# General Management and Needs Assessment of the **Tybee Island Fire Rescue Department**

## CONSULTANT'S FINAL REPORT

**December 2024**


Presented by

**Public Consulting Group LLC**

Public Safety Consulting Services

www.publicconsultinggroup.com/ems

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# SECTION 1. PROJECT INTRODUCTION

# 1.1. Introduction

The City of Tybee Island contracted Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to conduct a general management and needs assessment of the Tybee Island Fire Rescue Department. This study recommends improving operational outcomes, promoting communication and operations, promoting efficiency and effectiveness within and across the department and divisions, and addressing the Ocean Rescue Program.

The goals of this project are complex; however, a broad understanding of the overall goals include:

- Comprehensively reviewing the daily operations of the Tybee Island Fire Rescue Department and addressing needs and deficiencies.
- Evaluating response times, call types, and level of EMS care to the citizens and visitors of Tybee Island.
- Recommending needs with administrative, operational, and capital items within the Department.

Tybee Island is a vibrant community steeped in local pride and commitment to its residents and visitors; however, the status of Tybee Island Fire Rescue (TIFR) has room for operational effectiveness and sustainability improvement. Over the past decade, challenges with leadership consistency have led to unclear direction, lack of continuity, confusion in daily operations, and reduced morale. Under previous leadership, TIFR experienced challenges maintaining strong accountability and consistent communication with key stakeholders. The transition from a volunteer-based organization to a paid department has brought positive changes and unintentionally impacted the department's sense of identity and long-term vision. Strengthening these areas will help TIFR align its goals and foster more effective collaboration with its community and team members.

TIFR serves the community through two distinct divisions: fire and ocean rescue. While each division plays a critical role, the separation has led to communication, accountability, and operational cohesion challenges. This divide has contributed to gaps in focus, staffing, equipment planning, and defining priorities, leaving some uncertainty about TIFR's overall coverage standards.

Given Tybee Island's geographic isolation and limited access to nearby emergency support, TIFR has an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders who can assist during natural disasters and emergencies. Establishing a shared Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is particularly important, considering the island's vulnerability to hurricanes and other severe weather events.

Plans for a new fire station, which the City has been actively working on, represent a positive step toward addressing these challenges. The proposed facility would consolidate all emergency services under one roof, improving coordination, efficiency, and response capabilities while supporting the department's long-term growth and operations.

Integrating these elements—including the need for dedicated fire and ocean rescue staff positions—along with the arrival of a new Fire Chief sets the stage for positive future advancement. TIFR has much to offer current and potential employees; exemplary leadership can transform the Department and its community. Effective leadership, strategic planning, resource management, and effective decision-making will enhance the operations of TIFR and service to the residents and visitors of Tybee Island.

# 1.2. Project Overview

## 1.2.1. Scope of Work

In March 2024, the City of Tybee Island contacted Public Consulting Group (PCG) to discuss a study proposal. After a proposal and presentation process, PCG was successfully awarded the project in late April 2024. The project officially began in July 2024 and included the elements listed below in its Scope of Work.

**Operational Analysis**

- General overview of deployment practices
- Staffing needs
- Response procedures
- Mutual/automatic aid response

**Call Volume Data Analysis**

- Response type and call time
- Seasonal variabilities with population influxes

**Resource Analysis**

- Capital overview to include fleet and facilities
- Equipment needs
- Capital planning needs

**Administrative Analysis**

- General overview of policies and procedures
- Administrative processes
- General finances
- Organizational structure
- Assist as needed with the hiring process for a new Fire Chief as needed

## 1.2.2. Acknowledgements and Appreciation

Throughout this Study, multiple stakeholders have played a key role in providing direct insight into the City, department, local system, and historical context. Specifically, the engagement provided by the Mayor, City Manager, Interim City Manager, Administration, interim Chief Officer staff, and the Ocean Rescue team should be commended, and our consulting team would like to extend our sincere appreciation for all their efforts during this Study. Additionally, the hospitality the fire department and ocean rescue crews extended during our team's on-site visit should be considered exemplary. It speaks volumes for their dedicated service to the City, its residents, and its visitors.

Our consulting team also acknowledges the significant role played by the neighboring fire chiefs, dispatch center representatives, and supporting stakeholders. Their engagement in this Study and their insights have been crucial in our efforts to improve the Fire Department and the collective emergency services system.

## 1.2.3. Project Team

**Chief Steve Noble** brings over 30 years of fire and EMS industry knowledge and experience to this project as a primary report author and **Lead Consultant/Subject Matter Expert**. Steve holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Science, an Associate of Applied Science degree in Fire Science and General Studies, and multiple fire service credentials in incident command and hazardous materials response. His operational and chief officer experience extends from fire service and fire-based EMS response models to specialty and hazardous materials response arenas. In addition, his professional experience includes work in the national emergency preparedness and response landscape as an experienced safety officer, task force leader, emergency manager, and internationally as a terrorism response instructor. Combined with his experience as an educator at the national and international level within many of these disciplines, Chief Noble brings a development-focused mindset and a strategic and tactical leadership approach to his fire/EMS consulting work.

**Chief Tim Nowak** brings over 20 years of fire and EMS industry knowledge and experience to this project as a report author and **Consultant/Subject Matter Expert**. Tim holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Science, an Undergraduate Certificate in Human Resource Management, an Associate of Applied Science degree as a Fire Protection Technician, and a Technical Diploma as an EMT-Paramedic. He is a Nationally Registered Paramedic (NRP) with two decades of clinical and instructional experience, including a variety of current and former accompanying critical care, instruction, and management-oriented credentials. His background includes prehospital and hospital-based clinical care, training delivery and development, quality assurance and data management, and protocol development for EMS agencies ranging in rural, suburban, and urban demographics throughout four states. In addition, he has over a decade of experience as a

career firefighter in an urban fire department with transporting ambulance services. As an experienced chief officer, he brings executive-level experience overseeing the areas of EMS administration and compliance, operations, special operations and emergency preparedness, logistics and supply chain management, accreditation, policy development, and community risk reduction.

**Ms. Kaitlynn Edwards** brings over nine years of administrative, operational support, and project management experience to this project as its **Project Manager**. Kaitlynn holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and has experience serving in both project support and project manager roles for multiple fire and EMS consulting projects. Her background also includes report copy editing, contract management, project research, and business development.

**Ms. Alina Coffman** brings over 15 years of project management experience to this project as its **Project Director** and as a point of contact for this project's execution. Alina holds a Master of Public Affairs degree and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). Her background includes experience in EMS agency cost collection and project management oversight for multiple fire and EMS operational studies.

**Ms. Rachel Zemanek** brings over 10 years of copywriting and project management experience to this project as a member of the **Project Support** team. Rachel holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Project Management and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP). She is also a Nationally Registered Paramedic (NRP) and certified firefighter with a background in EMS education, peer support network and leadership, and EMS client relations.

**Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG)** is a leading national fire and EMS consulting firm with experience in providing feasibility studies, data analysis, strategic and master planning, operational assessments, cost reporting analysis, ambulance supplemental payment program design, and professional recommendations for public safety agencies.

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# 1.3. Final Report Introduction

## 1.3.1. Report Structure

*Tybee Island Fire Rescue is hereafter referred to as TIFR or the Department.*

This Report's overall structure begins with the project's introductory context and transitions into our consulting team's community and Department research, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback. From there, our team begins to utilize a data-supporting approach toward identifying administrative, operational, and capital recommendations based on our findings and their relationship to the Department's *Strategic Plan*. The recommendations outlined within this Report are further expanded within each respective category, and a recommended timeline for implementation is prioritized and assigned.

## 1.3.2. Methodology

Our full-time consulting team developed this Report through direct data analysis provided by the Tybee Island 9-1-1 Center, stakeholder feedback, independent research, consultants' on-site visits, NFPA and OSHA standards, and professional industry experience and insight. No direct comparable assessments were utilized due to Tybee Island's uniqueness concerning geographic location, limited access, and the availability of neighboring resources. No forms of artificial intelligence were used in this Study's data analysis or recommendation construction phases. The content of this Report is entirely original.

## 1.3.3. Limitations and Disclaimers

The primary limitation identified by our consulting team during this Study was the consistency and quantity of data available. For this Report, we obtained two fiscal years of usable data from Tybee Police Dispatch. Still, more critical information, such as available dates, call types, call receipt times, and incident locations, needed to be included. Although this affected the precision of our analysis, our team was still able to capture a valuable snapshot of call volumes and types.

The second limitation was the lack of comprehensive data on the Department's fleet. Our team gathered information from the Interim Fire Chief, the Ocean Rescue Sergeant, and an internal member responsible for several small watercraft. We contacted a third-party maintenance contractor, and they provided minimal information due to their intermittent involvement with TIFR over the years.

Throughout this Study, we witnessed a few pivotal events: the unforeseen exit of the Department's Fire Chief and the Special Operations Captain at the project's outset and the welcoming of a new City Manager. During our team's onsite visit, the Interim Fire Chief was notified that he would need to step down from his role and take on the position of Assistant Chief due to credentialing requirements in Georgia. This transition was smooth for the Chief and the Interim Assistant, as they collaborated closely during the interim period. While these incidents did not impede the Study's progress, they are notable developments that may shape the Department's future direction and the reception of our consulting team's suggested strategies.

## 1.3.4. Key Terms and Definitions

**AEMT** – Advanced Emergency Medical Technician; a traditionally basic life support EMS provider with limited advanced life support capabilities, such as Intravenous (IV) access and limited IV medication administration.

**ALS** – Advanced Life Support refers to a transport unit crew consisting of an EMT and a Paramedic, a first response or supervisory vehicle staffed solely by a Paramedic, or patient care provided by a Paramedic.

**BLS** – Basic Life Support; commonly referred to as a transport unit crew consisting of two EMTs, a combination of EMTs and AEMTs, or patient care provided by an EMT.

**City** – In appropriate context and when capitalized, refers to the City of Tybee Island as either the government body or its geographic boundaries.

**Department** – In appropriate context and when capitalized, refers to Tybee Island Fire Rescue.

**EMS** – An abbreviation for Emergency Medical Service(s).

**EMT** – Emergency Medical Technician; a basic life support EMS provider.

**Fire Department** – In appropriate context and when capitalized, refers to Tybee Island Fire Rescue.

**Paramedic** – An advanced life support EMS provider. In appropriate context and when capitalized, it refers to the position of being a Firefighter/Paramedic.

**Report** – Referencing this document.

**Study** – Referencing this project, its Scope of Work, and the consulting team's research, findings, and recommendations; may also reference this document (in the appropriate context and as applicable); synonymous with the use of Analysis throughout this document.

**TIFR** – An abbreviation for Tybee Island Fire Rescue.

# SECTION 2. CITY OVERVIEW

# 2.1. Community Overview

Tybee Island, located about 18 miles east of Savannah, Georgia, is the state's easternmost point, as seen in **Figure 2.A.** The island has a small, close-knit community with a permanent population of around 3,000 residents, significantly increasing during the tourist season. **Figure 2.B.** shows Tybee Island is in District 4 of Chatham County. All districts in the county are balanced by population rather than land size, making District 4 the largest in terms of land area and the one with the greatest travel distances across the region. Tybee Island ranks 12th in population inside Chatham County and 235th in Georgia. (**Table 2.C.**)[5]

Renowned for its relaxed atmosphere and family-friendly environment, Tybee Island is a popular tourist destination. Key attractions include multiple beaches, Tybee Pier and Pavilion, water activities, and themed festivals and events. (**Figure 2.D.**)

Accessible by car via U.S. Highway 80, Tybee's nearest major airport is Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport. Public transportation on Tybee Island is limited, with most residents and visitors relying on cars, bicycles, or walking to get around the 3.36-square-mile island (**Figure 2.E.**).

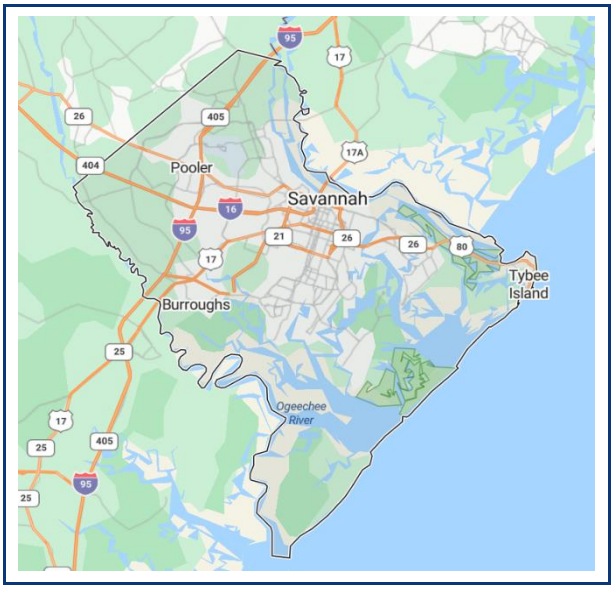



**Figure 2.A. Overview Map of Chatham County** [1]

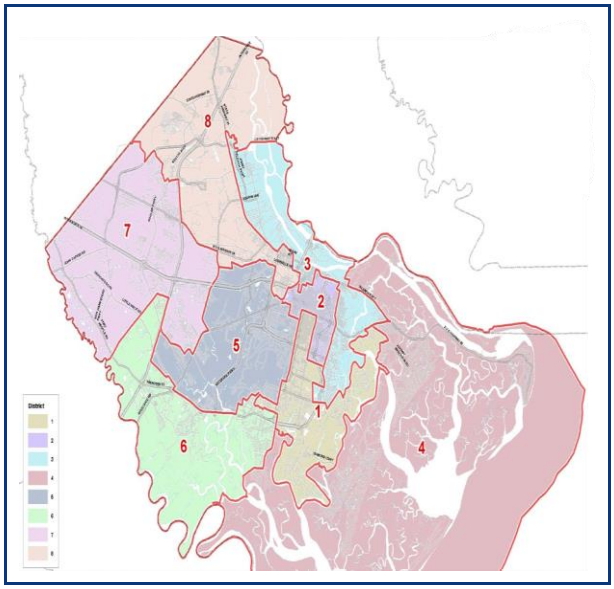



**Figure 2.B. Chatham County (Representative/Voting) Districts** [2]

| City | Chatham County Ranking | State Ranking | Population (2024 Census) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Savannah | 1 | 5 | 147,845 |
| Pooler | 2 | 44 | 30,833 |
| Port Wentworth | 3 | 85 | 15,652 |
| Wilmington Island | 4 | 89 | 14,863 |
| Georgetown | 5 | 101 | 12,522 |
| Garden City | 6 | 111 | 10,363 |
| Skidaway Island | 7 | 119 | 9,738 |
| Whitemarsh Island | 8 | 150 | 6,307 |
| Montgomery | 9 | 198 | 4,082 |
| Henderson | 10 | 228 | 3,316 |
| Bloomingdale | 11 | 231 | 3,211 |
| **Tybee Island** | **12** | **235** | **3,122** |
| Thunderbolt | 13 | 261 | 2,535 |
| Isle Hope | 14 | 284 | 2,080 |
| Dutch Island | 15 | 336 | 1,310 |

**Table 2.C. Fifteen Most Populous Cities in Chatham County** [5]


**Figure 2.D. Overview Map of the City of Tybee Island Beaches**[3]

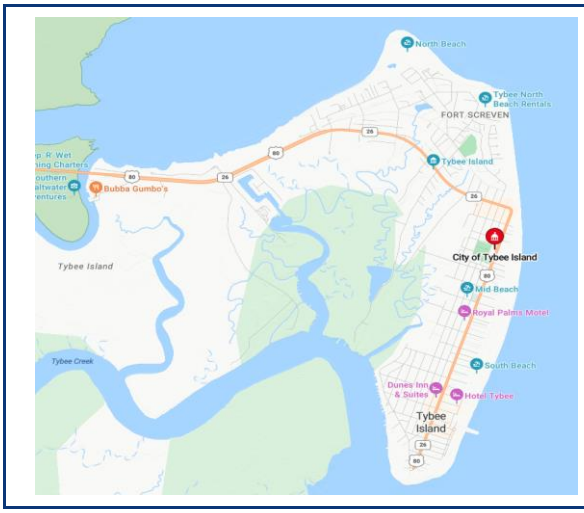



**Figure 2.E. Overview Map of the City of Tybee Island**[4]

Given Tybee Island's geographic limitations as an island with no room for land expansion, growth opportunities must focus on sustainable development, maximizing existing space, and enhancing experiences for residents and visitors. Revitalizing and repurposing existing structures can attract new businesses and create community spaces on the island. Expanding tourism through year-round events, enhanced amenities, and water-based

activities can boost the local economy. Environmental sustainability initiatives, such as eco-tourism and green infrastructure, will help preserve the island's natural beauty. Enhancing mobility with bike lanes, walking paths, and shuttle services can reduce car usage and improve accessibility. Supporting local businesses through pop-up shops and small business incentives can foster a vibrant local economy. Collaborating with nearby Savannah for joint tourism efforts and seeking grants for sustainable projects can further drive growth while maintaining the island's charm and environment. The City's population projection is that Tybee will see a slight population decrease over the next few decades. The numbers are not alarming and should not impact the sustainability of Tybee. (**Figure 2.F.**)[6]

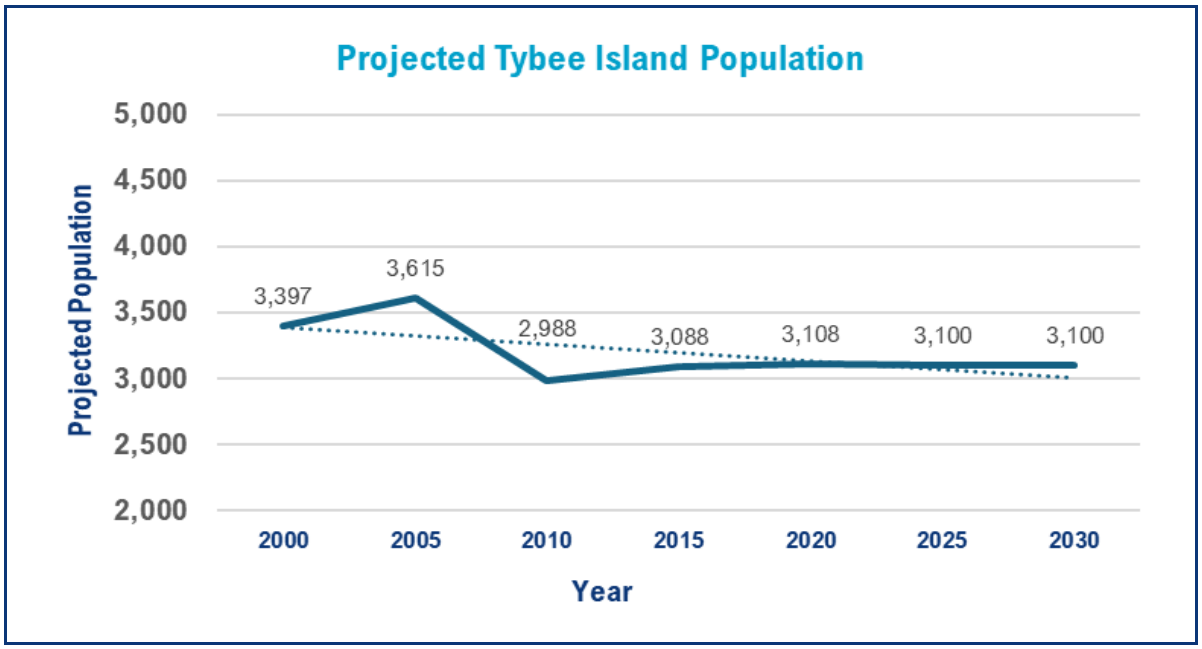



**Figure 2.F. Projected Tybee Island Population** [6]

The economic vitality of Tybee Island is intertwined with its tourism sector and fluctuating seasonal populations (**Figure 2.G.**), which significantly enhances the island's financial well-being. The charm of Tybee Island as a vacation hotspot is quantifiable, with the tourism industry contributing an estimated $93 million annually to the local economy[7]. The collection of taxes from sales, accommodations, and parking further augments this economic boost. However, this financial upswing comes with challenges as the island contends with overpopulation, traffic congestion, and increased demands on public services during peak seasons, all of which can impact the quality of life for residents. These observations highlight the critical importance of tourism to Tybee Island's fiscal health and the necessity of aligning tourist activities with sustainable community growth principles.

