force of 78 firefighters.
- The MCFD is responsible for a broad range of fire protection, including commercial, industrial and chemical and utilities in addition to residential.
- Access to Specialized Equipment: There is no ‘magic’ piece of equipment that will cover all fire situations and the terrain of Long Beach prevents the deployment of some over sized vehicles due to the variety of conditions of slope, road access/width, power lines and special conditions presented by LSD (beach access/wind). The ‘articulated’ fire vehicle MC acquired does not have the ability to fight structure fires by reaching over and around buildings in a location such as ‘beachside’. Lake Michigan winds present unique fire hazards and fire fighting problems that are not easily (cheaply) solved by any department. LB can request support of any MC service and equipment on a mutual aid basis.
- Though MC has more and a greater variety of equipment than Long Beach, the “mutual aid” agreement and historic working relationship amongst all communities makes all specialized equipment available as needed and as available. Long Beach has and requires a basic complement of equipment

sufficient to serve a mostly residential community as stipulated by ISO but it is aged.

- LB supports MC on as needed basis (mutual aid). On occasion LB has manned the US 12 station when it is on a call.
- “Working relationship with LB is excellent”, Chief Novak
- As a paid dept. MC does have some advantages in amount of training and breadth but all FF are classed 1 or 2.
- Distinct advantage to LB having FFs knowledgeable of neighbors and history.
- MC training facility is utilized by LB. LB utilizes the “burn” facility extensively.
- “Current LB fire station is not suitable for MC equipment.” ---Chief Novak.
- “MC would not build or occupy a station in a location that is not within the municipal boundary.”----Chief Novak.
- Fire and EMT Response time for LB would likely increase for the Eastern portion of Long Beach but this is variable depending on time of day or night.
- The existence of the LBVFD provides additional firefighting capability for the entire community through mutual aid.

Metrics and service level of Firefighting Medical Assistance.

- MC Fire budget = Approx. \$ 8M (Commercial and Residential)
- MC ISO Rating = 3.0
- MC # of fire calls/yr = 1900
- MC responds to fire and *serious* health only on first dispatch but responds to all calls if requested by 911
- Neither MC nor LB ‘transport’ victims to the hospital. That is the responsibility of the LaPorte County Ambulance service.
- LaPorte County Ambulance is likely to move to 421/94 (St. Anthony) and this would negatively impact ambulance response time to LB.

LONG BEACH Equipment Status:

- All equipment is currently certified but the “pumpers” are below NFPA age recommendation.
- Engine 1 1990 Mack (pumper)
- Engine 2 2004 LaFrance (pumper)
- Rescue 3 1996 Suburban

Equipment Procurement/Status

- The NFPA recommends that “pumper trucks” be rotated so that the first-line equipment is less than 10 years of age.
- Used equipment is difficult to purchase and is expensive to rehab.
- Used is sold as is with no warrantee
- All LB equipment is independently certified and currently qualified.
- Grants are available but limited due to the financial status of the LB community.

- Search for grant money is a continuing operation and has been successful in the past.

Michigan City Position on assuming Long Beach fire protection responsibility:

- It is anticipated that the cost to LB would be at a premium to MC residents because of the terrain and special conditions. This concept is similar to that experienced by our water service and any potential sewer service. We should expect no less.
- Comparable residential tax rate in Sheridan Beach is 87% higher than Long Beach. (Subject to 1% and 2% tax cap)
- Long Beach Cove currently receiving only trash and sewer service currently pay more in tax for that service than they pay to the Town of Long Beach.
- On a current cost basis we have a distinct advantage today even with an upgraded “pumper” capability and fire station remodel.
- LB could request that MC respond to all calls with a fire truck (which carries the EMT) on first dispatch but inevitably that would result in higher cost due to increased equipment stress/replacement.
- “The capability of the LBVFD is excellent to serve the needs of the Community,” according to Chief Novak, “as is the cost/benefit.”
- MC has no intention or desire to service Long Beach. It is not in their plans but, if LB wanted to talk, it would require Long Beach to provide the analysis and plan.

Summary / Conclusion

- Fire fighting is a cost benefit operation like any other. A local volunteer fire company with primarily residential service has a cost (salary) advantage that is not available to a broad capability/requirement company of a larger municipality. Limited scope offers limited expense.
- A community such as Long Beach has the additional good fortune of having a mutual aid relationship with MC if and when the need arises.
- The Community nature of a Volunteer Fire Department does provide one advantage that a paid force does not. Service to the Community by a Local Group of dedicated providers has benefits for all in terms of knowledge of the populace and local environment. The amount of goodwill and community shared by having neighbors helping neighbors is a distinct plus.

Long Beach Unique Opportunity:

We enjoy a unique blend of service and community relations with a Volunteer Fire Company. I daresay every one of us has had a unique and satisfying relationship with the LBVFD whether through a fire service call, medical emergency, the ice cream social or waterball fights on the 4th. They are here to help and they bring the

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community together. They are dedicated and highly qualified to meet the needs of our unique community. The small town advantage is not available to a community that must serve a large population of commercial, residential and rural properties over a wide geographic area.

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Some comparative costs per service:

Long Beach 2017 Budget Est.	\$/HH/YEAR
Water Base Capital Charge	\$273
Refuse/Leaf and Street	\$285
Streets	\$699
Community Center	\$57
Beach stops	\$32
Parks	\$143
Police	\$708
LBVFD with upgrade	\$108