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Rockaway Beach Fire Department

Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning is a process developed by an organization to link its day to day operation with its mission, vision and values. The plan is implemented by the Fire Department to guide the organization for present or future challenges, while accomplishing defined emergency response goals.

The Strategic Plan consisted of interviewing Fire Department personnel and community members using the S.W.O.T. analyses format "Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat".

- "Strength" is a resource the Fire Department possesses externally and internally to achieve its objectives.
- "Weakness" is an internal limitation, fault, or defect in the Fire Department that prevents achieving objectives.
- "Opportunity" is a favorable external situation that the Fire Department may utilize to enhance its position.
- "Threat" is an undesirable situation that can be a potential constraint, barrier or obstacle, preventing the Fire Department from achieving its mission.

The Planning Process - Situational Analysis

The situational analysis reflects opinions and observations of the various groups based on their individual perspectives of the Rockaway Beach Fire Department:

Strengths

- Support from the City and citizens of Rockaway Beach.
- The Fire Chief.
- The Fire Chief's interaction with community and Volunteers.
- City Administration support.

- Highly motivated Volunteers.
- Fire Department apparatus, station and equipment.
- Fire Department image in the community.
- Volunteer Association communication to community.
- Volunteer community involvement.

Weaknesses

- Volunteer training and mandatory certifications as established by federal, state (Oregon DPSST) and NFPA Firefighter standards. Lack of qualified staff to conduct the required training.
- The absence of City requirement for Fire Department minimum response standard to all dispatched calls.
- Volunteer recruitment and retention program.
- Not having the necessary Volunteer staffing to meet emergency response. Safety of responding personnel is at risk with present response system.
- City Administration's lack of knowledge concerning Fire Department minimum standards.
- Absence of formal apparatus replacement schedule, i.e. service year cycles, projections and financial reserve.
- Absence of full time Fire Department administration.
- Medical response to the citizens, ASA not always available for immediate response.
- Need for a technology plan including up-to-date communication methods, systems that will improve communication to City Administration, Volunteers and citizens.
- Job descriptions for all positions will include mandated minimum standards.
- Absence of local business pre-fire planning and assisting the County Building Department with new construction fire code review.
- Absence of local business fire inspection program.

Opportunities

- Opportunity for grants that will support additional funding for a new station, equipment and personnel.
- Keep the public informed of the Fire Department monthly response numbers by fire, medical and public assist.
- Develop Fire Department branding through information technology.
- Re-locate the present fire station to a hazard free zone.
- Maintain the present Cert-Team and integrate them into the Fire Department's community public assist program.
- Hire a full time paid Fire Chief to administrate the Fire Department and implement the strategic plan.
- Hire full time paid firefighters to secure minimum response standards.
- Develop and maintain a Volunteer recruitment and training program.
- Develop a plan with the Community College Fire Science curriculum to allow a "student sleeper program".
- Develop in-house technology programs.
- Consider annexations, mergers, and/or operational consolidation.

- Educate the City Administration and citizens on federal, state and NFPA response standards.

Threats

- Lack of Volunteers.
- Reduced Fire Department budget.
- Reduced business and residential tax support.
- Loss of local EMS transport.
- Rising operational cost.
- Reduced community image as a result of not meeting response standards.
- Natural disaster; earthquake, tsunami, etc.
- Federal and state required mandates without financial support.
- Increased mutual aid demands and the imbalance between departments.
- Increase in assisted living facilities creating non-medical response for public assist.
- Increase in response demands due to seasonal visitors.

Strategic Plan revealed the following

The SWOT Analysis revealed the Fire Department is not capable of meeting national or state recognized standards for emergency response. They also are experiencing the same difficulty recruiting and maintaining volunteers as are other volunteer fire departments within Oregon.

The City does not have standards for minimum staffing or response times. Without the established standards it will be difficult to determine what the needs are in developing the Fire Department future. The standard establishes a baseline for minimum staffing levels.