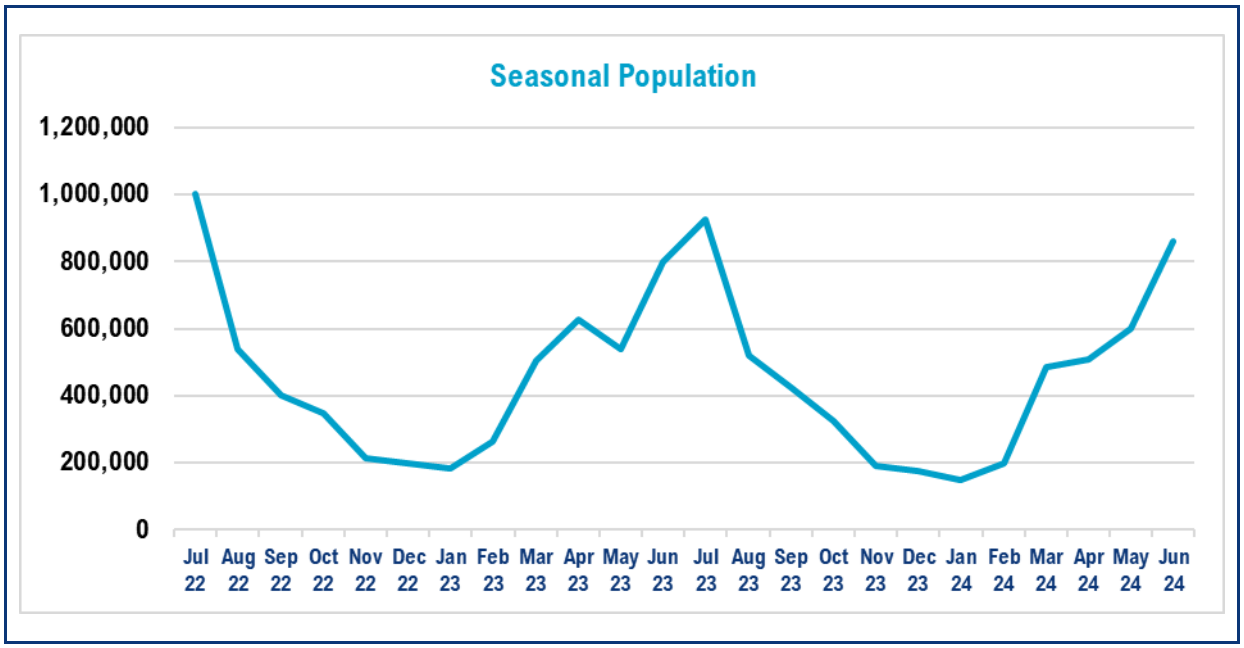



**Figure 2.G. Tybee Island Seasonal Population (FY23-FY24)**

# 2.2. Community Health Profile

The conditions in which people – or populations – are born, grow, live, work, and age are their social determinants of health (SDOH). These conditions are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources throughout local communities, and the differences in these conditions lead to health inequities or the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between different regions. SDOH elements include education access and quality, health care and quality, neighborhoods and the built environment, the social and community context, and economic stability (**Figure 2.H.**[11]).

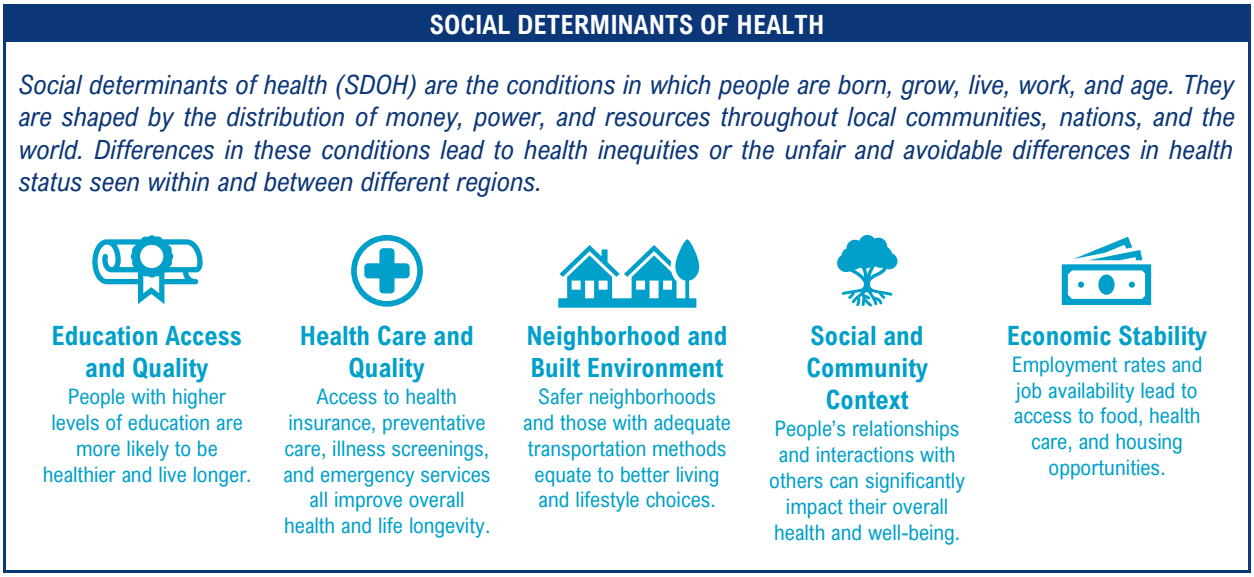



**Figure 2.H. Social Determinants of Health** [11]

Reflecting upon these various elements, the *Healthiest Communities Rankings* serve as one source of objectively ranking counties throughout the country based on many SDOH conditions. **Figure 2.I.** displays a categorical breakdown of many SDOH elements related to Chatham County, including an overall score comparison of some of its neighboring counties and local urban markets. Overall, Chatham County excels over many neighboring counties but is lacking heavily in the overall equity category while ranking high in the economy and population health categories. [8]

## CHATHAM COUNTY HEALTHIEST COMMUNITIES RANKING

*All Scores Based on 100 Total Points Unless Noted Otherwise*

**OVERALL SCORE 44**

| | |
|---|---|
| Peer Group Category: | **Urban, High Performance** |
| Peer Group Median Score: | **61** |
| State Median Score: | **33** |
| National Median Score: | **47** |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Bryan County Score:* | 59 |
| *Effingham County Score:* | 61 |
| *Liberty County Score:* | 37 |
| *Bulloch County Score:* | 36 |
| *McIntosh County Score:* | 29 |
| *Long County Score:* | 33 |

### Population Health

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **60** | --- | Healthy Behaviors Score: | 53 | --- |
| Access to Care Score: | 50 | --- | Smoking Rate: | 18.1% | 18.3% |
| Pop. Without Health Ins: | 16.4% | 15.7% | Health Conditions Score: | 61 | --- |
| Mental Health Score: | 72 | --- | Health Outcomes Score: | 54 | --- |
| Mental Distress in Adults: | 16% | 16.1% | Life Expectancy (years): | 78.2 | 77.9 |

### Community Vitality

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **45** | --- | Community Stability Score: | 52 | --- |

### Equity

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **27** | --- | Educational Equity Score: | 31 | --- |
| Health Equity Score: | 30 | --- | Income Equity Score: | 35 | --- |
| Social Equity Score: | 55 | --- | | | |

### Housing

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **38** | --- | Housing Capacity Score: | 53 | --- |
| Housing Affordability Score: | 33 | --- | Housing Quality Score: | 77 | --- |
| Hours to Pay for Housing: | 44.1 | 37.3 | | | |

### Economy

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **60** | --- | Income Score: | 52 | --- |
| Employment Score: | 59 | --- | Poverty Rate: | 14.4% | 14.3% |
| Opportunity Score: | 62 | --- | Average Weekly Wage: | $969 | $1,132 |
| Unemployment Rate: | 7.6% | 6.5% | Median Household Income: | $61,111 | |
| Business Growth Rate: | 9.3% | 10.1% | | | $66,427 |

### Public Safety

| | County | State | | County | State |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall Score:** | **59** | --- | Per Capita on Emer. Services: | $787 | $435 |
| Public Safety Capacity Score: | 66 | --- | | | |

**Figure 2.I. Chatham County Healthiest Communities Ranking** [8]


# SECTION 3. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

# 3.1. Fire & EMS Coverage and Response

TIFR provides emergency service coverage to the island from a single station, staffed year-round with career firefighters. The station is in the heart of the island (**Figure 3.A.**), with good access to the most northern and southern points. The specifics of the station and the apparatus housed there will be thoroughly covered in **SECTION 4** of this report, along with response data, which will be detailed in **SECTION 5**.


**Figure 3.A Map of Tybee Island with TIFR Station Location** [12]

# 3.2. Administration

TIFR's administrative team maintains a broad range of responsibilities for the Department's effective operation and community service. This includes strategic planning, policy development, budgeting, and financial management. Personnel management is also essential, involving recruitment, training, performance evaluations, and professional development. Additionally, they develop and maintain emergency response plans, manage equipment and resources, and analyze operational data to inform continuous improvement.

## 3.2.1. Organizational Structure

A fire department's organizational structure and span of control are crucial for ensuring efficient and effective operations. A clear organizational structure establishes a defined chain of command, enabling clear communication, decision-making, and accountability. An appropriate span of control ensures that supervisors can effectively manage their subordinates, providing necessary guidance and maintaining necessary administrative needs. This balance prevents supervisors from becoming overwhelmed and allows for better workload management and resource allocation.

TIFR's organizational structure is very light at the top end to handle the administrative tasks needed for the Department, as displayed in **Figure 3.B.** consists of a Fire Chief and an administrative Special Operations Captain with an administrative Special Operations Sergeant reporting to the Captain. This has placed a heavy workload on just a few personnel to carry out all the administrative tasks needed to keep the Department moving in the right direction. Respective recommendations from our consulting team will be addressed later in this Report.

Within the firefighter ranks, the station is overseen by Lieutenants assigned to fire apparatus. Sergeants also fall under the direction of the Lieutenants. All remaining positions are considered Firefighters who report to both the Sergeant and Lieutenant, and all positions within the ranks must be credentialed at the emergency medical technician (EMT) level or higher (e.g., advanced EMT/AEMT, Paramedic).

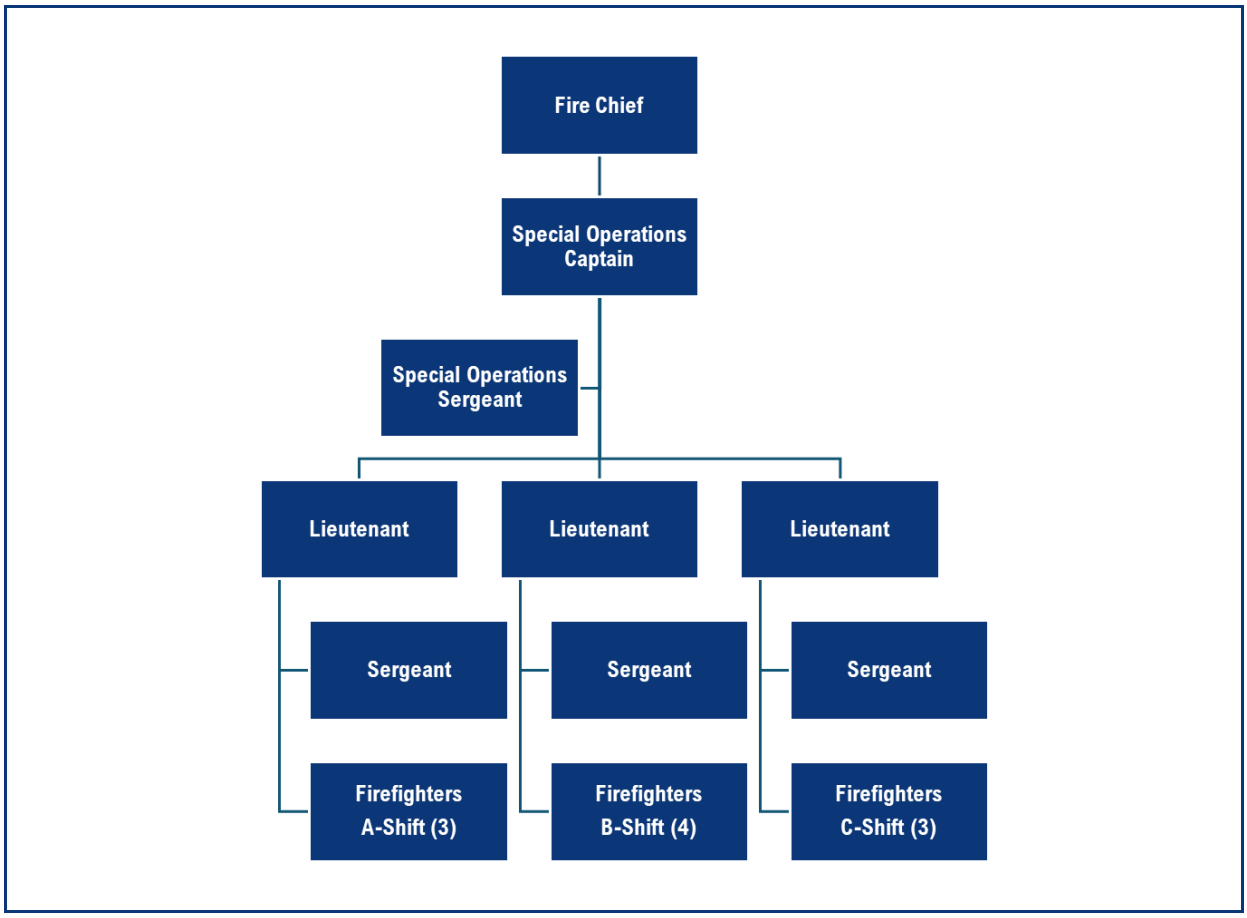



Figure 3.B. Image of TIFR Organization Chart (2024)

## 3.2.2. Administrative Roles & Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities allow for strong organizational management and ensure that all aspects of the Department's operations are being addressed.

The following positions make up the administrative staff for the TIFR with current detailed roles and responsibilities:

**Fire Chief**

- **Administration:** Grant program(s), stakeholder committees, confer with elected officials
- **Finance:** Annual budget
- **Emergency Management:** Tybee Island's Emergency Management Coordinator

- **Planning:** Operations for community events and natural disasters
- **Logistics:** Equipment purchasing oversite
- **Operations:** Risk management, emergency response
- **Personnel:** Personnel management
- **Training:** Oversite of all training requirements, certifications, and programs
- **Quality:** Oversight of all operations
- **Compliance:** Contracts and agreements
- **Community Engagement:** Public inquiries, social media oversight

**Special Operations Captain (VACANT)**

- **Administration:** Various duties assigned by the Fire Chief
- **Finance:** Payroll review, overtime tracking, timesheet verification, payroll submission
- **Planning:** Assist Emergency Management Coordinator
- **Training:** Coordinates all training programs and certifications
- **Logistics:** Apparatus and equipment inventory and maintenance
- **Community Engagement:** Risk Management, special events
- **Compliance:** Department policies and procedures
- **Data Reporting:** Records management and required documentation reporting

**Special Operations Sergeant/Beach Safety Coordinator**

- **Administration:** Inventory, reporting
- **Finance:** Payroll review, overtime tracking, timesheet verification, payroll submission
- **Planning:** Seasonal recruitment for Ocean Rescue
- **Operations:** Daily staffing, emergency response, equipment management, operating emergency vehicles/apparatus, backfill for shift commander
- **Personnel:** Supervise Ocean Rescue personnel
- **Training:** Staff training, CPR, community awareness

- **Compliance:** Department policies/procedures
- **Community Engagement:** Social media and PIO for Ocean Rescue and Fire Department programs

### 3.2.3. Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is critical for a fire department as it provides a clear roadmap for achieving long-term goals and improving service delivery, ensuring the safety and well-being of the community. It guides decision-making on resource allocation, staffing, training, and equipment purchases, aligning them with the department's mission and vision. A strategic plan is essential for guiding a fire department's growth and ensuring it can effectively fulfill its mission and provide high-quality service to the community. The current five-year continuing *Strategic Plan* for TIFR outlines the vision for 2023-2028 and appears to have been put together by the Fire Chief at the time; it does not address any input from a committee, external stakeholders, or the public. Community and stakeholders' input is strongly recommended to ensure that the department moves forward to meet the community service priorities and stakeholders' expectations.

The current strategic plan addressed no strategic goals or initiatives but an overall vision for the next five years. The vision includes the following:

- Increased manpower
- Restructuring of Department personnel
- Development of a fire prevention program
- Continuing improvement of training
- Purchasing new training props/simulators
- Recruitment and retention of trained personnel
- Purchase new fire apparatus
- Build a new fire station

A strategic plan should encompass developed goals within various strategic initiatives, encompassing timelines, funding needs, and benchmarks for achieving these goals. TIFR's plan had a vision but lacked a roadmap to guide it.

Our consulting team recommends starting a new strategic plan when a new Fire Chief is hired, beginning with a clear mission statement that defines the department's purpose and primary objectives, accompanied by a vision statement that describes the desired future state of the department. Core values outline the principles and standards guiding the

department's actions and decisions. An environmental assessment, including strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and community needs assessment, helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and evaluate the needs and expectations of the community served. Strategic goals and objectives focus on life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation. Operational planning encompasses training programs, resource management, and regular updates to policies and procedures. Performance measurement and evaluation involve accurate data collection, analysis, and performance audits to ensure continuous improvement. Community engagement and partnerships are fostered through outreach programs and collaborations with other agencies and organizations. Finally, financial planning, including detailed budgeting and funding strategies, ensures sustainable funding for future growth. Together, these components can create a roadmap for TIFR to follow, enabling it to effectively serve the community and adapt to changing circumstances.

This Report will reflect upon the current *Strategic Plan* and how it correlates to the respective sections being discussed while focusing on the sentiment of pride the Department's workforce has as an organization (**Figure 3.C.**).


**Figure 3.C. Collection of Photos Showing Station and Apparatus Workforce Pride**

# 3.3. Operations

Tybee Island Fire Rescue operates two divisions: fire/EMS and ocean rescue. Shift Lieutenants handle administrative roles and responsibilities, including training, logistics, and fleet maintenance, and they report directly to the Fire Chief.

Ocean Rescue, a division within the Fire Department, is managed by a Special Operations Sergeant. This Sergeant reports to a Special Operations Captain, who is also under the direct command of the Fire Chief. Despite the informal structure, these divisions are intended to manage and operate the department's various responsibilities.

## 3.3.1. Dispatching Services

Tybee Island Fire Rescue and its Police Department are dispatched through Tybee Island 9-1-1. The Tybee Island Police Department manages this system, ensuring coordinated response efforts for fire and police emergencies. Ocean Rescue has a designated dispatcher in the Tybee Island 9-1-1 Center during beach lifeguard staffing hours. Neighboring Chatham County has its designated dispatch center, which handles Chatham EMS and provides transport services for Tybee Island. Tybee Island Dispatch does not offer priority dispatching for medical calls and does not utilize computer-aided dispatching (CAD).

## 3.3.2. Daily Fire Staffing

The department operates with budgeted staffing of 16 fire personnel across three shifts; the 2025 budget allocates up to 19 personnel. Each shift includes a Sergeant and Lieutenant overseeing it. The shifts follow a 24/48 rotation, meaning each employee works 24 hours on duty, followed by 48 hours off. This rotation is commonly used in many fire departments throughout the region.

The department's minimum staffing requirement is four personnel per shift. There is no extra budgeted staffing to account for vacation, paid time off, sick time, or other scheduled or unscheduled absences. When staffing drops below the minimum of four personnel, overtime is offered to those signed up for extra duty, or mandatory overtime is enforced.

Additionally, personnel are not allowed to act out of their position or pay grade, except the Sergeant, who is allowed to act in the Lieutenant position during the lieutenant's absence. This limits the availability of personnel to fill positions above their pay grade and contributes to overtime costs.

## 3.3.3. Fire Response

Fire response by TIFR involves the actions and procedures taken to manage various fire incidents. These include structure fires in residential, commercial, or industrial buildings, wildfires, vehicle fires, chemical and hazardous material fires, electrical fires, and kitchen fires. The response encompasses several critical tasks: evacuating and rescuing individuals, fire suppression, and overhaul operations to ensure the scene is safe. After the incident, procedures such as fire investigation, documentation, and conducting reviews are carried out to improve future responses conducted by Chatham County; TIFR does not conduct fire investigations.

The primary objectives of TIFR's fire response are to save lives, protect property, and effectively control and extinguish fires. TIFR responds to all incidents using available resources and may employ mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments when additional resources are required. There is no current automatic aid agreement with neighboring agencies, as the new agreement has not been finalized for several months due to the change in Department leadership.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 standard addresses the structure and operation of organizations providing fire suppression services. This NFPA standard outlines essential requirements for fire department service deployment to ensure the effective, efficient, and safe delivery of protective services. **Figure 3.D.** shows essential requirements in the NFPA 1710 standard based on occupancy and staffing levels. [13]

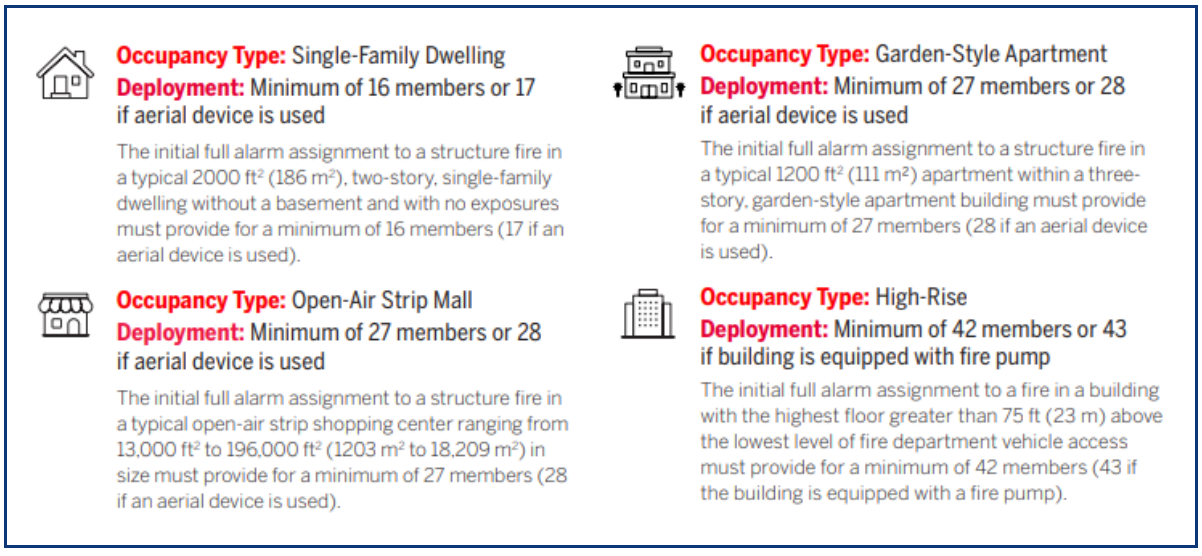



**Figure 3.D. Image of NFPA 1710 Key Requirements** [9]

TIFR has a standard deployment matrix for the following first-alarm incidents based on 3-person fire apparatus staffing levels:

**Residential Structure Fire**

- 1 Engine, 1 Truck, 1 Tanker, 1 Rescue, 1 Chief Officer (7 personnel)

**Commercial Structure Fire**

- 1 Engine, 1 Truck, 1 Tanker, 1 Rescue, 1 Chief Officer, Mutual Aid (7+ personnel)

It is important to note that Tybee Island Fire Rescue cannot meet NFPA standards due to limited apparatus and personnel. Until mutual aid resources arrive, response limitations must be considered and clearly defined in a Standard of Coverage (SOC) document.

