

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 28, 2026 SELECT BOARD MEETING

Fire Department Budget Workshop

MEMBERS PRESENT: Board Members Chair Allison Knab, Vice Chair Joe Anderson,

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Tim Roache, Fire Chief Jeff Denton, Peggy Crosby, Hearshel Vanluven, John Dardani, Josh Crow

At 10:02am Ms. Knab opened the meeting.

Chief Denton presented a budget scenario designed to provide 24/7 medical call coverage through a combination of per-diem employees, call force personnel, and full-time staff. The presentation included multiple staffing scenarios, including options to increase the use of the call force to support expanded coverage. He also discussed options for addressing the increase in medical calls through the addition of per-diem personnel and stipend-supported call force volunteers. The Board discussed the various options presented.

The Board discussed the increased cost associated with expanded coverage in the context of the overall municipal budget. Members acknowledged the costs associated with maintaining the level of readiness and responsiveness expected of a community the size of Stratham. The Board also discussed population growth and the increasing difficulty of providing adequate coverage under the current mix of call force, per-diem, and full-time personnel.

Josh Crow provided a summary of call force participation during overnight hours and reported that approximately three call force members are responding to the majority of overnight calls. He noted that one member accounted for approximately 76% of overnight call responses.

The possibility of adding a full-time Fire Chief was also discussed as part of the overall staffing and budget scenarios. It was noted that a full-time Fire Chief would not be anticipated until at least the 2028 budget year.

The Board agreed that Fire Department staff should continue to refine the budget and staffing scenarios, balancing the use of call force, per-diem, and full-time personnel. There was general agreement that additional workshops may be scheduled as the budget process progresses.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Roache', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Roache
Town Administrator