

Plymouth Fire District End of Year Report 2025

Communications;

The Board appointed a Chief in an attempt to get the Chief Officer to demonstrate leadership ability and skill. The reason or explanation for this is a total lack of leadership and in fighting in the fire department. The focus has been on having a title after ones name instead of training and professionalism development.

The Chief and Dept. leadership has not change in 2025 we continue to have a total lack of communications. The Fire Chief has been questioned and offers no response except to point fingers at others and he states he is too busy.

The District issue revolves around roles, responsibilities, accountability, control expenses and cost to the community and providing quality equipment for firefighters and best service to the community. The Department is going in reverse on a monthly basis despite the District best attempts to right the ship.

Training has improved for some individuals taking County courses but as a department it has gone downhill. A number of members have taken advantage of state course work including Interior & Exterior firefighter, and EMT classes. But team work and maintaining current knowledge has declined. I.e. Driver training and attempts to promote individuals from Support to Fire fighter and even Officer Positions without qualifications and without training. Chief went so far as to turn in a roster in which he designated support staff as exterior firefighters who were not certified/trained. He took more than two months to correct the roster.

There is also a need to stay on top of annual mandatory requirements for OSHA, Sexual Harassment, and Violence in the work place, Bail out and SCBA and Driver certifications but members report training is not occurring and request for specific course work is ignored. There have been new claims of Sexual Harassment and violence in workplace, the Chief has sit on the reports for weeks at a time. He has not submitted any reports.

In addition Fire Reports for 2025 were not done in a timely matter despite having three train members available. The Department failed to file state fire reports with the District despite their claims the reports are completed and up to date. County reported that the reports for 2023 were not done and the 2024 reports were not up to date and seriously behind.

District ideas and support were met with non-response from the Chief. During the year the Chief was directed to complete reports requested for a project study to look for ways to improve the fire service.

The leadership team lacks a team effort.

Fire Department Line Officer qualifications continues to be a concern. Work continues with the County to work on schedule for I300 training. As noted earlier, our department personnel are actively taking advantage of courses being offered through County Fire Service. One example has been members taking

EMT classes and exterior firefighter classes. Members should be focus on taking courses that will build their skills and promote them to firefighters.

Health and Safety;

The County Health Department Inspection passed the District facilities to maintain the health and safety kitchen operations and laundry room gear cleaning operations.

Training can only be described as being in a incomplete state. Again the Chief reports, I have a job, family, lack help, volunteer, what you going to do I quit, has all been heard again.

District this year has been researching and discussing with Dept., County Fire Coordinator, neighboring Fire Districts/Departments, and community members how to improve and maintain our fire services. Explore improving fire services for the community covered by Plymouth Fire District. We commission a study be conducted by CGR Consulting.

Despite changes in membership throughout the year and at times like a revolving door Fire Department staffing is holding steady at a minimal level. Need continues to be monitoring the membership of active firefighters to remain constant and increase. Have to ensure sheer numbers of support staff not over inflate our membership numbers. We took in 5 new members but we lost 5 members too.

The cost for Insurance benefits continues to increase our Insurance budget line item. Due to a number of variables these expense items change every year and needs to be monitor throughout the year because this item continues to come in over budget.

District directed the Chief to work with a Fire Commissioner searching for and obtaining grant funding. Again, the Fire Commissioner had to keep after the Chief to complete department information needed to complete grants. Despite the tug of war, the Fire Commissioner continues to research grant opportunities.

Operations & Maintenance;

Inventory Control continues to be an area of concern for property control, insurance coverage, replacement scheduling, cost control and purchase funding.

Building maintenance continues to be a major item this year. We needed furnace and roof inspections and phone/internet updates and storage shed replacement. There is a need for community room resurfacing floors, roof repair, parking lot repair, exterior lighting repair, and heaters for the rest rooms are being planned for the future.

New line item required for truck fuel as the Town Highway Dept. withdrew from share service plan.

Items completed; Establish account to cover plan for new surfacing of parking lot in next five years cost estimate \$150,000.

Equipment maintenance and replacements was another major area requiring a lot of our attention.

Turn out gear replacement continues with 3 new sets cost \$13,663. Personnel Protective Gear (helmets, gloves, hoods and boots) was needed to replace outdated gear.

On top of challenges for 2025 a series of truck repairs needed for Engine 272 and Rescue 275. In house reviews/discussions on 272 Engine Pumper continued. The Board attempted to obtain a federal grant for a new engine pumper was never filed because the Chief was uncooperative and failed to file paper work in a timely matter. The information presented has been piece meal and a number of questions have gone unanswered.

Despite this, there is still some questioning based on department staffing and service needs as to the need for a new truck. Especially in view that we have vehicles that meet our current needs.

Annual service all vehicles cost was up from last year, \$8468.

Financial Operations;

Annual financial reports for 2024 were not completed as expected.

Applied for a DEC Grant for 2025. Grant approved for equipment at 50/50 share cost \$7000. Completed the application for the 2025 DEC forestry grant. Chief has not reported back and no funding has been received from DEC.

The District has identified a number of institutions offering grants and requested the District working on requesting cascade system for SCBA filling station approximate Cost \$30,000.

Despite the Problems within the Department and their lack on compliance in many areas the District approved four requests made by the Chief totaling \$ 12,623 for various items throughout the year.

Our 2025 expenditures came in over budget. The overage was covered by interest earnings and unassigned, unappropriated funding from prior year savings. Tires cost \$9550.

Our 2025 Budget passed with a 2% increase to the tax levy. Even with the tax levy increase the Board continued with reduced funding for Capitol Reserve account to keep the increase to a minimum.

We will continue to perform line item review and tighten financial controls on purchasing requests.

New Business goals for 2026;

Complete annual financial reports for 2024 and 2025.

Explore and develop plans for future building work orders.

Improve overall fire service with completion of a fire service study to improve safety, efficiency and effectiveness of our fire service.

Focus on grants to provide for taxpayer relief in the future.