Within the SOC, a comprehensive Community Risk Assessment (CRA) is essential to identify all hazards and categorize them into a manageable format that reflects what the community can support and afford. It is crucial for both the community and the fire department to understand that the identified risks align with the current performance levels the fire department can deliver.

While response times are an essential metric, the accurate measure of a successful response is the event's outcome. Focusing on outcomes will help guide the community and the fire department in setting realistic expectations and goals for fire response capabilities.

TIFR has achieved an Insurance Services Office (ISO) classification of 03/3X. The ISO evaluates communities across the United States based on their structure fire suppression capabilities. In this rating system, scores range from 1 to 10, where 1 represents the best possible performance, indicating exceptional abilities, and 10 describes the poorest performance or capabilities. The split classification of 03/3X distinguishes between different properties within the community. The first number (03) applies to properties within five road miles of the responding fire station and 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, such as a fire hydrant, suction point, or dry hydrant. The second number (3X) applies to properties within five road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply.

The Department’s most recent Public Protection Classification (PPC) credits were not available at the time of this report.

## 3.3.4. EMS Response

Emergency medical services (EMS) is a pre-hospital medical care system that provides triage, treatment, and transport (if required) to those calling 9-1-1 for emergency medical care. TIFR utilizes a fire-based approach to provide medical care to Tybee Island's citizens and visitors. While TIFR offers varied levels of care, including basic life support (BLS) from its Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and advanced life support (ALS) from a Paramedic, it relies upon a contract with Chatham County EMS to provide transport

services to those in need. Chatham County EMS provides ALS ambulance coverage to Tybee Island with a staging location at the YMCA.

## 3.3.5. Specialty Response

Tybee Island Fire Rescue is equipped with a specialized operation response force dedicated to addressing specialized incidents. These incidents are generally high-risk but low-frequency events requiring specialized equipment and training for mitigation. TIFR currently staffs a single station that houses all specialty response equipment and apparatus.

### 3.3.5.1. Ocean Rescue

The Fire Department Ocean Rescue program is a crucial component of public safety on Tybee Island. It ensures the well-being of residents and visitors who enjoy the island's beaches and waters. This program, managed by the fire department, focuses on ocean rescue operations, emergency medical services, and public education. The program operates with seasonal lifeguard staff during daylight hours from May through October each year. The Sergeant is a full-time, year-round employee who handles other duties throughout the year. With the massive visitor population during the peak months, Ocean Rescue personnel interact with more residents and visitors daily than any other service on Tybee Island.

Critical aspects of the program include:

- **Lifeguard Services**: Trained lifeguards are stationed at popular beach areas to monitor swimmers and beachgoers, provide immediate assistance in emergencies, and perform rescues and aid when necessary.
- **Rescue Operations**: The program includes a dedicated team equipped with specialized gear, such as rescue boards, jet skis, and utility terrain vehicles (UTV), to respond quickly to water-related emergencies, including swimmer distress, boat accidents, and other marine incidents.
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS)**: Ocean Rescue personnel are often cross-trained as EMTs or paramedics, allowing them to provide critical medical care on-site before transporting individuals to a medical facility.
- **Public Education and Safety Awareness**: The program also emphasizes educating the public on water safety, rip currents, water displacement, sandbar safety, heat safety, lighting, and CPR. Social media and hands-on CPR training with the local YMCA and summer camps accomplish this.
- **Coordination with Other Agencies**: The Fire Department Ocean Rescue Program typically collaborates with local, state, and federal agencies, including the

Coast Guard, to ensure comprehensive coverage and efficient response to large-scale emergencies.

- **Seasonal Adjustments**: The program is active on the beach during daytime hours from May to October each year. Any staffing variations, up or down, would be for special or weather-related events.

Overall, the TIFR's Ocean Rescue Program is vital to maintaining safety on Tybee Island's beaches and offers peace of mind to those enjoying the natural beauty of the island's shoreline.

## 3.3.5.2. Hazardous Materials Spills/Leaks

Hazardous materials response is a specialized discipline focused on responding to, detecting, containing, and stabilizing incidents involving hazardous substances. These incidents can involve hazardous materials in solid, liquid, or gas forms, which may threaten human life or the environment.

All TIFR firefighting personnel are trained to meet at least the National Pro Board Qualifications for operations-level requirements in hazardous materials emergency response. This training covers basic air monitoring, Electric Vehicle (EV) blanket suppression, small lithium-ion battery overpacking, and other skills for recognizing and identifying hazardous materials. The Department relies on a mutual aid agreement with the Savannah Fire Department for significant hazardous materials incidents to provide the necessary expertise and resources for effective mitigation.

## 3.3.5.3. Motor Vehicle Extrication

Vehicle extrication refers to rescuing individuals involved in motor vehicle accidents who cannot exit their vehicles due to injuries or physical entrapment. This procedure requires a coordinated effort by emergency responders who use specialized tools and techniques to safely extricate the patients while minimizing further injury.

Vehicle extrication is categorized into three basic levels: basic, advanced, and heavy extrication. All Tybee Island Fire Rescue (TIFR) firefighters are trained in basic and advanced extrication techniques, allowing them to handle routine vehicle collisions effectively.

- **Basic Extrication**: This level involves standard procedures used at the scene of collisions involving cars, light-duty trucks, or SUVs to free individuals trapped within the vehicle. It covers the essential techniques required for most common vehicle extrication.

- **Advanced Extrication**: These are specialized procedures used in more complex scenarios where individuals are trapped within the vehicle in a way that requires more intricate techniques. Advanced extrication goes beyond the basic level and necessitates additional training and sometimes more sophisticated equipment.
- **Heavy Extrication**: This focuses on extrication techniques for heavy vehicles, such as buses, semi-tractor trailers, dump trucks, concrete mixers, and other large vehicles. Heavy extrication is more complex and often requires TIFR personnel to request additional resources and personnel through mutual aid agreements.

Through these levels of training, TIFR is equipped to manage a variety of vehicle extrication scenarios, ensuring that individuals involved in accidents can be safely and effectively rescued.

## 3.3.5.4. Technical Rescue

Technical rescue involves using specialized tools and skills to perform rescues in complex and challenging environments. These types of rescues include, but are not limited to:

- **Confined Space Rescue**: Involves rescuing individuals from areas with limited entry and exit points, such as tanks, tunnels, and underground vaults.
- **Rope Rescue**: Using ropes and rigging systems to access and rescue individuals from high or steep areas, such as cliffs, buildings, or towers.
- **Trench Rescue**: This field focuses on rescuing individuals trapped in trenches or excavations, often requiring shoring to prevent further collapse.
- **Structural Collapse Rescue** involves locating and rescuing individuals trapped in collapsed buildings or structures, often caused by natural disasters or explosions.

TIFR has limited education and equipment to handle specialized rescue events outside Ocean Rescue. The risk of such specialized events is relatively low on Tybee Island, and integrating these specialties into the current structure of TIFR is not deemed necessary. As a result, TIFR relies on the Savannah Fire Department to respond to these types of incidents when they occur. The reliance on outside aid ensures that while TIFR may not have the full capability of every technical rescue, they can still provide effective response through collaboration with neighboring departments when needed.

# SECTION 4. FACILITIES & FLEET

# 4.1. Facilities

This section of the Report includes the facilities profile. The following are outlined: operational use, staffing, facility and physical structure, apparatus bays, storage, occupancy, amenities, access, and security features. Our consulting team's observations are included in the profile. All elements, relevant photos captured during the on-site visit, comments related to the overall status and needs of the facilities, and provided ratings are based on our team's professional insights and applicable national standards.

Outlined below are common findings or observations noted by our consulting team reflecting all facilities as a whole:

- Verify that the station meets OSHA requirements for eyewash stations, the presence of a safety data sheet (SDS), and chemical labeling/storage.
- Gear storage is non-compliant with NFPA 1971 and should be addressed with future construction or remodeling to protect valuable PPE.
- The station appears to be at physical space capacity within its apparatus bays, limiting vehicle storage needs and equipment.
- Verify the facilities have an OSHA/NFPA-approved flammable storage cabinet for safe storage of fuels, aerosols, and other combustibles.
- Fire extinguishers need to be accessible and mounted and not stored on desks/counters.

# 4.1.1. Station 1/Headquarters Profile

| STATION | | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | 512 Jones Avenue |
| | | **Area Designator** |
| | | Tybee Island |

| KEY: | A – Adequate | S – Satisfactory with Minor Modifications | N – Needs Improvement | I – Inadequate | X – Does Not Exist | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| OPERATIONAL USE & STAFFING | | OVERALL RATING: | I |
|---|---|---|---|
| Primary Use: | ■ Fire Apparatus Station ■ Command Staff ■ Headquarters ■ Training Facility ■ Ops/Logistics | | |
| Primary Apparatus: | EN1, TR1, SQ1, RQ1 | Min. Staffed Personnel: | 4 |
| Secondary Apparatus: | anker1, various watercraft, multiple ATV's | | |

**Comments & Notations**

- Station 1 serves as the only fire station for the City that includes Administration staff
- Station is at capacity with no room for any expansion
- Discussion and initial plans are being addressed to replace this station in the future

| FACILITY & PHYSICAL STRUCTURE | | OVERALL RATING: | I |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ownership: | **Tybee Island** | Square Footage: | **N/A** |
| Shared Space: | **N/A** | Construction Type: | **Varied** |
| Year of Construction: | **N/A** | Env. Hazards Prevention: | **None** |
| Year Occupied: | **N/A** | Visual Integrity: | **Inadequate** |

**Comments & Notations**

- The buildings are old and past serviceable life
- The structure has undergone several remodels from the original construction
- Large voids in the construction and poor insulation are not energy-efficient
- Not constructed for any environmental hazard protection

| APPARATUS BAY & STORAGE | | OVERALL RATING: | I |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apparatus Bay Space: | Needs Improvement | Decon/Cleaning Access: | Inadequate |
| Climate Control: | Inadequate | Maintenance/Repair Area: | Needs Improvement |
| Exhaust System: | N/A | Gear Storage Space: | Inadequate |
| CO/Alarm System: | N/A | Equipment Storage Space: | Needs Improvement |
| Water Drainage: | Adequate | Bulk Storage Space: | Needs Improvement |

**Comments & Notations**

- Storage space is at capacity
- Living quarters and apparatus are separate structures with no covered access between the two structures
- EMS supplies are currently stored in a non-climate-controlled space; this should be rectified immediately
- No storage racks for gear storage - piled on the floor; this should be rectified immediately
- Maintenance area is cluttered; organization systems needed
- Outside the rear of the apparatus bays needs cleaning and organization; many trip hazards are present

| OCCUPANCY & AMENITIES | | OVERALL RATING: | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dayroom Amenities: | Adequate | Restrooms: | Needs Improvement |
| Kitchen Amenities: | Adequate | Shower Access: | Satisfactory |
| Dining Amenities: | Adequate | Crew Lockers/Storage: | Satisfactory |
| Office Space: | Satisfactory | Sleeping/Dorm Rooms: | Satisfactory |
| Meeting/Training Space: | N/A | Laundry Access: | Needs Improvement |
| Fitness/Exercise Access: | Inadequate | | |

**Comments & Notations**

- Fitness equipment in the bay space is inadequate and needs to be addressed with the new station
- Sleeping quarters in separate structures from the apparatus leads to long turnout/chute times
- Laundry/PPE extractors are meeting the current need, but it is not ideal with limited climate control

| ACCESS & SECURITY | | OVERALL RATING: | I |
|---|---|---|---|
| Apron/Driveway: | Satisfactory | Generator/Back-up Power: | Needs Improvement |
| Thoroughfare Access: | Needs Improvement | Camera Monitoring: | N/A |
| Station Markings: | Needs Improvement | Key/Code Door Access: | Adequate |
| Roadway Warning Lights: | N/A | Gated Parking Area: | N/A |
| Visual/Curb Appeal: | Inadequate | Window Security: | N/A |
| Crew/Staff Parking: | Inadequate | Remote Alarm Monitoring: | N/A |
| Public Access & Parking: | Inadequate | Eyewash/Safety Features: | N/A |

**Comments & Notations**

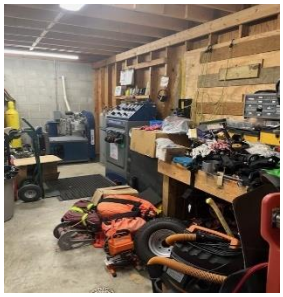
- Recent upgrade to key codes on residential-grade doors
- No separation between public vs employee parking
- There is no emergency decontamination (eye wash/shower) noted upon inspection, per OSHA 1910.151(c)
- Main entry door is inward swinging, not to code
- Main access onto a residential road is not ideal for response times
- Powerlines directly above the apparatus apron are a hazard for fire equipment and personnel
- Generator needs to be plugged in when needed; this needs to be a hard-wired backup

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS & IMAGES








## CONSULTANT'S OVERALL SUMMARY

The Department and City are making a wise choice to look for new property and the building of a new station. A new station will serve the firefighters, administration, and the community for years. Ensuring that the next station will be built to withstand environmental conditions and be used 24/7, it will serve Tybee Island for the next 50+ years.

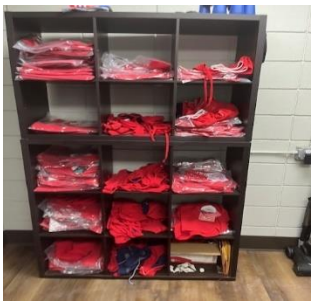
Our consulting team did not evaluate the training tower; however, its surroundings indicate that it did not meet NFPA 1402 regarding signage, emergency exits, and water supply for live fire evolutions.

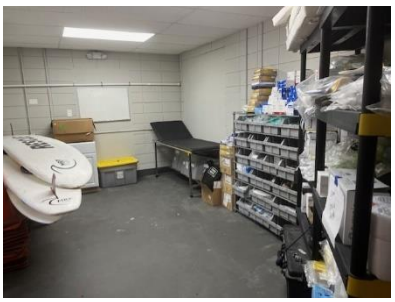
# 4.1.2. Ancillary Facilities

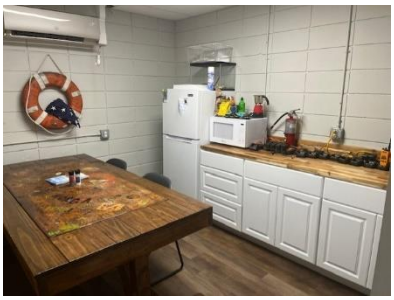
| LOCATION |
| --- |
| **1509 Strand Ave.** |
| **Area Designator** |
| South Annex |

**COMMENTS & IMAGES**

- Add an outdoor shower for the lifeguards coming off the beach/water
- The leak in the ceiling needs to be addressed
- Add a secure storage locker for uniforms and equipment
- Add secure storage for rescue vehicles
- Mount fire extinguisher to meet code
- Schedule routine maintenance on lifeguard towers





## CONSULTANT'S OVERALL SUMMARY

Overall, the structure meets the needs of the Ocean Rescue program. It is sound, with a few water leaks that need to be addressed, but can endure the weather that Tybee encounters annually. With minor modifications to help meet the employees' needs, this facility can serve the community in the foreseeable future. There may be an opportunity to clean out some storage space around the South Annex to accommodate secured storage of rescue vehicles to help reduce travel to and from the fire station and help free up space. An exterior shower for lifeguard staff only (not public) would be beneficial and feasible for this structure and help with working conditions for the lifeguards. The lifeguard towers are in good condition and primarily serve the island's south end. Many towers have been removed in the past, and the North end only has one tower located at the North Beach entrance. The addition of fire extinguishers and AEDs to each lifeguard tower should be considered for emergency needs.

# 4.2. General Considerations for Future Station Construction/Renovations

Highlighted below are general considerations for the Department regarding updated NFPA 1500, 1710, and 1851 standards, industry best practices, or specific Department needs as future station construction and renovation projects occur. Consider any new station having at least five bays large enough to accommodate drive-thru movement and parking of the Department's largest apparatus (typically a Truck).

- Consider enclosed/ventilated gear storage with minimal fluorescent light and no sun exposure compliant with NFPA 1971 standards.
- Incorporate cancer prevention measures such as creating hazard zones, proper PPE storage, decontamination rooms, diesel exhaust systems, and PPE cleaning extractors.
- Factor floorplan design elements and movement/walking flow for efficient turnout/response times.
- Consider OSHA regulations and NFPA standards when planning any remodel or new construction.
- Consider sleeping and living accommodations for at least 12 personnel to allow for staffing during the storms and potential cadet or volunteer program(s).
- An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) needs to be considered with new construction.

# 4.3. Fleet

The Tybee Island Fire Rescue's vehicle fleet encompasses several types of apparatus, vehicles, tools, and equipment essential for fulfilling its mission of protecting life, property, and the environment through preparation, prevention, and response.

Each type of vehicle and apparatus plays a crucial role in the department's ability to effectively respond to various emergencies, from structure fires and medical incidents to ocean rescue. Regular maintenance, training, and equipment upgrades are essential to ensure the readiness and operational effectiveness of the department's vehicle fleet.

**Figure 4.A.**, below, details the types of vehicles the Department has, including the general characteristics of each vehicle.

**ENGINE**

Also known as " Pumpers," these vehicles carry hoses, ground ladders, a water pump, and a tank with 500-750 gallons of water.

**TRUCK**

Also known as a "Ladder" or "Quint," TIFR's Truck has a large aerial ladder capable of extending approximately 100 feet. It also carries additional ground ladders and has the same hose, pump, and water tank capabilities as an Engine.

**WATERCRAFT**

Specialized vessels designed to navigate ocean currents are equipped to handle various emergencies, such as rescuing people in rough waters or assisting in other maritime emergencies.

**SPECIALTY & SUPPORT**

TIFR has a variety of specialty apparatus. These apparatuses have specific functions beyond the traditional fire suppression apparatus. They will support operations related to ocean rescue, beach rescue, and incident command response functions.

**STAFF**

Staff vehicles transport personnel for daily administrative duties. These duties can range from public education to chief officer vehicles and business inspections in a non-emergency capacity.

**Figure 4.A. Summary Description of TIFR Fleet Vehicle Categories**

TIFR currently utilizes Tybee's Department of Public Works (DPW) and a third-party contractor to perform routine and emergency maintenance of its apparatus. Most maintenance of its watercraft is done by internal shift personnel and is not contracted out. This practice should be carefully evaluated for liability on the employee(s) and the city. It is highly recommended that any person(s) working on fleet vehicles beyond routine checks and maintenance be certified through credentialed programs. Due to several third-party contractors within the last several years and in-house repairs, getting accurate records on each vehicle to assess current conditions is difficult.

It is recommended that Tybee start a detailed tracking system on all vehicles to include the following:

- Purchase Date
- Purchase Price
- Assign an asset number to the vehicle (currently utilizing two different tracking numbers, VIN and City ID)
- Maintenance Costs compared to the Purchase Price of the vehicle
- Service count(s)/cost per year

This tracking system would allow TIFR to systematically evaluate their fleet vehicles and make informed decisions regarding replacement needs. This will enable TIFR to understand the current fleets:

- Overall Condition
- Projected Age (Life Expectancy)
- Projected Mileage (Life Expectancy)
- Replacement Schedule

Our consulting team has outlined our interpretation of the fleet's status and corresponding vehicle conditions, which are highlighted below. It should be noted that this is not a professional opinion by a licensed mechanic but rather that of our consulting team and input from TIFR staff.

Our consulting team has clearly defined each possible vehicle rating. These provide context to the rating provided for each vehicle and are not official ratings provided by a national rating system or mechanic.