There are two major issues for the lack of Volunteers and certification training:

Fire Response

Prior to the standards created in the last 25 years, a volunteer would attend a weekly meeting which included hands-on training. The volunteer would be able to meet family and work requirements and also serve their community.

Today it is very difficult for a individual to meet the minimum requirements that is required to be a volunteer. When an individual becomes a volunteer today for safety and liability concerns, they must meet the same Firefighter 1 requirements as a paid firefighter. That requirement takes extensive hours of scheduled training. The training is a state standard governed through Oregon Department of Public Safety and Standards. They regulate the minimum standards and certifications for all positions within the Oregon Fire Service. The certification not only enhances the volunteers level of performance but it reduces the city liability when working within their certification.

Emergency Medical Response

To be a Fire Department you are not required to respond to medical calls. If the City elects to respond to medical calls, it is selecting to serve their citizens and assure a standard response time to all emergencies.

On the Medical response analysis the Fire Department has accepted the county Ambulance Service Area contract as an acceptable medical standard for serving the citizens. The ASA does not assure medical response will meet the timeframe the City may want for their citizens.

Presently the Fire Department may not respond as "first out" on medical calls because they do not have EMS qualified volunteers available. In some cases non-EMS trained Volunteers wait for the Ambulance and respond behind them providing non-emergency assistance to the ambulance crew.

The County Ambulance Service Area (ASA) is required by the State and designed to assure medical response throughout the State. The ASA establishes different minimum response times based on distance of travel and transport locations. The ASA contract is approved by the County Commissioners. The ASA has a minimum requirement that all responding personnel are certified to the Emergency Medical Response level. Presently only a few Fire Department Volunteers are certified to respond to medical emergency.

On all emergency responses, a volunteer not trained or certified does establish a liability for the City.

Strategic Plan Implementation Priorities and Timeline

Most strategic plans work within a time frame of one to five years. With the present Fire Department training and certification needs, the below priority and timeline is designed to bring the Fire Department into compliance within a one year. The focus of the plan is hiring a fulltime paid Fire Chief to administrate the plan. The position will create the daily management required to bring the Fire Department up to certification standards. The Fire Chief will create a financial operating resource to fund the fulltime paid firefighter program and deliver the emergency response system needed to serve the citizens .

Priority 1: Approval to hire full time paid Fire Chief .

Timeline: Completion date - December 2018 - Responsibility - City Council

Priority 2: Develop Fire Department organization chart.

Timeline: Completion date - January 2019 - Responsibility - City Administration.

Priority 3: Develop Job Description for fulltime paid Fire Chief position:✓

Timeline: Completion date - January 2019 - Responsibility - City Administration.

Priority 4: Establish Fire and Medical emergency response standards.

Timeline: Completion date: March 2019 - Responsibility - Fire Chief.

Priority 5: Educate the City Administration on the minimum federal and state requirements for fire departments.

Timeline: April 2019- ongoing - Responsibility - Fire Chief

Priority 6: Develop timeline for securing financial support for hiring fulltime paid firefighters to meet the emergency response standards. That may include a tax levy, operational consolidation, mergers, contractual agreements or forming a Fire District.

Timeline: Completion date: March 2019 - Responsibility - Fire Chief

Priority 7: Develop Volunteer recruitment program.

Timeline: March 2019 - May 2019 - Responsibility - Fire Chief or designee

Priority 8: Review present Volunteer training records to assure certifications meet the minimum requirements for the emergency response standards.

Timeline: March 2019 - April 2019 - Responsibility - Fire Chief or designee.

Priority 9: Fire department monthly reports to City Administration and the citizens of Rockaway Beach.

Timeline: Beginning April 2019 - on-going - Responsibility Fire Chief or designee.

Priority 10 - Develop peak season master plan for increased emergency response.

Timeline: June 2019 - Fire Chief or designee

Priority 11 - Natural Disaster training for Fire Department and community.

Timeline: April 2019 - On-going - Fire Chief or designee

Priority 12 - Fire Inspection program for Rockaway business community.

Timeline: June 2019 - Fire Chief or designee