- **Excellent** – Vehicles in excellent condition show minimal wear and tear, have low mileage relative to their age, and have undergone regular maintenance according to schedule. They show no significant mechanical issues or safety concerns and are considered reliable. These vehicles are in optimal condition and are expected to continue operating effectively for the foreseeable future.
- **Good** – These vehicles are generally well-maintained and in satisfactory condition overall. They may show some signs of wear and have moderate mileage, but they remain reliable and functional. Good-rated vehicles may require routine maintenance and occasional repairs but are reliable assets within the fleet.
- **Consider Replacement** - Vehicles categorized as "consider replacement" are nearing the end of their useful life or showing signs of significant wear, deterioration, or mechanical issues. While they may still be operational, they require frequent repairs,

have high mileage, or exhibit other factors compromising their reliability and cost-effectiveness. These vehicles should be part of the upcoming replacement plan and moved to reserve status to extend the service life.

- **Needs Replacement** - Vehicles identified as needing replacement are no longer cost-effective or reliable for continued use. They have either exceeded their recommended service life, experienced significant mechanical failures, or become unsafe. Replacement is necessary to maintain fleet efficiency, safety, and performance. These vehicles should be prioritized for replacement as soon as possible to minimize downtime and mitigate risks associated with continued use, especially in emergency response vehicles.

## 4.3.1. Engines

The department has one engine in its fleet (E1); however, another Engine has been ordered and rebuilt as a reserve engine (E2) (**Figure 4.B.** and **Table 4.C.**).

TIFR's engine is in good condition, and a reserve engine is a positive addition during routine maintenance and unforeseen repairs to the frontline engine.


**Figure 4.B. Photo Collection of TIFR Engines**

| Unit # | Description | Status | Year | Miles | AVG Mi/Yr | Purchase Cost | 2024 Maint. Costs | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E1 | HME | Front | 2016 | 26,974 | *7,907* | N/A | $4,221 | Good |
| E2 | Smeal | Reserve | 2004 | 25,437 | *1,272* | $156,600 | N/A | N/A |

Excellent Good Consider Replacement Needs Replacement

**Table 4.C. Fleet Details for TIFR Engines**

## 4.3.2. Truck

The department's fleet includes one ladder truck. The truck is in good condition and should be maintained, as it is the most expensive apparatus in the fleet. Mileage should be kept to a minimum to extend the life of the apparatus. (**Figure 4.D.** and **Table 4.E.**).

**Figure 4.D. Photo Collection of TIFR's Truck**

| Unit # | Description | Status | Year | Miles | AVG Mi/Yr | Purchase Cost | 2024 Maint. Costs | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Truck 1 | HME | Front | 2021 | 18,149 | *6,050* | N/A | $6,213 | Good |

Excellent Good Consider Replacement Needs Replacement

**Table 4.E. Fleet Details for TIFR Truck**

## 4.3.3. Watercraft

The department's fleet includes five watercraft designated for search and rescue (**Figure 4.F.** and **Table 4.G.**). TIFR's current watercraft fleet needs an evaluation and replacement planning process specifically related to the needs and resources available with surrounding agencies. The search and rescue (SAR) jet skis are very useful and are needed assets by the fire and ocean rescue departments. A good maintenance and replacement program should be in place to keep these valuable vessels operating. The two boats should be evaluated for resale and removed from the fleet, reducing overhead and opening space for Engine 2 when it arrives. The 22' Marine 1 does not meet the island's needs and can only be launched from Lazaretto Creek, about a 15-minute drive up north and a 15-minute ride back to the oceanside. This vessel also has limitations in navigating the sandbar and parts of the creek during low tide. The purchase of an adequate vessel or reliance on the other

agencies in the area should be considered, and their available watercraft should be utilized during rescue incidents and training events.

Figure 4.F. Photo Collection of TIFR Watercraft

| Unit # | Description | Status | Year | Hours | AVG Hr./Yr | Purchase Cost | 2024 Maint. Costs | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marine 1 | 22' Zodiac | Reserve | 2016 | 600 | *75* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| SAR 1 | SeaDoo PWC | Front | 2015 | 113 | *12.5* | N/A | N/A | Consider Replacement |
| SAR 2 | SeaDoo FishPro | Front | 2023 | 52 | *52* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| SAR 3 | Yamaha VX | Front | 2014 | 134 | *13.4* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| SAR 4 | SeaDoo GTX | Front | 2018 | 106 | *17.6* | N/A | N/A | Needs Replacement |
| 17' Boat | Jon Boat | Reserve | N/A | N/A | *N/A* | N/A | N/A | Needs Replacement |

Excellent Good Consider Replacement Needs Replacement

Table 4.G. Fleet Details for TIFR Watercraft

## 4.3.4. Specialty Response & Support Vehicles

The Department's fleet includes ten specialty response and support units (**Figure 4.H.** and **Table 4.I.**). Overall, the specialty response and support vehicles are in good condition. The one vehicle that stood out to our team is Rescue 1, the 2005 F-550. This vehicle does not seem to fit the needs of the Department, as it has a quad-cab, poor turning radius, and no secondary capability such as water and a pump. The duties of this apparatus could be handled with a less expensive, more maneuverable vehicle like Squad 1. Squad 1 could be outfitted to carry rescue boards on top, full EMS capabilities, extrication equipment in the rear, and quickly pull any watercraft to a launch site.


**Figure 4.H. Photo Collection of SFD Specialty Response & Support Vehicles**

| Unit # | Description | Status | Year | Hours | AVG Hr./Yr | Purchase Cost | 2024 Maint. Costs | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tanker 1 | Am. LaFrance | Front | 2008 | 6,398 | *400* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| Rescue 1 | Ford F-550 | Front | 2005 | 17,383 | *915* | N/A | N/A | Consider Replacement |
| Command | F-550 XL | Reserve | 2018 | 1,764 | *294* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| Squad 1 | Ford F-150 | Reserve | 2016 | 46,783 | *5,848* | N/A | N/A | Consider Replacement |
| UTV | Grey HD9 | Front | 2022 | 4,623 | *2,312* | N/A | N/A | Needs Replacement |
| UTV | Red HD9 | Front | 2022 | 9,066 | *4,533* | N/A | N/A | Needs Replacement |
| UTV | Green HD10 | Front | 2022 | 5,055 | *2,528* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| UTV | Green HD7 | Front | 2022 | 2,963 | *1,482* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| UTV | Green HD7xl | Front | 2023 | 1,565 | *1,565* | N/A | N/A | Good |
| UTV | Camo HD7 | Front | 2023 | 3,411 | *3,411* | N/A | N/A | Good |

Excellent Good Consider Replacement Needs Replacement

**Table 4.I. Fleet Details for TIFR Specialty Response & Support Vehicles**

## 4.3.5. Staff Vehicles

The department's fleet includes two staff vehicles (**Figure 4.J.** and **Table 4.K.**). Overall, the TIFR staff vehicle fleet is in good condition. Staff vehicles should be part of capital improvement planning and evaluated closely to help extend their life.


**Figure 4.J. Photo Collection of SFD Staff Vehicles**

| Unit # | Description | Status | Year | Miles | AVG Mi/Yr | Purchase Cost | 2024 Maint. Costs | Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Chief 1** | Tahoe | Front | 2021 | 46,229 | *15,409* | N/A | N/A | **Excellent** |
| **Chief 2** | Explorer | Front | 2022 | 25,492 | *12,746* | N/A | N/A | **Excellent** |

**Excellent** **Good** **Consider Replacement** **Needs Replacement**

**Table 4.K. Fleet Details for TIFR Staff Vehicles**


# SECTION 5. INCIDENT & CALL DATA

# 5.1. Incident and Call Demand

Tybee Island Police Department Dispatch provided incident and call volume data via computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data from its dispatch center.

## 5.1.1. Department Incident Data

Historically, TIFR has reported annual incidents (sometimes called "calls for service") with good breakdowns. For this Study, these incident volumes will remain divided to show incident type differences within each category, which includes EMS, fire, rescue, and other incidents. In providing this breakdown, our consulting team can better articulate a whole perspective of the Department's call types and system demand.

TIFR responds to most incidents within the City of Tybee borders while currently not participating in a Mutual Aid contract with neighboring agencies. During this process, TIFR units may respond to neighboring communities—and vice versa—due to the size or type of incident.

*For this Report, "incident" is more commonly used to indicate a unique event, while "call" refers to instances where a particular unit responds. The sum of all calls may (will) not equate to the total incidents that the Department responds to, as one incident may necessitate multiple responding units and, therefore, one "call" per unit – all responding to the same (single) "incident."*

### 5.1.1.1. Incident Volumes

Annual incident volume trends show a gradual increase for the Department over the last two fiscal years **Table 5.A.**, with consistent month-to-month volumes and trends noted (**Table 5.B.** and **Figure 5.C.**), showing significant increases in the summer months. Based on this data, TIFR's incident volume growth trend likely aligns with its high population increase during summer months, which should show the Department increasing to approximately 1,037 incidents in 2024. Daily, year-over-year trends show consistent incident volume patterns between the days of the week **Table 5.D.**, with the Department responding to approximately 2.6 incidents per day.

| Fiscal Year | Incident Volume |
|---|---|
| FY 2023 | 889 |
| FY 2024 | 1,037 |

**Table 5.A. TIFR Fiscal Year Incident Volumes (2023-2024)**

| Month | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | --- | 73 | 62 |
| February | --- | 51 | 60 |
| March | --- | 81 | 75 |
| April | --- | 93 | 97 |
| May | --- | 84 | 111 |
| June | --- | 87 | 115 |
| July | 80 | 123 | --- |
| August | 80 | 130 | --- |
| September | 77 | 95 | --- |
| October | 71 | 79 | --- |
| November | 71 | 42 | --- |
| December | 41 | 48 | --- |

Red Indicates the Lowest Monthly Volume for the Year
Green Indicates the Highest Monthly Volume for the Year

Table 5.B. TIFR Monthly Incident Volumes (FY23-FY24)

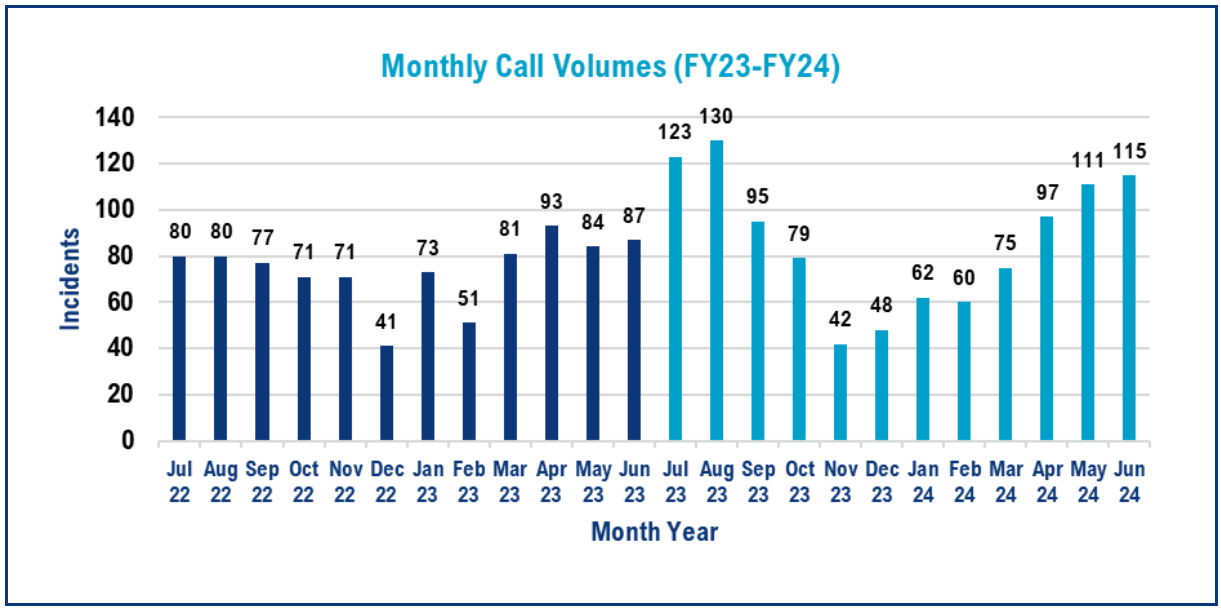



Figure 5.C. TIFR Monthly Incident Volumes per Year (FY23-FY24)

| Day of Week | FY2023 | FY2024 | 2-Year Total | 2-Year AVG |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday | 149 | 156 | 305 | 153 |
| Monday | 108 | 118 | 226 | 113 |
| Tuesday | 106 | 120 | 226 | 113 |
| Wednesday | 118 | 146 | 264 | 132 |
| Thursday | 116 | 132 | 248 | 124 |
| Friday | 136 | 169 | 305 | 153 |
| Saturday | 156 | 196 | 352 | 176 |
| TOTALS | 889 | 1,037 | 1,926 | 138 |
| AVG per Day | 2.4 | 2.8 | 2.6 | 2.6 |

**Red** Indicates the Lowest Daily Volume for the Year
**Green** Indicates the Highest Daily Volume for the Year

**Table 5.D. TIFR Incidents by Day of Week per Year (FY23-FY24)**

## 5.1.1.2. Incident Types

A two-year analysis (FY23-FY24) of incident types responded to by TIFR units within and outside the city shows a clear trend: EMS calls dominate at a ratio of 3:1 compared to all other incidents. **Table 5.E.** provides a detailed breakdown of incidents during this period, categorized into EMS, Rescue, Fire, and Service/Other. A deeper look into each category offers more specific insights. For Rescue calls, 0.1% involved land-based rescues, while 2.9% were water-related. In the Fire category, which includes fire calls, hazardous situations, and other fire-related incidents, only 1.1% were active fire responses, while the remaining 15.2% involved hazards or fire-related issues, such as smoke odors or fire alarms.

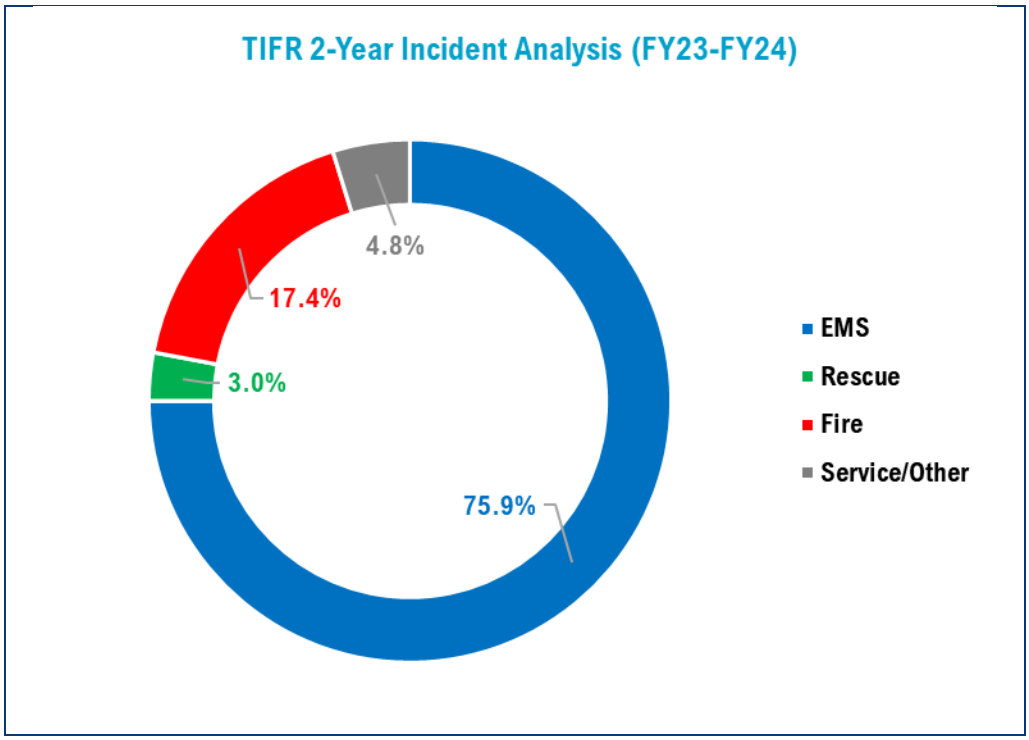



Table 5.E. TIFR 2-Year Incident Type Analysis (FY23-FY24)

## 5.1.1.3. Peak Trends

Examining the time (hour) of the day throughout the year for all incidents that TIFR units are dispatched to, **Figure 5.F.** and **Figure 5.G.** display the peak 4-hour and 12-hour periods for requests for services for the Department (2023 and 2-year trend, respectively). Based on these observations, TIFR's peak incident trends show consistency between the individual 2023 patterns and collective 2023-2024 patterns, with the peak 4-hour time periods of 15:00-19:00. Overall, the peak 12-hour periods varied from 09:00-21:00 in 2023 and 11:00-23:00 collectively for 2023 and 2024. Putting the 12-hour periods into perspective, there are approximately twice as many calls that occur during the "daytime" hours of 09:00-21:00 when compared to the "overnight" hours of 21:00-09:00 (68%/32% in 2023 and 70%/30% in FY23-FY24). Proportionately, this equates to a 2:1 daytime-to-overnight call volume comparison, a common observation of our consulting team concerning assessing different fire departments and EMS agencies nationwide.

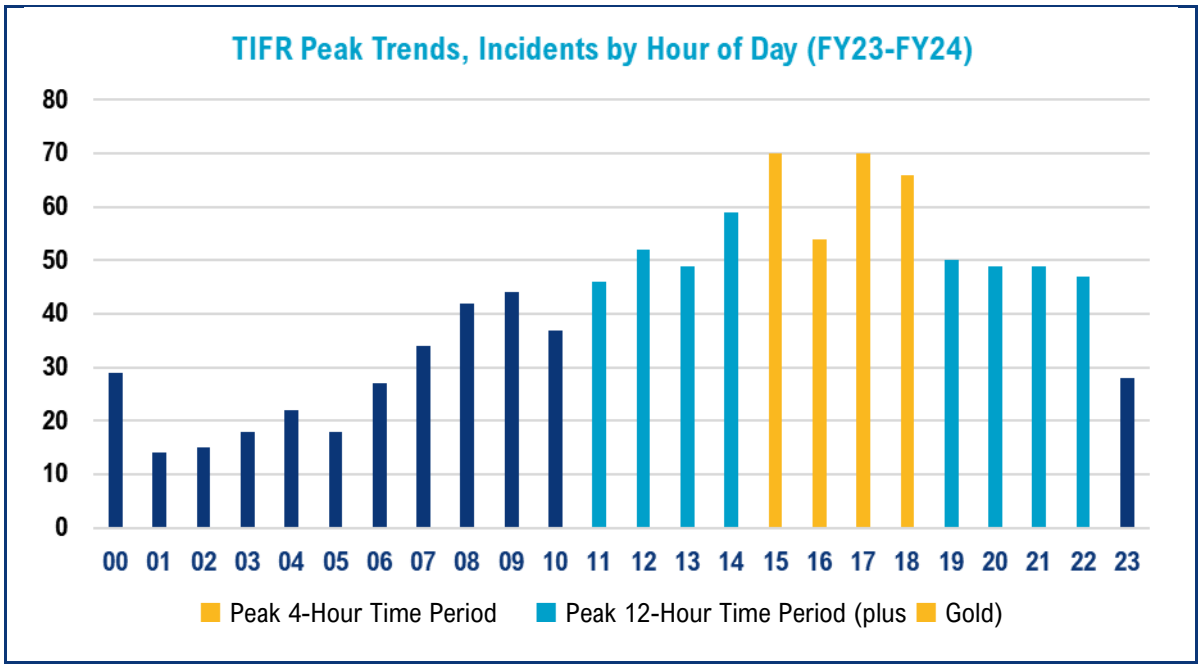



Figure 5.F. TIFR Peak Trends, Incidents by Hour of Day (FY23-FY24)

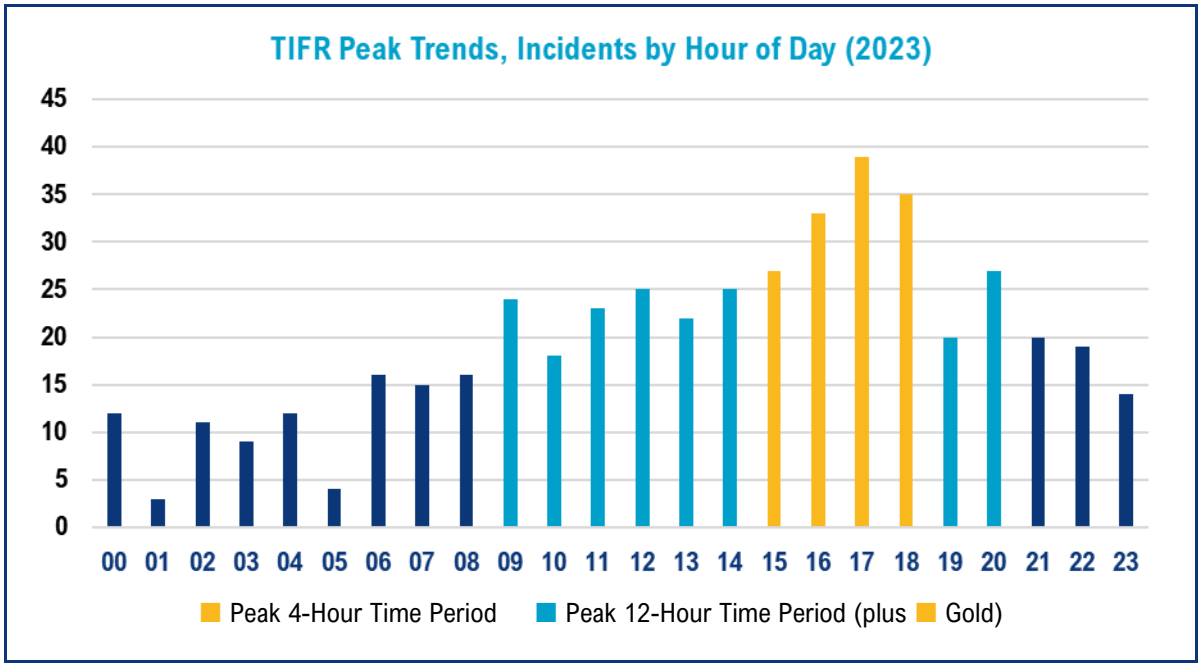



Figure 5.G. TIFR Peak Trends, Incidents by Hour of Day (2023)

# 5.2. Call Response Times

Our consulting team analyzed available response time data for 2023, uncovering a consistent average for all EMS and structure fire incidents. Current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards suggest that first-arriving units should arrive on scene within 5:00-5:20 minutes for high-acuity EMS and fire calls 90% of the time (when accounting for the dispatch-to-arrival time). While such standards face scrutiny within the industry because they promote a lights & siren response – even when it may not be statistically warranted – they serve as a benchmark for discussion concerning response performance. **Figure 5.H.** highlights the average response times for the first TIFR unit to arrive on the scene for fire and EMS incidents.

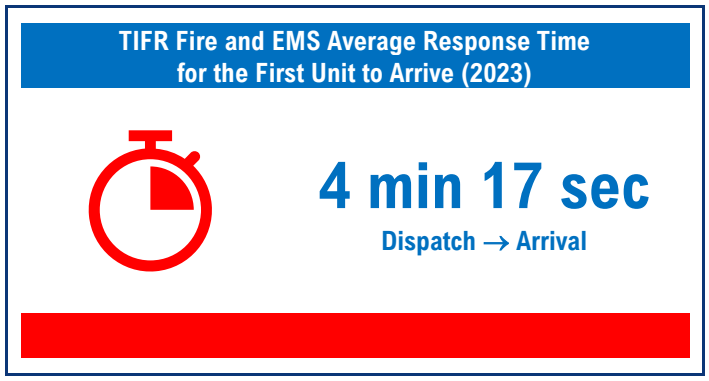



**Figure 5.H. Infographic of TIFR Average Response Times (2023)**


# SECTION 6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# 6.1. Fire Department Workforce Interviews

Our consulting team conducted a two-day site visit to Tybee Island on August 27th and 28th. The site visit consisted of visiting the station, elected officials, and fire and ocean rescue crews. The Department's administrative team gave us a tour of the Island, highlighting station needs, equipment, fleet, high-risk sites, water supply, and additional team interviews. Interviewing the Department's workforce is valuable for gaining insights into departmental operations, employee satisfaction, and organizational culture. We met with personnel on-site in group settings and individual and group virtual interviews. During the interviews, our team utilized open-ended questions to facilitate discussions, allowing employees to express their views on equipment, job satisfaction, training needs, organizational culture, and challenges within their roles. We identified common themes, comments, and cultural environment findings throughout the process.

Our consulting team was able to conduct the following interviews with Department personnel:

**On-site Visits**

- All three on-duty crews
- Special Operations Sergeant/Beach Safety Coordinator
- Six lifeguard personnel
- Interim Fire Chief
- Interim Assistant Chief

**Virtual Interviews**

- Interim Fire Chief
- Interim Assistant Chief
- Special Operations Sergeant/Beach Safety Coordinator

The comments from these interviews and data from the anonymous survey were compiled to help identify issues and provide actionable recommendations.

The top common themes noted were as follows:

- Hardworking employees
- Station conditions deteriorating

- Lack of leadership in the past
- Turnover of command staff
- Broken relationships with the stakeholders due to past leadership
- Separation of divisions between fire and ocean rescue

# 6.2. Fire Department Workforce Engagement Survey

A *Workforce Engagement Survey* was designed by our consulting team and approved by the Fire Department administrative team and the City's respective survey review and approval team. It was electronically sent to all TIFR staff, excluding the Chief and Assistant Chief (at their request so as not to skew any results), which equated to 13 personnel. Participation was optional and anonymous. **Overall, 10 participants responded, which equaled 77% of the total recipients.**

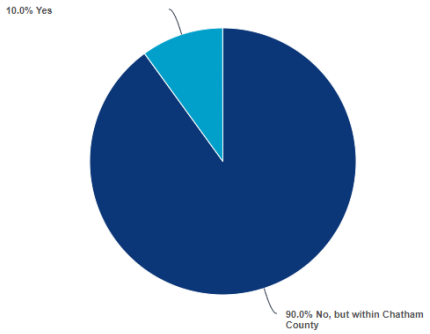
Below are the original survey questions with appropriate graphics for applicable items. Our consulting team summarizes the comments listed to retain the anonymity of the respondents unless direct quotes are utilized.

| KEY | Question # |
|---|---|
| | (Survey question/results screenshot) |
| | • Bullet point summary or interpretation items |

*NOTE: Quoted comments listed within each question/response herein are posted either verbatim or our consulting team has edited them for grammatical errors and/or potential personal descriptors that may jeopardize the anonymity of the reaction.*

## Question 1

1. Do you live on Tybee Island?



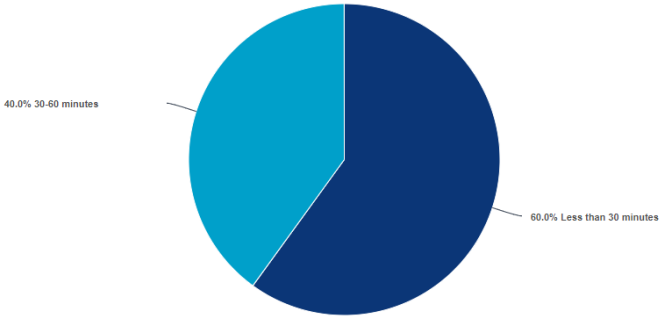

| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| No, but within Chatham County | 90.0% | 9 |
| Yes | 10.0% | 1 |

Totals: 10

- The large majority of TIFR's workforce lives outside the City limits but within Chatham County
- Housing costs and availability may be a contributing factor to these numbers

## Question 2

2. What is your average time commuting to the fire station?



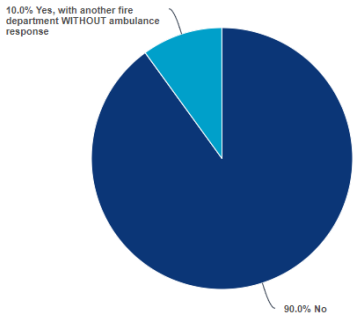

| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 30 minutes | 60.0% | 6 |
| 30-60 minutes | 40.0% | 4 |

Totals: 10

- Having all participants living within Chatham County, commute times are considered normal

## Question 3

3. Do you work part-time for another fire department or EMS agency?



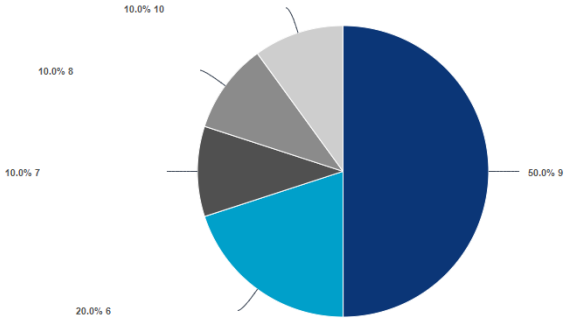

| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| No | 90.0% | 9 |
| Yes, with another fire department WITHOUT ambulance response | 10.0% | 1 |

Totals: 10

- Only one participant indicated that they work for an outside fire department that does not provide ambulance service (fire only)

## Question 4

4. What is your overall satisfaction as an employee with Tybee Fire Rescue?



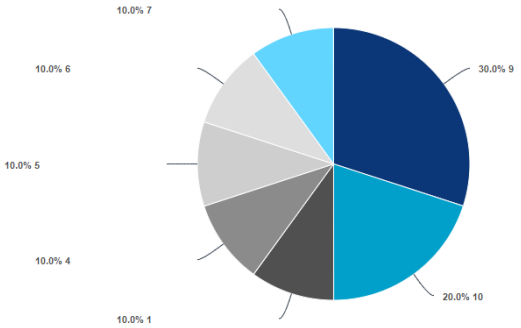

| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 50.0% | 5 |
| 6 | 20.0% | 2 |
| 7 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 8 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 10 | 10.0% | 1 |

Totals: 10

- The survey shows very positive numbers in overall satisfaction with Tybee Island Fire Rescue (10 being “Very Satisfied” and 1 being “Very Unsatisfied”)
- 50% indicated a rating of 9 out of 10 score
- No score was below a six in overall satisfaction

## Question 5

5. How satisfied are you with the current work schedule of 24 hours on and 48 hours off?

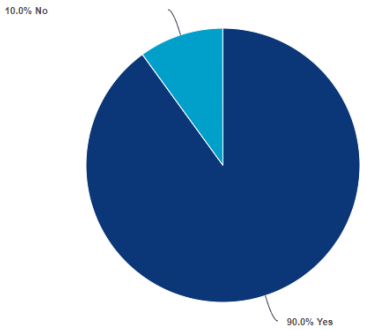



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | 30.0% | 3 |
| 10 | 20.0% | 2 |
| 1 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 4 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 5 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 6 | 10.0% | 1 |
| 7 | 10.0% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- The current work schedule satisfaction was spread out from very satisfied (10) to very dissatisfied (1)
- 50% of the participants were satisfied overall (indicating scores of 9 or 10)
- Three indicated a satisfaction level of 5 or below

## Question 6

6. Would you favor entertaining a different schedule to reduce travel to and from work (example of 48/96)?

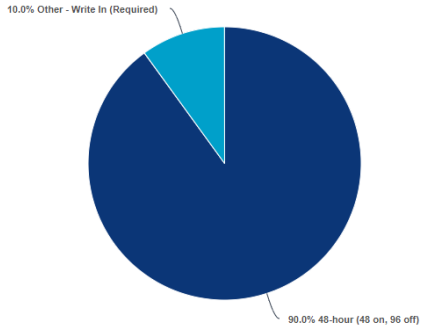



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 90.0% | 9 |
| No | 10.0% | 1 |
| | Totals: 10 | |

- Even though overall satisfaction with the schedule looked positive, 90% indicated that they would be in favor of entertaining a different work schedule
- This may be an opportunity to enhance employee satisfaction and recruitment

## Question 7

7. If the shift schedule were to be changed, what would be most preferable?

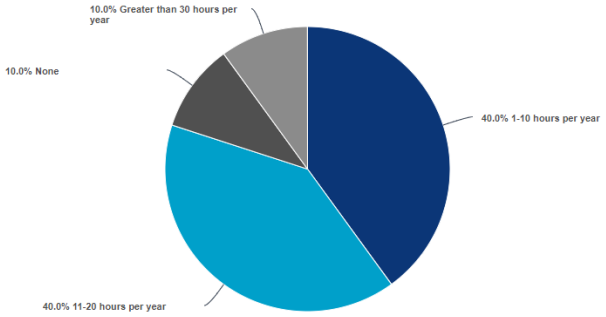



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 48-hour (48 on, 96 off) | 90.0% | 9 |
| Other - Write In (Required) (click to view) | 10.0% | 1 |
| | Totals: 10 | |

- Of the choices provided, 90% of participants would be in favor of a 48/96 work schedule
- This schedule is often popular with longer commuting distances to reduce travel to and from work
- One participant indicated “other” and did not prefer the options

## Question 8

8. On average, how many hours per year do you attend training (for any fire/EMS discipline or topic) while off-duty and without hourly compensation for your attendance?




| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 1-10 hours per year | 40.0% | 4 |
| 11-20 hours per year | 40.0% | 4 |
| None | 10.0% | 1 |
| Greater than 30 hours per year | 10.0% | 1 |

Totals: 10

- 90% of participants indicated that they partake in job-related training on their own time without Department support
- 40% indicated 1-10 hours per year, while another 40% indicated 11-20 hours per year

## Question 9

9. Thinking about Tybee Fire Rescue as an organization, what are some of its strengths and opportunities?

- There were ten comments on the Department's strengths and opportunities
- The majority indicated the strengths of the organization were the people, small department, and community
- Areas that were noted for opportunities were Ocean Rescue, EMS, and internal growth
- *"Some strengths are being a small department and city. Family-type environment with co-workers, other city workers, and the community. Opportunities in this department are it allows you to learn fast in all aspects. Fire, medical, and water rescue. Being a small department, you have a lot of opportunities to do things some fire departments don't allow."*
- *"The biggest strength at the Tybee Fire Department is the ability to work as a team to oversee and handle a wide range of emergencies. The opportunities at Tybee Fire are related to advancement in the fire career through classes and training."*

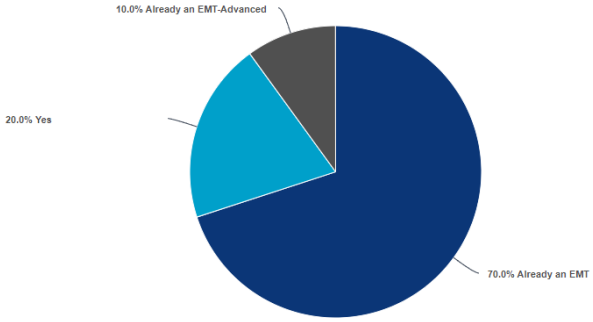
## Question 10

10. Thinking about Tybee Fire Rescue as an organization, what are some of its challenges and risks?

- There were ten comments on the Department's strengths and opportunities
- The majority indicated the challenges and risks are staffing (fire and ocean rescue), finding positive upper management, and budget
- *"Tybee's biggest challenge right now is finding an administrative structure that works."*
- *"The challenge Tybee Fire faces is related to the budget to maintain staffing levels at an appropriate level we need."*

## Question 11

11. Are you interested or willing to become an EMT in the future?

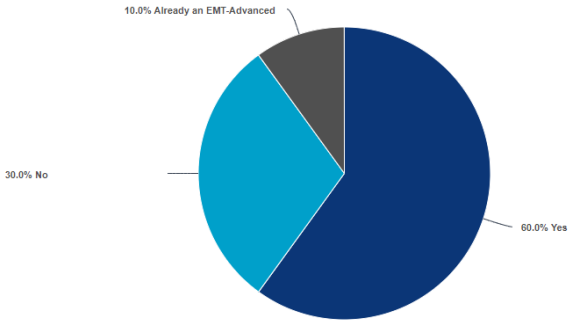



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Already an EMT | 70.0% | 7 |
| Yes | 20.0% | 2 |
| Already an EMT-Advanced | 10.0% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- The two personnel who are not already trained to at least the EMT level are interested in obtaining their EMT

## Question 12

12. Are you interested or willing to become an EMT-Advanced in the future?

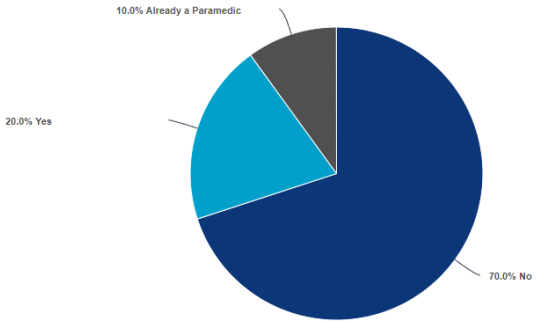



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 60.0% | 6 |
| No | 30.0% | 3 |
| Already an EMT-Advanced | 10.0% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- 60% of the participants indicated a desire to advance their current level of training from EMT to AEMT
- AEMT is an intermediate level between EMT and Paramedic
- AEMT level is a value to Tybee Island's location and visitor population and call needs

## Question 13

13. Are you interested or willing to become a Paramedic in the future?

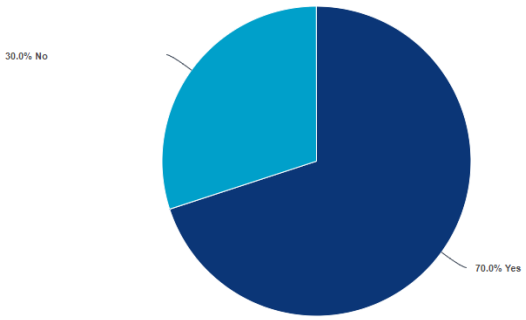



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| No | 70.0% | 7 |
| Yes | 20.0% | 2 |
| Already a Paramedic | 10.0% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- The advancement to Paramedic is not an interest to 70% of the participants
- Two personnel indicated that they would be interested in obtaining their Paramedic license in the future

## Question 14

14. Have you ever been a lifeguard with the Ocean Rescue Program?




| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 70.0% | 7 |
| No | 30.0% | 3 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- 70% of the participants have been active with the Ocean Rescue program before being pulled away from that activity
- Ocean Rescue training provides more opportunities for TIFR firefighters
- Available TIFR staff can help assist with staffing issues on the beach during high-demand

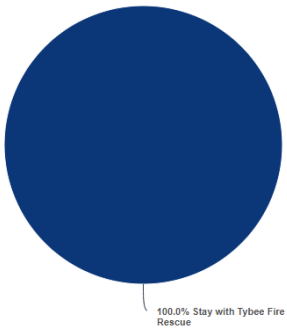
## Question 15

15. Do you have any comments or feedback regarding the Ocean Rescue Program?

- There were ten comments from fire personnel regarding the Ocean Rescue Program
- The majority indicated a lack of organizational structure, and accountability has decreased over a few years
- Fire personnel being separated from the program was indicated several times as a negative
- Communication and working relationships have deteriorated due to past administration
- *"I believe that, with proper leadership and organization, it will be a great program. Right now, things like accountability and organization need some work."*
- *"There needs to be better communication between fire and ocean rescue."*
- *"Most firefighters have more experience working on the beach than the actual lifeguards. Most of the fire personnel came from the lifeguard program originally. The budget cuts also prevented the fire personnel from picking up shifts on the beach on off days. This removed a huge chunk of beach rescue experience."*

## Question 16

16. What is your current 5-year plan?




| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Stay with Tybee Fire Rescue | 100.0% | 10 |
| | | Totals: 10 |

- Very positively, no participants indicated that they had any plans to separate from TIFR in the next five years

## Question 17

17. Please describe your reason for departing if you plan to leave. (Examples: culture, work environment, schedule, etc.)

- No information available, as no participants indicated a desire to leave

## Question 18

18. Do you have any additional feedback that you would like to share regarding Tybee Fire Rescue?

- Nine responses contained additional comments regarding Tybee Island Fire Rescue
- Dedication to their community was a common theme
- Noted was a possible switch in the work schedule
- A new dedicated Fire Chief was noted several times
- *"Switching to a 48/96 schedule would open up positions for firefighters from departments further away that have differing skill sets that they could bring and share with current firefighters."*
- *"I would just love to see a good Chief come in here and do the right thing."*
- *"I love this department, and I want it to succeed. I believe this is a good department that just needs the right administration and incentives."*

# 6.3. Ocean Rescue Workforce Engagement Survey

A *Workforce Engagement Survey* was designed by our consulting team and approved by the Fire Department administrative team and the City's respective survey review/approval team. It was electronically sent to all Ocean Rescue staff, excluding the dispatchers and Special Operations Sergeant, which equated to 22 personnel. Participation was optional and anonymous. **Overall, 13 participants responded, which equaled 59% of the total recipients.**

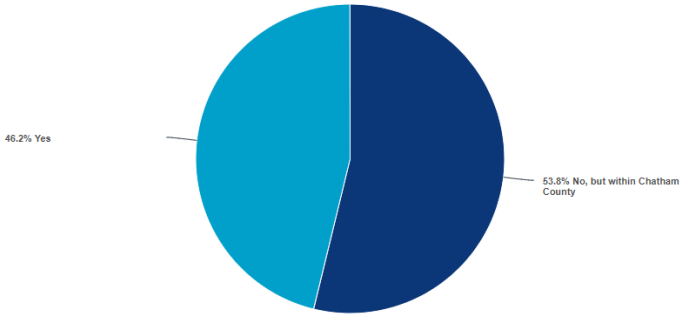
Below are the original survey questions with appropriate graphics for applicable items. Our consulting team summarizes the comments listed to retain the anonymity of the respondents unless direct quotes are utilized.

| KEY | Question # |
|---|---|
| | (Survey question/results screenshot) |
| | • Bullet point summary or interpretation items |

*NOTE: Quoted comments listed within each question/response herein are posted either verbatim or our consulting team has edited them for grammatical errors and/or potential personal descriptors that may jeopardize the anonymity of the reaction.*

## Question 1

1. Do you live on Tybee Island?

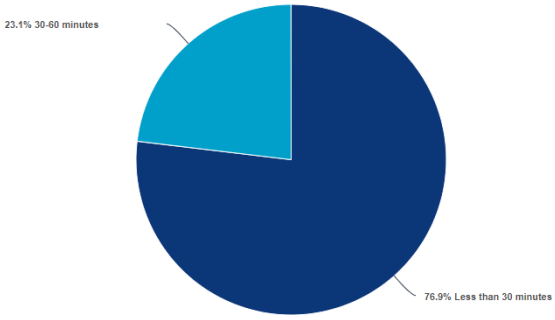



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| No, but within Chatham County | 53.8% | 7 |
| Yes | 46.2% | 6 |
| | | Totals: 13 |

- A very significant percentage of Ocean Rescue personnel live on Tybee Island at 46%, and all participants live within Chatham County

## Question 2

2. What is your average time commuting to the fire station?

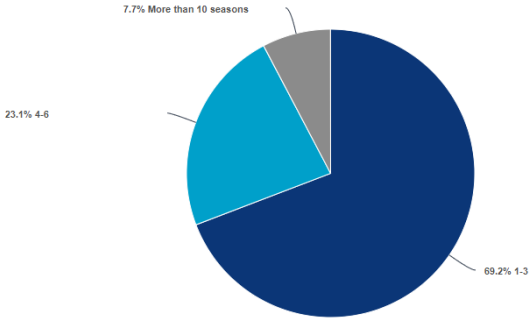



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 30 minutes | 76.9% | 10 |
| 30-60 minutes | 23.1% | 3 |
| | | Totals: 13 |

- Having all participants living within Chatham County, commute times are considered normal

## Question 3

3. How many seasons have you worked for Tybee Ocean Rescue?

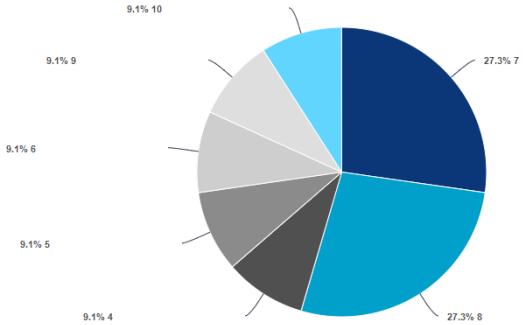



| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 | 69.2% | 9 |
| 4-6 | 23.1% | 3 |
| More than 10 seasons | 7.7% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 13 |

- A large majority of participants are within their first three years
- These numbers may reflect retention problems with returning lifeguards
- A junior staff makes supervisors more necessary with management and education

## Question 4

4. What is your overall satisfaction as an employee with Tybee Ocean Rescue?




| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | 27.3% | 3 |
| 8 | 27.3% | 3 |
| 4 | 9.1% | 1 |
| 5 | 9.1% | 1 |
| 6 | 9.1% | 1 |
| 9 | 9.1% | 1 |
| 10 | 9.1% | 1 |
| | | Totals: 11 |

- Overall satisfaction with Tybee Island Ocean Rescue was very positive from the participants
- Only two personnel rated their satisfaction at a five or below

## Question 5

5. Thinking about Tybee Ocean Rescue as an organization, what are some of its strengths and opportunities?

- There were 13 comments regarding the Ocean Rescue program's strengths and opportunities
- The majority indicated a connection with the community is an opportunity to educate the public
- The personnel were noted several times as a strength of the program
- An opportunity to work in emergency services and connect with other Tybee Island emergency response personnel is a growth opportunity
- *"Tybee Ocean Rescue offers many opportunities to interact with and inform people. The people I work with directly form a great work environment that is very encouraging."*
- *"Tybee Island Ocean Rescue comprises a handful of dedicated employees who have devoted significant time to the organization despite facing frequent adversity over the years."*
- *"Provides cool opportunities to work with other firefighters, police officers, military service members, or people pursuing medicine. Essentially, you get to connect with other people who care about serving the community they are in."*

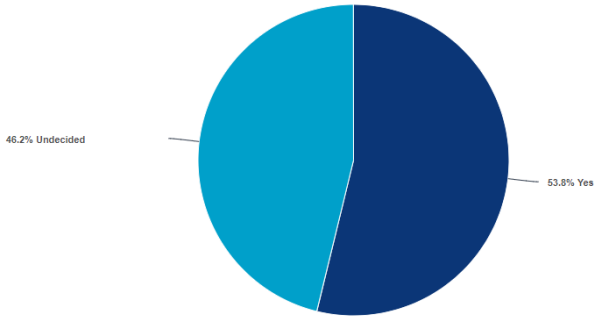
## Question 6

6. Thinking about Tybee Ocean Rescue as an organization, what are some of its challenges and risks?

- There were 13 comments regarding the Ocean Rescue program's challenges and risks
- The majority indicated upper fire management and staffing as the most significant challenges
- Equipment was a focus with replacement and proper equipment for beach conditions
- Lack of working hours and pay were addressed as recruitment and retention risks
- "It was difficult to feel prepared on the beach because we had supervisors who couldn't show up because they had maxed out their hours. So, we had days where we didn't have enough supervisors on the beach."
- "One of the challenges of Tybee Ocean Rescue is that we often seem understaffed. I know that this summer specifically, our hours were limited significantly, and because of this, this job couldn't be a sole source of income for anyone with bills to pay."
- "Lack of direction, consistency, and greater vision from upper leadership positions."
- "Recruiting seems to be a challenge that this organization faces. There are many high schools and colleges nearby where tables could easily be set up on campus to try and target future employees."

## Question 7

7. Do you plan on returning next season to Tybee Ocean Rescue?




| Value | Percent | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 53.8% | 7 |
| Undecided | 46.2% | 6 |

Totals: 13

- With just over 50% of participants indicating they will come back next season, it is concerning for recruitment
- Survey shows 46.2% indicated that they were unsure if they would return to Tybee Island Ocean Rescue next year

## Question 8

8. What are some factors that would lead you not to return to Tybee Ocean Rescue?

- There were 13 comments regarding factors that may lead to not returning to Tybee Island Ocean Rescue
- The majority indicated lack of hours and pay would lead to seeking employment elsewhere
- Lack of leadership and support from fire management was a strong indicator of not returning
- If the program was outsourced, returning to Tybee would not be a priority
- “Salary/benefits and the uncertainty of operational procedures moving forward.”
- “If I couldn't work enough hours again, I couldn't keep this job.”
- “Fire leadership has been a problem in the past, so I think ocean rescue should be a separate department.”
- “If they do not find a way to bridge the divide between hours and pay, I, along with others, would have no choice but to find other jobs.”

## Question 9

9. Do you have any additional feedback that you would like to share regarding Tybee Ocean Rescue?

- There were 12 responses with additional comments regarding Tybee Fire Rescue
- Support from leadership and the city would be greatly appreciated
- 2024 had some terrific saves from a solid team
- Appropriate stiffing for population and conditions is warranted
- Equipment and public information tools are necessary to be proficient
- Competitive pay for recruitment and retention, underpaid relative to the industry
- Inclusion in meetings, decisions, and emergency planning

# 6.4. Mayor and Administration Interviews

Our consulting team conducted interviews with various city and administrative personnel to help provide insight into the governance and administrative processes of Tybee Island. Our team engaged in open discussion with the ability for questions to be asked by both parties to build an equal understanding of the city and the project. Key focus areas were the budget process, government structure, and challenges the City and Department faced. Our consulting team looked to identify common themes, comments, and cultural environments.

Our consulting team was able to conduct the following interviews with department personnel:

- Human Resource Director
- Finance Director
- Interim City Manager
- Mayor
- Contract City Project Manager

Our consulting team compiled the comments from these interviews to help identify strengths and weaknesses and provide actionable recommendations to the city and Department.

The top common themes noted were as follows:

- Report structure and deliverables
- Fire Chief status
- Staffing
- Fleet and station conditions
- Possible deficiencies
- Future construction needs

Overall, the administration was pleased with the progress. Our consulting team ensured we could answer questions throughout the process and after the project's completion for continued support.

# 6.5. Fire Department Stakeholder Interviews

Our consulting team interviewed the immediate surrounding fire chiefs, and the dispatch center used by Tybee Island Police and fire department to provide insight into the working relationships, communications, and response models. Our team engaged in open discussion with the ability for questions to be asked by both parties to build an equal understanding of the city and the project. Key focus areas were leadership, communications, inter-agency operations, and dispatch challenges. Our consulting team looked to identify common themes, comments, and cultural environments.

Our consulting team was able to conduct the following interviews with stakeholder personnel:

- Tybee Police Chief
- Dispatch Supervisor
- Chatham County EMS CEO
- Chatham County Fire Chief

The top common themes noted were as follows:

- Broken relationships with past leadership
- Lost identity after moving to a paid department
- Poor communication and coordination between the departments and other agencies

Overall, the stakeholders interviewed had a positive perspective on TIFR and were pleased to be a key partner with them. However, the top areas identified for improvement were communications and leadership. All outside stakeholders wanted to see progress and success for the Department.


# SECTION 7. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSESSMENT

# 7.1. Consultant's Findings

*This section outlines a non-prioritized listing of specific and general findings by our consulting team related to the Scope of Work for this Study, in addition to supplemental findings that were uncovered and are noteworthy to highlight. Key elements and supporting recommendations for each finding have been bolded for easy recognition. Prioritized and timeline-focused recommendations are also forthcoming within this section of the Report.*

## 7.1.1. Organizational Structure and Role Delegation

**The current organizational structure of TIFR presents a "light" administrative team. Since TIFR is a small organization and the ability to maintain multiple administrative officers is not feasible, a few positions supporting administrative functions could increase administrative capabilities and accountability**. Our consulting team identified uneven role delegation within the ranks. Notably, its Ocean Rescue Sergeant position functions in a capacity that warrants a higher Lieutenant title as it supervises a division within the Department. The creation of the Battalion Chief, or Division Chief, position is designed to provide chief-level oversight and responsibility in support of the Fire Chief. While this role could be filled at the captain level, as in the past, our consulting team believes introducing a second chief-level position would improve productivity, accountability, decision-making, coordination, and succession planning. Traditionally, the level of Captain and Lieutenant could be considered the same with different titles depending on the organization, thus another reason to utilize the Battalion Chief title over Captain.

The delegation of responsibilities among Fire Lieutenant positions has been observed to be light and redundant. This first-level supervisory role within TIFR should be expanded to include broader roles and administrative duties, while the sergeant position could be assigned lower-level administrative functions. By shifting the current Lieutenant's responsibilities to the promoted Sergeant position, Lieutenants can take on more significant tasks, such as managing programs similar to the Ocean Rescue position. For each administrative position, dedicated official use of cellular phones should be assigned, and the use of personal phones for official business should be prohibited. At the same time, available daytime-use vehicles should be available for the Battalion Chief and Ocean Rescue Lieutenant.

The proposed organizational chart outlines the chain of command from the firefighter up to the Fire Chief. Currently, the structure designates the shift sergeant as the first-line supervisor for the firefighter rank. Even though the sergeant can assume a leadership role on an apparatus or during the absence of the shift lieutenant, the shift sergeant should not be responsible for handling personnel matters, conducting annual reviews, or providing daily oversight. These functions should remain at the appropriate supervisory level to maintain clear lines of authority and accountability.

Adding administrative responsibilities to fire department roles brings several benefits. It improves efficiency by distributing the workload more evenly, leading to quicker decision-making and smoother operations. It also promotes leadership development, allowing firefighters to gain valuable management experience and advance within the department. Administrative tasks, including budget management, scheduling, and equipment oversight, contribute to better resource management and enhanced accountability. **By embedding administrative roles throughout the department, operational staff and leadership communication improve, resulting in better coordination and strategic decision-making. Increased focus on compliance and proper documentation further ensures that the department meets regulatory standards. Additionally, sharing administrative responsibilities will allow the chief officers to concentrate on higher-level planning while ensuring that operational tasks are effectively managed.** Ultimately, this integration should strengthen both the administrative and operational functions of TIFR. **Figure 7.A**. displays a proposed organizational chart, while **Table 7.B.** outlines the delegated responsibilities for each proposed position. Our consulting team also noted that supervisors were utilizing personal phones for work business, this practice should be discontinued, and work phones should be distributed for professional business.

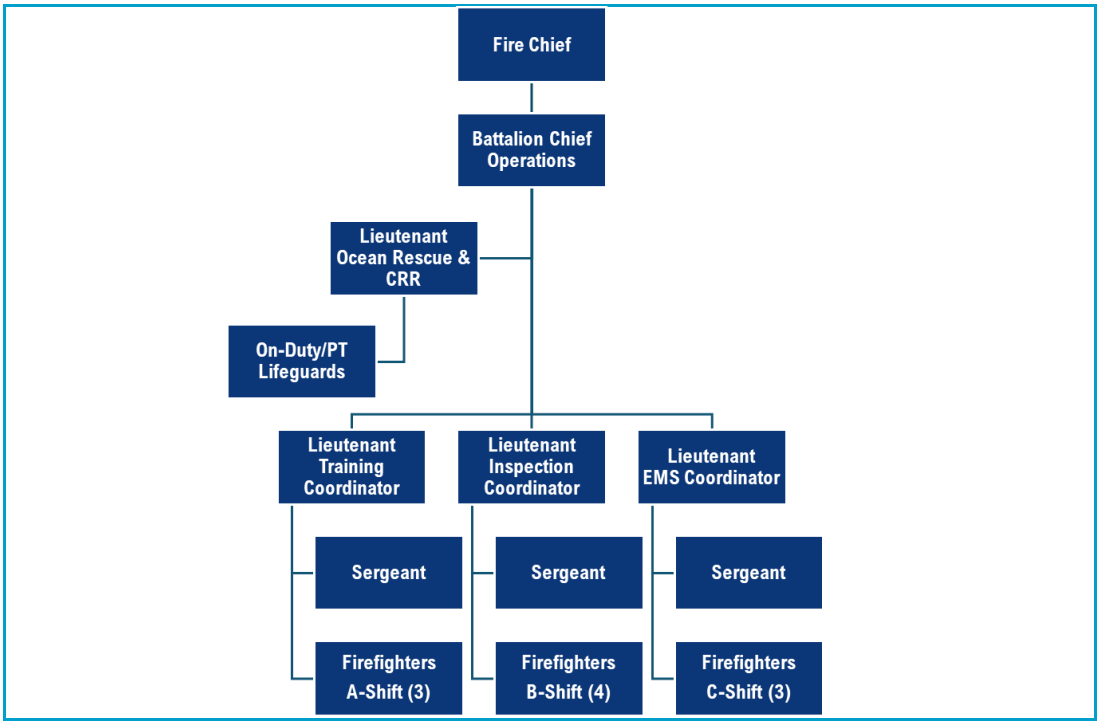



**Figure 7.A. Proposed TIFR Organizational Chart and Chain of Command Structure**

| Position | Responsibilities (Non-exhaustive List) |
|---|---|
| **Fire Chief** | Chief executive & financial officer, city representation, Emergency Manager, budget management, primary stakeholder group representation, capital planning, contract management, contract management. *These duties should be conducted and housed in the Public Safety Building, and the fire chief should be relocated from the fire station building.* |
| **Battalion Chief Operations** | Chief administrative officer, chief operations officer, human resources/personnel management, payroll management, policy management, compliance management, risk management, health & exposure reporting officer/management, records management, data management, procurement management, staffing management |
| **Ocean Rescue Lieutenant/Community Risk Reduction Coordinator** | Lifeguard recruitment/hiring, beach operations management, scheduling, training, reports, performance evaluations, budget management for beach and education programs, public awareness/education, PIO, inventory, PPE/uniforms, coordination with outside agencies |
| **Fire Lieutenant (Training Coordinator)** | Develop training programs, evaluate training needs, schedule department training, training compliance, record keeping, outside agency training coordination, safety standards |
| **Fire Lieutenant (Inspection Coordinator)** | Business fire inspection coordination, scheduling, documentation/reporting, training/education, collaboration with County Fire Marshal |
| **Fire Lieutenant (EMS Coordinator)** | Manage EMS operations, coordination with the Medical Director, training/education, compliance, and quality assurance |
| **Sergeant** | PPE / Uniform inventory and distribution, documentation, record keeping |
| **Sergeant** | Station Supplies inventory and distribution |
| **Sergeant** | EMS Supplies inventory and distribution |

**Table 7.B. Proposed TIFR Position Key Responsibility List**

## 7.1.2. Ocean Rescue

**The Ocean Rescue program is an integral part of the fire department and interacts with more residents and visitors than any other program on the island.** TIFR Ocean Rescue program is crucial in ensuring public safety and emergency response to beachgoers on Tybee Island. The beach is the most significant risk to Tybee Island and needs to be treated as such. TIFR Ocean Rescue is equipped to handle water-related emergencies like drownings, rip currents, and boating accidents, often making the difference between life and death. Monitoring water conditions, enforcing safety regulations, and educating the public about hazards help prevent accidents before they

occur. For communities reliant on tourism like Tybee, having an ocean rescue team boosts public confidence and promotes safer beaches.

The most significant concern is the communication, budgeting, and oversight gap of the Ocean Rescue Program. There is a distinct "us and them" culture between the fire and beach operations. **The need for strong, positive leadership to bridge the gap and form seamless services is a priority to continue good service to the community.** Administrative needs noted are as follows:

- There is a need to manage separate budget line items for uniforms, equipment, public education, etc.
- Training needs for recruits, budgeting, and time allocated to hold an academy before the season starts.
- Pay—As noted in the Employee Engagement Survey, pay is not competitive in the market for retention purposes. With hours needing to be cut back for seasonal employees, there should be a market adjustment.
- Re-incorporate qualified fire personnel to fill lifeguard positions to maintain adequate beach coverage when necessary. **Labor laws and financial hurdles will need to be overcome if possible.**

**Tybee Island has an opportunity to outsource the lifeguard program to a third party to handle all administration, operations, and capital, including program management, staffing, and all necessary equipment.** Outsourcing TIFR's ocean lifeguard program might offer cost savings but has notable downsides that can affect public safety and service quality. Suppose Tybee Island Ocean rescue services are outsourced. In that case, the City will lose direct control over lifeguard operations, training standards, and staffing, leading to inconsistent service and response protocols less tailored to Tybee Island's local beach conditions. Outsourced staff may not have the same familiarity with unique tides, sandbar complexity, weather, or community needs, potentially compromising their ability to respond to hazards effectively. Additionally, external providers might prioritize cost efficiency over quality, leading to lower wages, high staff turnover, and reduced morale, which can negatively impact the program's stability and professionalism. The trust of Tybee's beachgoers can also suffer, as residents may perceive outsourced lifeguards as less invested in public engagement and safety education. **Our consulting team believes TIFR has the means to have a robust and community-minded ocean rescue program that fire administration can manage effectively. With the right leadership and proper goals, the current program can thrive, serve the island's needs, and expand its current capabilities through technology and enhanced equipment.**

## 7.1.3. Incident Data Tracking

**Our consulting team identified several gaps in incident data, as outlined in SECTION 5.** Comprehensive tracking of incident data allows fire departments to make informed, data-driven decisions that enhance response capabilities and service delivery, ultimately ensuring greater safety for responders and their communities. We observed that the Ocean Rescue program lacked proper documentation of incidents and public interactions with medical care during dispatch. It is essential to record all incidents, including missing persons, jellyfish stings requiring treatment, and water entries by rescue personnel, to ensure the data accurately reflects the department's actions. **Therefore, our consulting team recommends implementing training and procedures that clearly define the communication and documentation processes for fire and ocean rescue incidents.**

## 7.1.4. Fleet Data Tracking

**TIFR currently does not utilize any software or internal program to track the status of the Department's fleet of vehicles.** Fleet data tracking is crucial for fire departments as it ensures the reliability and efficiency of their vehicles. By monitoring data on maintenance, fuel usage, and vehicle performance, departments can prevent breakdowns, extend vehicle lifespans, and optimize budget allocations. This tracking enhances safety by ensuring that vehicles are in top condition during emergency responses and helps comply with regulatory requirements. It also improves response times by ensuring suitable vehicles are ready for deployment. Additionally, tracking fleet data supports informed decision-making, promotes environmental sustainability, increases accountability, ensuring responsible management of public resources. **To address this gap, our consulting team recommends that the department consider a software platform that will address fleet management and other areas, such as preplanning, dispatch, and inventory.** Overall, effective fleet data tracking strengthens both operational readiness and public safety.

## 7.1.5. Outside Professional Development and Training Approval Procedure

Regarding the individual training needs of the rank-and-file firefighters, our consulting team found that **funding and determination/selection for outside training are inconsistent and, in many respects, lacking**. Our consulting team identified through survey results and interviews that training opportunities are often not funded or supported by the Department, and there is no absolute determination or priority on what outside training gets funded. Our *Employee Engagement Survey* identified that 90% of the

participants take part in unpaid training for career development. Internally addressing this, **our consulting team recommends that a formal process be developed to provide clarity to employees regarding how professional development and supplemental training opportunities are approved and funded**. This includes detailing which opportunities are prioritized, procedures for applying, training priorities, and how the Department supports elements such as registration fees, travel, lodging, and per diem costs. Time commitments should also be outlined, specifying when PTO is required, how shift coverage will be arranged, and under what conditions overtime will be approved. This structured approach ensures that training investments are aligned with departmental goals and employee development needs, facilitating effective budgeting and resource allocation.

## 7.1.6. Computer-Aided Dispatch

**TIFR currently does not have Computer-Aided Dispatching (CAD) on its apparatus for responding units to obtain critical information such as call address, call type, and vital patient information not to be distributed over the radio.** Our consulting team noted that there were Toughbook computers mounted in some apparatus, but they could not be utilized by any city dispatching services. Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems significantly benefit fire departments by enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of emergency responses. Integrated mapping and GPS help identify optimal routes and nearby hydrants, while multi-agency coordination ensures seamless collaboration with other emergency services. CAD systems also support post-incident analysis by recording detailed data, which aids performance evaluation and future planning. Additionally, it allows access to pre-incident plans, enhances decision-making, and ensures compliance with reporting standards. **To address this gap, our consulting team recommends pursuing options to upgrade the current unusable system to align with neighboring agencies and provide seamless dispatching with Chatham County units.**

## 7.1.7. Policies and Guidelines

**The current policy manual for TIFR was very extensive and challenging to navigate, with items that do not belong in a policy manual, such as job descriptions. Limited Standard Operating Guidelines were available for our team to evaluate during this Study.** Reflecting upon the differences between policies and guidelines, policies are formalized statements that define the principles, rules, and governing actions & decisions within the organization. They should cover personnel management, ethical conduct, and overall governance. These should be designed as objective and binding procedures that provide a framework for activities/actions.

Standard operating guidelines (SOGs) are detailed procedural instructions focusing on specific tasks and situations, such as fire suppression, medical response, and hazardous

materials incidents. They are more flexible, allow for situational adjustments based on professional judgment, and are updated frequently to incorporate new techniques, equipment, and staffing. While policies establish overarching rules, SOGs ensure consistency and efficiency in daily response operations.

To mitigate any current redundancies and/or confusion, **our consulting team recommends a complete review and revision of these documents for current practices and accuracy, including a defined separation between administrative policies and operational guidelines**. References such as credentialing criteria from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and standards promoted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) should be utilized as a framework to guide this effort.

## 7.1.8. Budgeting

**The City of Tybee Island allocates general fund expenditures to fire and ocean rescue services. Although this Study did not include an in-depth financial analysis, our consulting team observed that the budget lacks detailed breakdowns of expenditures.** For example, having a single category for supplies and equipment does not provide clarity for effectively budgeting programs like Ocean Rescue and EMS. Proper budgeting for categories like fuel, technology, and communication systems is essential for maintaining operational readiness, while supplies and EMS resources are crucial for daily operations and life-saving care. Funding for fire prevention programs, public education, and health and wellness initiatives enhances community safety and supports firefighter well-being. Each budget line item is critical in sustaining the department's readiness and protecting the public. **Our consulting team recommends that the current budget be broken down into more specific categories, allowing department managers to identify gaps early and ensure program support and sustainability.**

## 7.1.9. Future Consolidation Consideration

**Tybee Island faces unique challenges due to its location, demographics, and size. The fire department must maintain sustainability during emergencies while waiting for additional support, yet it lacks the budget and resources to be entirely self-sufficient.** By merging departments to create a combined department, the economy of scale efficiencies may be realized in terms of the reduction of unnecessary duplicated pieces of equipment or apparatus, utilizing a more dynamic approach toward system deployment, and better alignment and delegation of administrative responsibilities through expanded divisions with right-sized disciplines of responsibility. If the City determines that the cost of maintaining a fire department is too high, TIFR could benefit from improved resource allocation, cost savings by centralizing leadership, standardization of training standards and facilities, and access to advanced equipment and technology that may be too

expensive for a smaller organization like TIFR. Specifically, our consulting team sees a viable opportunity for future consolidation between the Tybee and Chatham County fire departments if so desired. **Looking into the long-term future of the TIFR, this presents itself as a low-level consideration that should be continually revisited as a long-term sustainability option if the City chooses to discontinue supporting TIFR.** Moreover, short-term opportunities exist for greater shared services alignment with Chatham County Fire.

## 7.1.10. Fire Shift Schedule

**TIFR currently operates on a 24/48 work schedule, where fire personnel work 24 hours on duty and then have 48 hours off duty every three days.** Given Tybee Island's geographic location, commute times for some personnel, and future recruitment needs, shifting to a schedule like the 48/96 could be beneficial. This schedule, where firefighters work two consecutive 24-hour shifts followed by four days off, offers numerous advantages for personnel and departmental operations. The 48/96 schedule enhances work-life balance, supports adequate rest and recovery, and helps reduce burnout by providing more consecutive days off. With fewer commutes, firefighters save time and experience less travel stress, which is especially helpful for those who live farther from the station. **This model streamlines staffing and scheduling, as fewer shift changes may reduce administrative costs and overtime.** With a complete four-day break after each shift block, firefighters are generally better able to stay focused and engaged during their on-duty time.

**Our consulting team recommends the 48/96 schedule for TIFR, as it was also supported in the *Employee Engagement Survey*.** Many options are available to consider, such as the location of the Department and the commute times, which should be a priority when considering recruitment and how far future employees are willing to travel. Our consulting team has included **Table 7.C.** to give perspective. Several Georgia fire departments have explored the 48/96 work schedule through pilot programs to assess its impact on reducing fatigue, improving firefighter health, and boosting operational efficiency. These trials often included modifications, such as later shift start times, to encourage better sleep and overall well-being. The Perry Fire Department has adopted the 48/96 schedule, citing notable benefits, including improved morale, better work-life balance, extended four-day breaks, reduced long-term fatigue, and enhanced recruitment and retention efforts. *This is not an all-inclusive list but a quick snapshot of nearby departments or those who have publicly commented about their experience with the 48/96 shift schedule.*

| Department | 24/48 | 48/96 | Considering 48/96 | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tybee Island Fire/Rescue | X | --- | YES | ---- |
| Chatham County Fire | X | --- | UNKNOWN | --- |
| Savannah Fire | X | --- | YES | --- |
| Pooler Fire | X | --- | YES | --- |
| Garden City Fire | --- | X | --- | --- |
| Bloomingdale Fire | X | --- | NO | --- |
| Port Wentworth Fire | X | --- | UNKNOWN | --- |
| Airport Fire 165th | --- | X | --- | --- |
| Thunderbolt Fire | --- | X | --- | --- |
| Isle of Hope Fire | --- | --- | NO | Day Shift Only M-F |
| Roswell Fire | --- | X | --- | --- |
| Perry Fire | --- | X | --- | --- |

Table 7.C. Georgia Fire Department Shift Schedules

# 7.2. Consultant's Recommendations

*Recommendations outlined within this section reflect the Consultant's Findings from above and are prioritized on a High, Medium, and Low scale. Each recommendation is then benchmarked with a completion timeline of Immediate (0-6 months), Near Future (6-12 months), Short-Term (1-3 years), Long-Term (3-5 years), and Extended (5-10 years). The recommendation number referenced (i.e., R#) is based on its comprehensive task listing in* **SECTION 10.** *As a result, this section of the report may appear misnumbered.*

### (R4) Department Cellular Phones

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The Department should assign official use and dedicated cellular phones to all administrative positions, including one for the on-duty Battalion Chief. Personal phones should be prohibited for official business.

### (R7) Ocean Rescue Administrative Upgrades

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

With a new Fire Chief soon to be appointed, administrative needs should be prioritized for the next budget cycle. Focusing on recruitment, retention, and staffing is critical for the Ocean Rescue program to maintain staffing and response on the beaches of Tybee.

### (R8) Organizational Structure and Role Delegation

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Revise the department's organizational structure to define and distribute administrative functions across all ranks. This will enhance efficiency by improving role delegation, establishing dedicated areas of responsibility, ensuring consistent communication through clearly identified channels, and fostering mission-focused decision-making and accountability. With the addition of a new Fire Chief soon, this should be considered a re-alignment moving forward.

### (R9) Incident Data Tracking

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

To ensure accurate data is being captured by fire and ocean rescue incidents, investigations of documentation and reporting practices or software platform data communication issues should be conducted.

### (R10) Fleet Data Tracking

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

To ensure accurate tracking of capital items within the fleet, TIFR should consider a software platform to help monitor the equipment's status and aid in planning future purchasing needs.

### (R11) Future Ocean Rescue Staffing Level Increase

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Consideration should be given to increasing Ocean Rescue staffing to accommodate needs based on the beach population approach with a defined staffing matrix. (along with subsequent budgeted and minimum staffing levels) for next season.

### (R15) Budgeting

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Adding detailed line items to the TIFR budget will provide several benefits that enhance financial management and operational efficiency. It will increase transparency by clearly outlining specific categories of expenditures, such as personnel costs, equipment, training, and programs such as Ocean Rescue. This allows for better tracking of how funds are allocated and spent, promoting accountability. This will also facilitate more informed decision-making for TIFR managers to prioritize spending based on actual needs and operational priorities. Ultimately, line-item budgeting improves the department's ability to maintain readiness, manage resources effectively, and ensure long-term sustainability.

### (R18) Outside Professional Development and Training Approval Procedure

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

A formal process should be developed to clarify how professional development and supplemental training opportunities are approved and funded for employees. This process should include elements such as covered costs and time off.

### (R19) Policy and Guideline Revision

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Our consulting team received and reviewed the department's policy manual, which is very extensive but requires updating to reflect current practices and compliance. A complete review and revision of the *Policy Manual* should be initiated in the near future. This includes incorporating a defined separation between administrative policies and operational guidelines focused on eliminating current redundancies and reducing overall page counts. References such as credentialing criteria from the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS), as well as standards promoted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), should be utilized as a framework to guide this effort. It is understood that this will be an extensive project that will take over a year to complete and requires frequent updating and revising, recommended on a three-year interval. Additional effort should be placed on separating and developing regional operational guidelines to promote unified incident operations with collaborating neighboring agencies.

### (R20) Implementation of Computer-Aided Dispatching (CAD)

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Our consulting team recommends upgrading the unusable system to align better with neighboring agencies. This will allow seamless dispatching with Chatham County units and aid in data tracking and reporting requirements.

### (R22) Change in Fire Shift Schedule

High | Medium | **Low** || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

Changing the current work schedule for fire personnel should be considered in the next 1-3 years to add a balanced work schedule for current personnel, possibly expanding outreach for future employees, reducing travel to and from work, and streamlining administrative oversight.

### (R23) Future Consolidation Efforts

High | Medium | **Low** || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | **Long-Term** | Extended

While not a pressing priority, opportunities exist for the TIFR to consolidate with the Chatham County Fire Department. At a minimum, further exploration of this opportunity should be evaluated over the next three to five years and beyond as conditions change. This will largely depend on the City's willingness to continue supporting TIFR.

# SECTION 8. OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

# 8.1. Consultant's Findings

*This section outlines a non-prioritized listing of specific and general findings by our consulting team related to the Scope of Work for this Study, in addition to supplemental findings that were uncovered and are noteworthy to highlight. Key elements and supporting recommendations for each finding have been bolded for easy recognition. Prioritized and timeline-focused recommendations are also forthcoming within this section of the Report.*

## 8.1.1. Personal Protective Equipment & Uniforms

Typical personal protective equipment (PPE) utilized by TIFR firefighters includes but is not limited to structural firefighting turnout gear ensembles (i.e., coat, pants, gloves, helmet, hood), self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), traffic vests, and EMS-related items such as medical gloves, masks, and gowns. NFPA 1970 consolidated many standards into a single document to address PPE needs, such as work uniforms, structural PPE, SCBA, and personal alert safety systems. PPE is also discussed in many other standards that need to be considered such as *NFPA 1975: Standard on Station/Work Uniforms*.

**Our consulting team identified multiple areas that were not fully compliant with these NFPA standards. These areas should be addressed to promote firefighters' and lifeguards' safety in their all-hazards response environment.**

**Areas of Fire PPE deficiencies include:**

- Leather gloves for apparatus/equipment check or grass fires
- Personal-issued eye protection for equipment checks and EMS calls
- Footwear should contain, at minimum, a composite toe box for safety
- Shorts that meet thermal-stability test along with water-repellent properties would be ideal

**Areas of Ocean Rescue PPE deficiencies include:**

- Radios with provided earpieces for communication clarity in loud environments
- Rain/Wind jackets
- Swim Fins replacement
- Rescue Boards replacement
- Personal-issued eye protection for equipment checks and EMS calls

Recently, the TIFR has provided all firefighting personnel with two sets of turnout gear to facilitate quick cleaning after contamination, designed to reduce the risk of cancer experienced by firefighters. This practice should be maintained, alongside proper care for all PPE. *NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting* specifies the requirements for proper care and maintenance, including monthly and annual inspections and cleanings. An administrative procedure or SOG should be established to outline this process, including documentation of all inspections, cleanings, and repairs. **As an overview, the City should fully financially support the annual maintenance and initial issue of necessary PPE, branded uniform items, and supplemental uniform items for fire and ocean rescue operations.**

## 8.1.2. Operating Equipment

**Fire and rescue equipment is essential for ensuring the safety, effectiveness, and readiness of TIFR and Tybee Ocean Rescue in responding to emergencies.** High-quality, reliable equipment like fire hoses, ladders, and water rescue boards enables firefighters and lifeguards to safely enter hazardous environments, suppress fires, and rescue individuals. Specialized tools like thermal imaging cameras, extrication devices, and drones support various rescue and emergency tasks, improving outcomes in life-threatening situations. **Properly maintained and updated equipment is vital for protecting both responders and the public. Some items noted by our consulting team showed areas needing improvement or an opportunity to enhance response capabilities.**

**Fire Department Equipment Needs:**

- Fire suppression nozzles
- Hydrant wrenches
- Upgraded stair chair

**Ocean Rescue Equipment/Operational Needs:**

- Hard EMS cases to replace the current soft cases that are not suitable for sandy/wet operations on the beach
- Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) should be readily accessible in all lifeguard towers and ATVs.
- Communication equipment on ATVs for public information/warnings, such as mounted speakers with microphones or simple megaphones, should be added to start the process. Current practice is yelling to warn beachgoers of hazardous situations, such as sandbar access.
- Public Buoy Stations – Implementing these stations would enhance safety for beachgoers during times when lifeguard services are unavailable, such as after hours

or in the off-season. Our consulting team recommends installing a rescue buoy station near each boardwalk, equipped with clear instructions and a numbering system. This system would allow individuals to provide 911 dispatchers with the exact location of an emergency, ensuring a quicker and more accurate response.

- Drone program—Over the years, Tybee has downsized the Ocean Rescue program from eleven lifeguard stations to four, creating significant gaps from the north to the south end of the island. Implementing air and water drones could quickly increase situational awareness of beach and population conditions but add another element of rapid rescue to the diminishing staffing.
    - An air drone beach survey involves using drones to conduct aerial assessments of a beach area, providing real-time data and images that can significantly enhance public safety, environmental monitoring, and resource management.
    - Water rescue drones are specialized unmanned water vehicles designed to assist in emergencies involving water hazards, such as drownings, boating accidents, or missing persons in aquatic environments. These drones enhance the capabilities of rescue teams and improve response times while larger watercraft are being deployed.
- Mobile warning flags mounted on beach all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for public awareness of changing conditions
- Rescue boards can be mounted on ATVs for expedient water entry. Currently, boards are stored at lifeguard stations and are not readily deployable.
- Emergency lighting on ATVs for public awareness and safety
- Beach deployable jet ski trailers would be beneficial for rapid rescue operations. The jet skis must be towed to the boat ramp for water entry, delaying emergency rescues.
- A minimum of two ATVs and jet skis for patrol and deployable rescue watercraft to cover the wide range of the beach.

## 8.1.3. Dispatch and Communications Operations

Fire dispatch and communications systems are essential for ensuring the efficient coordination and management of emergency responses. **TIFR utilized the Tybee Police dispatch center for 911 fire and EMS emergencies. Ocean Rescue does have a dedicated station within the dispatch center as a relay point of communication for the lifeguards; they do not process 911 calls.** Chatham County EMS, the ambulance provider, utilizes its own 911 center, while Chatham County Fire utilizes the county dispatch center. Our consulting team had conversations with all stakeholders involved with emergency responses to Tybee Island; there were common themes noted from all parties, which are listed below:

- Difficulty with communication due to the operation of separate frequencies
- EMS dispatching is unclear with what TIFR units should respond (left up to the crew)
- Separate computer dispatching does not allow for automatic aid dispatching
- Standard Operating Procedures are not clear, and hard to train new dispatchers
- Poor communication on fire incidents, no standardized communication model
- Too much turnover at the upper management of TIFR to standardize anything
- No mobile radios are installed in any fire apparatus or chief vehicle; this is a significant safety issue that needs to be addressed.

Tybee Police Dispatch does not have advanced systems to prioritize dispatching for fire and EMS incidents. This is common nationally, as police dispatching does not require incident prioritization, such as determining the level of EMS care needed for a particular incident. Non-Emergency Medical Dispatch (non-EMD) systems have significant shortfalls that can impact the effectiveness of emergency responses, particularly in medical situations. Without EMD protocols, dispatchers are unable to provide crucial pre-arrival instructions such as CPR guidance or choking interventions, leaving bystanders without direction in life-threatening situations. Additionally, non-EMD systems cannot accurately prioritize calls based on severity, leading to potential misallocation of resources and delays in response to critical incidents. Dispatchers may also struggle to gather detailed medical information, resulting in inconsistent resource deployment and increased risk for responders who lack vital scene context. These limitations can negatively affect patient outcomes and reduce overall operational efficiency, making non-EMD dispatch systems less capable of handling medical emergencies than EMD-equipped operations.

Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) provides real-time dispatching, integrated mapping, and GPS tracking, allowing fire units to respond swiftly and accurately to incidents. Two-way radio communication and tactical channels facilitate clear communication between dispatchers and firefighters, especially during complex emergencies. Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) further enhance operations by providing direct access to critical incident

information from vehicles. These systems also support the Incident Command System (ICS), enabling seamless command and control, while emergency medical dispatch (EMD) offers pre-arrival instructions and triage capabilities. Together, these technologies enhance resource allocation, improve response times, and ensure effective coordination between fire departments and other emergency services, ultimately contributing to the safety of responders and the community. **Adding these capabilities does come with a monetary investment; opportunities should be considered to consolidate with neighboring agencies dispatch like Chatham County, which has already built up a system to manage these needs.**

## 8.1.4. Fire-Based EMS Response

Fire-based EMS response is vital to modern emergency services, offering numerous benefits that enhance public safety and health outcomes. By integrating fire and medical services, communities can achieve more efficient emergency response, improved collaboration, and better preparedness for various emergencies. **TIFR currently employs a fire-based EMS system with ambulance transportation to definitive care by Chatham County EMS. Chatham County EMS provides Paramedic (ALS) ambulance service to Tybee Island with crew quarters at the local YMCA.** This model serves the community's needs and does not show gaps in the care of those in need. Fire-based EMS systems provide varying levels of emergency medical care based on the training and certification of their personnel. These levels range from basic life-saving interventions to advanced medical procedures, including critical care paramedicine and tactical EMS.

The AEMT level of care represents an intermediate stage in emergency medical services, bridging the gap between Basic EMTs and paramedics. AEMTs have advanced training and skills to perform more complex interventions than standard EMTs. They can manage advanced airway devices, administer a broader range of medications—including intravenous (IV) medications—and start and maintain IV lines for fluid resuscitation. They play a critical role in stabilizing patients during emergencies, working alongside paramedics to improve patient outcomes.

The department could manage this level of care in terms of equipment, training, budget, and staffing. **TIFR's attempt to maintain a Paramedic program presents challenges that can impact its effectiveness and sustainability.** Staffing and retention are key issues, as firefighter paramedics must balance the demands of firefighting and advanced medical care, leading to potential burnout and high turnover rates. Additionally, the extensive training required for dual certifications and the need for continuous education place a strain on personnel and resources. Budget constraints further complicate the situation, with high costs for advanced medical equipment, training, stipends, and operational support. Maintaining compliance with medical regulations and ensuring proper oversight add another layer of complexity.

**Our consulting team believes that the most appropriate and cost-effective service to Tybee would be AEMT (Advanced Emergency Medical Technician), a fire-based service relying on ALS from Chatham County EMS.** This aligns with the findings from the *Employee Engagement Survey*, which showed that more personnel are inclined to pursue AEMT certification rather than Paramedic certification. Offering this level of care will improve recruitment and retention efforts for TIFR by providing a more accessible certification path while enhancing the department's medical response capabilities.

## 8.1.5. Staffing Levels

**Maintaining appropriate staffing levels for Fire, EMS, and Ocean Rescue services on Tybee Island is critical to ensuring the safety and effectiveness of emergency response operations.** Adequate staffing allows for faster response times, ensuring that fire suppression, rescue, and medical care can be delivered promptly, which is often vital in life-threatening situations. Adequate staffing is essential for maintaining compliance with safety standards and operational protocols, such as meeting the required number of responders for tasks like entering a burning structure or managing large-scale and dynamic incidents. Maintaining proper staffing levels ultimately enhances the department's ability to protect responders and the community.

TIFR currently budgets to staff fire apparatus with a maximum of six personnel and a minimum of four per shift. This staffing model meets the current call volume demand; however, it does not allow for crew safety, responding to multiple incidents, and appropriate staffing with the extended resource backup response to Tybee Island. **Our consulting team recommends increasing the maximum to seven and the minimum to five. This adjustment would enable a more flexible response model, allowing the deployment of smaller, more agile vehicles (like Squad 1) for EMS and non-emergency calls while ensuring the larger apparatus remains adequately staffed and reducing wear and tear on heavy equipment. Adding an extra person per shift will also help reduce the reliance on overtime personnel and strengthen the overall response capability for all emergencies.** This implementation should be gradual, over a 3-5-year period, to allow for resource management and recruiting. Our team recommends beginning during the peak season to allow for flexibility by adding beach patrol periodically and staffing a light resource for low-acuity calls. **With this additional increase, our consulting team recommends developing and enforcing a daily staffing matrix that outlines which units are staffed and with how many crew members, as the minimum staffing level is exceeded through the availability of additional budgeted personnel** (Table 8.A.).

| Unit | 5 Personnel (Minimum Staffing) | 6 Personnel | 6 Personnel (Option 2) | 7 Personnel (Proposed) | 7 Personnel (Option 2) | 8 Personnel |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Truck 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Engine 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Squad 1 | (Unstaffed) | (Unstaffed) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Tanker 1 | (Unstaffed) | (Unstaffed) | (Unstaffed) | (Unstaffed) | 1 | 1 |

**This additional staffing amount accounts for our consulting team's recommended increase to the budgeted staffing level for each shift.*

**Table 8.A. Recommended TIFR Daily Staffing Matrix**

Conducting a community risk assessment involves evaluating the likelihood, consequences, and impacts of incidents within the community. **On Tybee Island, the beach presents the highest risk, making it essential to prioritize a standard of coverage for this area**. Ocean Rescue has faced a steady decline in staffing over the years, including removing seven lifeguard towers, which previously allowed personnel to monitor visitors and water conditions. A roving patrol model has been implemented to compensate, but this model still limits the number of personnel available for rescue operations. Our consulting team recommends creating a staffing matrix to assist with planning, scheduling, and managing beach rescue operations to include the appropriate span of control with available supervisors of no more than 1:7. A tiered staffing approach could increase the number of lifeguards during peak hours while extending coverage throughout the day. Re-engaging fire personnel in beach rescue operations would help address staffing gaps and support long-term recruitment and retention efforts. **Ultimately, enhancing beach staffing should be a priority to ensure Tybee Island residents' and visitors' safety and well-being.**

# 8.2. Consultant's Recommendations

*Recommendations outlined within this section reflect the Consultant's Findings from above and are prioritized on a High, Medium, and Low scale. Each recommendation is then benchmarked with a completion timeline of Immediate (0-6 months), Near Future (6-12 months), Short-Term (1-3 years), Long-Term (3-5 years), and Extended (5-10 years). The recommendation number referenced (i.e., R#) is based on its comprehensive task listing in* **SECTION 10.** *As a result, this section of the report may appear misnumbered.*

### (R2) Ocean Rescue Equipment Upgrades

**High** | Medium | Low || **Immediate** | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Equipment upgrades can be executed through a phased approach, prioritizing essential items first. The top priority should be upgrading hard equipment bags and communications gear for the ATVs. The next priority would be acquiring AEDs for all lifeguard stations and beach ATVs, with potential future consideration for public access AEDs. While a drone program is feasible, it will require specialized training, equipment, and the development of policies and procedures, making it a lower priority that can be delayed and revisited later. Public buoy stations will be addressed separately from this plan.

### (R3) Ocean Rescue Operational Upgrades

**High** | Medium | Low || **Immediate** | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The recommended operational upgrades will not require a significant investment but will significantly advance response capabilities. Operational needs should be prioritized for next season.

### (R5) Standardization, Distribution, and Maintenance of PPE

**High** | Medium | Low || **Immediate** | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The City should fully financially support the annual maintenance and initial issue of necessary PPE for the Department's apparatus and employees. This should include policy and guidelines for issuance, use, and replacement.

### (R6) Installation of mobile radios in all emergency response vehicles

**High** | Medium | Low || Immediate | **Near Future** | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The addition of mobile radios allows for safe driving practices and clear, concise communication of critical information while in transit, as well as command transmissions from chief officer vehicles during emergency operations.

### (R12) Fire-Based EMS Response Level

**High** | Medium | Low || Immediate | **Near Future** | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Advanced EMT standard of coverage is recommended for Tybee Island. Coordination with the Medical Director should be prioritized for training, equipment, and protocols.

### (R17) Addition of Public Self-Rescue Devices to the Beach

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The addition of numbered public self-rescue buoy stations on the beach side of each boardwalk would increase the safety of beachgoers, who would have the ability to initiate rescue for a person in need while 911 is being called.

### (R21) Dispatch/Communications Standardization

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Advancement to current equipment and operating procedures or consolidation with Chatham County Dispatch should be evaluated, and planning should be implemented. The ability to work and communicate seamlessly with all surrounding agencies (fire, EMS, police, Marine Squadron, etc.) in disaster situations should be prioritized.

### (R23) Future Fire Apparatus Staffing Level Increase

High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Consider increasing all fire staffing levels from six to seven members per shift (along with subsequent budgeted and minimum staffing levels) within the next five years. This will allow for TIFR to be prepared to be self-sufficient. At the same time, reinforcements arrive at large-scale incidents and maintain the capability to run multiple EMS incidents, especially during peak season.

# SECTION 9. CAPITAL ASSESSMENT

# 9.1. Consultant's Findings

*This section outlines a non-prioritized listing of specific and general findings by our consulting team related to the Scope of Work for this Study, in addition to supplemental findings that were uncovered and are noteworthy to highlight. Key elements and supporting recommendations for each finding have been bolded for easy recognition. Prioritized and timeline-focused recommendations are also forthcoming within this section of the Report.*

## 9.1.1. Capital Budgeting and Planning

**TIFR does not manage a large amount of capital, with the fire station being the biggest capital asset, followed by the large fire apparatus.** The need for a new fire station is overdue, and plans for a multi-use facility should be explored, potentially incorporating an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and space for an ambulance staffed by Chatham County EMS. Future capital investments will likely require increased tax revenues unless significant grant opportunities can be secured to fund these essential improvements. Ongoing funding for the maintenance of these assets must also be addressed. The city and department should also consider the potential consolidation/merger with a neighboring county fire department in future planning efforts. **Capital planning should be approached through a dynamic Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) focusing on safety, regulatory compliance, long-term use, return on investment, service enhancement, employee development, and alignment with the department's *Strategic Plan*.**

## 9.1.2. Fleet Summary

Our consulting team assessed the Department's fleet, covering mileage, maintenance, and the condition of each apparatus. **Overall, the fleet is generalized as being in good condition. However, capital planning is necessary for its sustainability.** Fire and EMS apparatus build times are currently taking two to three years from purchase to delivery and have been steadily increasing in cost between 20-30% annually for various reasons. TIFR's current fleet condition is sufficient to maintain service for the foreseeable future without a substantial increase in maintenance costs or a significant shift in its deployment model. **It is a priority to develop a plan for selling ancillary and older reserve fleet vehicles, followed by a master plan for purchasing new frontline apparatus when needed to ensure continued service quality and operational efficiency.**

Apparatus identified that could most likely be sold as soon as practical are:

- Marine 1 – 22' Zodiac

    - Currently impractical use and ability to launch for rescue incidents
    - Additional resources available in the area with quicker response times
    - Only two personnel are qualified to operate
- Jon Boat – 17' flatbottom
    - Not utilized or required for operations
- Search and Rescue 2 – SeaDoo FishPro
    - Poor condition
- Search and Rescue 4 – SeaDoo GTX
    - Out of Service - unrepairable
- Rescue 1 – Ford 550
    - Not practical for quick EMS operations
    - Large turning radius
    - Squad 1 could handle the same operational use
- UTV – Grey HD9
    - Poor condition
- UTV – Red HD9
    - Poor condition

**By reducing this inventory and reducing the liability of their cost and condition (through selling or trade-in opportunities), TIFR generates start-up revenue to begin funding new frontline fire apparatuses or upgrades to the current apparatus.** To manage and reduce the costs associated with purchasing new fire apparatus, TIFR can implement several strategic measures such as bulk purchasing through cooperative agreements with neighboring departments, exploring grants and funding opportunities (such as the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program – AFG – and Safe Streets and Roadways for All – SS4A), apparatus leasing and financing to spread out costs, and refurbishing existing vehicles to extend the service life of current apparatus at a fraction of the cost of new purchases. Standardizing fleet specifications and limiting customization can also reduce expenses.

General apparatus lifespans and replacement plans should consist of the following:

- **Engine:** 15 years frontline plus five years reserve; 1 new unit every 12-15 years
- **Truck:** 15 years frontline plus five years reserve; 1 new unit every 12-15 years

## 9.1.3. Station Summary

Our consulting team comprehensively assessed all capital structures covering operational use, physical state, safety, apparatus/storage space, amenities, and access/security. **Overall, the Department needs a new fire station, preferably with a change of location to one of the proposed sites on Butler Avenue.** Our consulting team has reviewed the station plans and understands the FEMA funding available for constructing a Safe Shelter/EOC. **The decision to move forward with construction is on a timeline that cannot be delayed any further to execute the 3-year timeframe and should be a priority of the City.**

This new station will enhance operational capabilities and provide modern amenities and improved safety features. However, planning for future sustainability is essential, and the addition of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) should be considered in the construction plans. The current station location can be re-purposed into green space and re-designed with park amenities for the residents of Tybee Island. **The current Ocean Rescue Quarters meet the needs, but improvements could be made to crew efficiency and resource management.** Strategic planning and budgeting will be necessary to ensure these upgrades are completed and maintain the department's high standards of service and safety.

# 9.2. Consultant's Recommendations

*Recommendations outlined within this section reflect the Consultant's Findings from above and are prioritized on a High, Medium, and Low scale. Each recommendation is then benchmarked with a completion timeline of Immediate (0-6 months), Near Future (6-12 months), Short-Term (1-3 years), Long-Term (3-5 years), and Extended (5-10 years). The recommendation number referenced (i.e., R#) is based on its comprehensive task listing in* **SECTION 10.** *As a result, this section of the report may appear misnumbered.*

### (R1) Fire Station Replacement

**High** | Medium | Low || **Immediate** | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The construction of a new Station 1 should be prioritized for operational advancement, safety, resource and equipment space, and recruitment and retention. Planning, budgeting, and land allocation should be decided quickly to maintain FEMA funding, with the understanding that construction will be ongoing for the next 1-4 years.

### (R13) Capital Planning

**High** | Medium | Low || Immediate | **Near Future** | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

The city should emphasize capital planning, and supportive tax revenue increases to ensure the Department has the necessary operational equipment and resources to respond effectively to emergencies and maintain public safety. A supporting Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should be developed to encompass various projects, including replacing firefighting, ocean rescue, and emergency medical equipment, upgrading communications systems, and acquiring large capital items such as fire apparatus and fire station construction. Additional emphasis may be placed on obtaining grant funding to support generated tax revenues and maintain capital improvement.

### (R14) Addition of Supervisor Response Vehicle

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | **Near Future** | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Our consulting team notices that the Ocean Rescue Seargent cannot maneuver throughout the city for management needs such as meetings, equipment needs, and responses. Adding an emergency response vehicle would cover the daily job responsibilities and align with the job description requirements.

### (R16) Apparatus Replacement

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | **Near Future** | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Attention should be directed toward developing and adhering to an apparatus replacement plan. Planning should begin to account for omitting and replacing some of the Department's existing fleet. At the same time, subsequent and reoccurring replacements should be conducted to prepare for the replacement over the next 10 years within the Capital Improvement Plan.

# SECTION 10. STRATEGIC & MASTER PLAN

# 10.1. Strategic Plan Alignment

It is to be noted that an incomplete Strategic Plan without a SWOT analysis, stated goals and objectives, operational strategies, financial planning, and performance metrics with accountability makes it difficult to accurately measure the current success or even progress of any vision or goal in the current plan.

Our consulting team reviewed the Strategic Plan and grouped similar initiatives into respective categories (Administrative, Operational, and Capital); below are the listings:

**Administrative**

- Enhance internal communications
- Enhance beach safety
- Develop a fire prevention program

While the Department is successfully meeting some of its current administrative objectives, the absence of measurable strategic initiatives and identified responsible parties makes it challenging to measure the success of broad visions. This underscores the need for everyone's active participation in the planning process.

Our overall impression is that the Department is progressing with the administrative initiatives. However, we strongly encourage the next strategic plan to be more ambitious and to include clear accountability, such as assigning a responsible party for each objective and ensuring routine updates. This will provide a sense of reassurance and confidence in the planning process.

**Operational**

- Staffing consistent for all shifts
- Restructure of Department and personnel
- Enhance Training program

The Department is failing to meet many of its operational objectives, probably primarily due to the recent turnover of leadership.

The vision is solid and effectively supports the Department's vision and mission. Our consulting team believes these can be included in the next Strategic Plan with accountability and measurable benchmarks.

**Capital**

- Enhance training props and simulators
- Purchase new equipment and apparatus
- Fire Station replacement

Our consulting team understands the Department's difficulties with capital budgeting in the strategic planning process. All objectives are ambitious and essential for TIFR to continue effective operations in the community. The planning of the new station is progressing and will significantly benefit the firefighters and the community. We recommend incorporating these visions into a separate Capital Improvement Plan to address all capital needs for TIFR over five to ten years.

# 10.2. Master Plan Vision

## 10.2.1. Immediate Time Period (0-6 Months)

The general focus within the immediate time period is directed toward achievable budget and process changes that enhance safety, consistency, and structure within the Department. Each recommendation requires minimal work, while all are rated high in prioritization. Many require minimal overall financial investments for implementation.

**(R1) Fire Station Replacement**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R2) Ocean Rescue Equipment Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R3) Ocean Rescue Operational Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R4) Department Cellular Phones**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R5) Standardization, Distribution, and Maintenance of PPE**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Our consulting team reviewed TIFR's capital structures and equipment needs, concluding that the department would benefit from relocating to a modern, safer fire station on Butler Avenue with an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The current station could be repurposed into a park for Tybee Island residents, enhancing community space.

Equipment improvements were identified for both the Fire Department and Ocean Rescue. TIFR's needs for fire equipment include updated fire nozzles, wrenches, and medical equipment. For Ocean Rescue, equipment such as hardcover EMS cases, AEDs, improved communication devices, and rescue buoys would boost efficiency and safety. Additionally, deploying drones and more ATVs with rapid-response capabilities would strengthen the Ocean Rescue team, especially given reduced staffing.

Our team also recommended new protective gear for firefighters and lifeguards to meet safety standards, such as enhanced eye protection, thermal-resistant shorts, and lifeguard rain jackets. The City should ensure ongoing support for PPE maintenance and upgrades, alongside training standards, to maintain readiness and safety for all responders.

## 10.2.2. Near Future Time Period (6-12 Months)

Near-future recommendations focus on formally implementing administrative and data tracking needs followed by staffing and EMS response level standardization: capital planning, budgeting, and large apparatus replacement round out the near-future planning.

**(R6) Installation of mobile radios in all emergency response vehicles**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R7) Ocean Rescue Administrative Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R8) Organizational Structure and Role Delegation**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R9) Incident Data Tracking**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R10) Fleet Data Tracking**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R11) Future Ocean Rescue Staffing Level Increase**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R12) Fire-Based EMS Response Level**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R13) Capital Planning**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R14) Addition of Supervisor Response Vehicle**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R15) Budgeting**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

**(R16) Apparatus Replacement**
High | Medium | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

Our consulting team recommends changes to streamline operations, improve administration, and strengthen the Ocean Rescue program. The Department's administrative team currently needs to be increased, which limits capacity. Adding an additional Chief-level position for chief-level support and promoting the Ocean Rescue Sergeant to Lieutenant would increase oversight and accountability. Redistributing responsibilities among Fire Lieutenants and Sergeants would also create a more efficient structure. Official cell phones and daytime-use vehicles for specific roles were advised to enhance communication.

The Ocean Rescue program plays a crucial role in beach safety for residents and visitors. Upgrades are needed in budgeting, training, and pay to ensure competitive hiring and

adequate coverage. The consulting team suggested keeping Ocean Rescue within TIFR to maintain local expertise and public confidence rather than outsourcing. Strengthened incident documentation and vehicle maintenance and usage tracking were also recommended to support data-driven decisions, improve response, and extend vehicle life. Breaking the budget into detailed categories, like technology and EMS resources, would enable better financial oversight and sustained readiness.

With these changes, TIFR can maintain high standards for both firefighting and beach safety, ensuring efficient operations, strong leadership, and robust community-focused services for Tybee Island.

## 10.2.3. Short-Term Time Period (1-3 Years)

Short-term enhancements for the Department begin with the need to address the need for a new fire station, followed by the addition of safety equipment to the beach and policy review/revisions. Later elements address future communication/dispatching needs.

### (R17) Addition of Public Self-Rescue Devices to the Beach

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | Long-Term | Extended

### (R18) Outside Professional Development and Training Approval Procedure

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

### (R19) Policy and Guideline Revision

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

### (R20) Implementation of Computer-Aided Dispatching (CAD)

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

### (R21) Dispatch/Communications Standardization

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

### (R22) Adjust Fire Shift Schedule

High | Medium | **Low** || Immediate | Near Future | **Short-Term** | Long-Term | Extended

Several key improvements to enhance safety, training, and communication were identified. Implementing public buoy stations along the beach could improve emergency response when lifeguards are off duty or not in the immediate area for rescue, with clear instructions and a numbering system for quick 911 dispatcher guidance. Training funding for firefighters is inconsistent, leading 90% of employees to rely on unpaid training. The team suggests a formal process for approving and funding outside training to better align with department goals.

Revising TIFR's policy manual could streamline operations by distinguishing policies from Standard Operating Guidelines and improving procedural clarity. Current communication systems pose challenges due to separate radio frequencies, unclear EMS dispatching, and a lack of mobile radios in fire vehicles. Consolidating dispatch with Chatham County and adding Computer-Aided Dispatch with emergency medical dispatch capabilities could greatly improve emergency coordination.

A proposed 48/96 schedule, where firefighters work two consecutive 24-hour shifts followed by four days off, would benefit work-life balance and reduce commute stress, especially for those traveling long distances. These recommendations aim to create a safer, more efficient, and better-supported environment for responders and the Tybee Island community.

## 10.2.4. Long-Term Time Period (3-5 Years)

The department's long-term needs revolve around continued capital planning and growth in terms of regular apparatus replacement. Beyond these efforts, future organizational opportunities exist in the form of consolidation and considering fire apparatus staffing increases. Neither of these items, moreover, requires immediate action and is intended to be revisited as the Department evolves.

### (R23) Future Fire Apparatus Staffing Level Increase

High | **Medium** | Low || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | **Long-Term** | Extended

### (R24) Future Consolidation Efforts

High | Medium | **Low** || Immediate | Near Future | Short-Term | **Long-Term** | Extended

Ensuring adequate staffing for Tybee Island's Fire, EMS, and Ocean Rescue services is essential for effective emergency response. TIFR currently staffs fire apparatus with a maximum of six and a minimum of four per shift, which meets demand but doesn't allow optimal safety for handling multiple incidents. Increasing staffing to seven and five, respectively, would offer more flexibility, reduce overtime reliance, and enable better resource management over time, especially during peak beach season. A staffing matrix could also help manage beach rescue operations efficiently, addressing the recent decrease in lifeguard presence and improving overall coverage.

Given Tybee Island's unique challenges, a combined approach between the fire and rescue teams could enhance cost-effectiveness, resource sharing, and training standardization. TIFR may explore future collaboration or consolidation with Chatham County Fire, potentially bringing access to advanced resources and technologies. For now, Tybee Island should prioritize maintaining staffing levels and consider strategic partnerships with nearby services to strengthen emergency preparedness and public safety.

# APPENDIX

# Appendix A. Recommendations Listing

Below is a list of task-oriented recommendations outlined by our consulting team for the city and department to reference. These numbered recommendations are listed first by their designated period, followed by their prioritization.

## Immediate

**(R1) Fire Station Replacement**
High | Medium | Low

**(R2) Ocean Rescue Equipment Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low

**(R3) Ocean Rescue Operational Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low

**(R4) Department Cellular Phones**
High | Medium | Low

**(R5) Standardization, Distribution, and Maintenance of PPE**
High | Medium | Low

## Near Future

**(R6) Installation of mobile radios in all emergency response vehicles**
High | Medium | Low

**(R7) Ocean Rescue Administrative Upgrades**
High | Medium | Low

**(R8) Organizational Structure and Role Delegation**
High | Medium | Low

**(R9) Incident Data Tracking**
High | Medium | Low

**(R10) Fleet Data Tracking**
High | Medium | Low

**(R11) Future Ocean Rescue Staffing Level Increase**
High | Medium | Low

**(R12) Fire-Based EMS Response Level**
High | Medium | Low

**(R13) Capital Planning**
High | Medium | Low

### (R14) Addition of Supervisor Response Vehicle

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R15) Budgeting

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R16) Apparatus Replacement

High | **Medium** | Low

## Short-Term

### (R17) Addition of Public Self-Rescue Devices to the Beach

High | Medium | Low

### (R18) Outside Professional Development and Training Approval Procedure

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R19) Policy and Guideline Revision

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R20) Implementation of Computer-Aided Dispatching (CAD)

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R21) Dispatch/Communications Standardization

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R22) Adjust Fire Shift Schedule

High | **Medium** | Low

## Long-Term

### (R23) Future Fire Apparatus Staffing Level Increase

High | **Medium** | Low

### (R24) Future Consolidation Efforts

High | Medium | **Low**

# Appendix B. References

*All citations within the report are noted with superscript numerical references. Any content, data, or images not cited were directly obtained by our consulting team or provided by the client.*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