

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE  
BALDWIN, MAINE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
AND  
ASSESSMENT OF FACILITIES REPORT

*Final Report*

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Continuity in delivering public safety service in today's environment is paramount to achieving successful outcomes. To reach this goal may require a deliberate plan that aligns multiple agencies in performing as a single entity. The harsh reality is that the volunteer and on-call system of delivering fire and rescue service is under great strain, not only in Baldwin, or Maine, but also across the country. Public safety agencies and community leaders need to be forthright and creative, and may need to step out of bounds in developing strategies that will meet the demand for optimal levels of service.

### **Scope of Work**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the current service provided by the Baldwin Fire Department and determine where efficiencies, modernization, streamlining, coalition, and adoption of other nationally recommended fire service practices might lend to providing a more effective service. The fundamental tenet of this study is to develop a strategic plan for the town to endorse which provides an adequate level of fire protection services in a cost-effective manner.

The study focused on the following:

The organizational structure and governance of the fire department, and the relationship with the town were analyzed.

The funding mechanisms, both operational and capital outlay, were reviewed. This included any financial support provided by related associations or other outside sources.

The internal operational and administrative methodologies employed by the fire department were assessed.

The staffing levels were reviewed. This facet of the project also included an analysis of the retention issues regarding emergency service personnel.

The levels of performance the department has achieved were evaluated.

The historical call volume and types of calls the department responded to were analyzed.

The fleet of apparatus and related equipment were considered with regard to function, serviceability, and distribution, in conjunction with the department's mission.

The collaborative efforts amongst and relationship with the region's fire and rescue department were evaluated. This included a review of the in-vogue mutual-aid agreements.

The distribution of fire stations throughout Baldwin, to include those of the neighboring communities was taken into account.

A specific component of this project was to assess the condition, functionality and serviceability of the three fire stations. Port City Architecture of Portland, Maine undertook this aspect of the project. Port City visited the three sites to assess the following capabilities of each site:

- Are the buildings functional for modern firefighting practices?
- Are they missing essential functions?
- Can they accommodate the required apparatus?
- Are the buildings structurally sound for an essential facility?
- Are there major code violations to address?
- Is there a safe working environment?
- Are the sites adequate?
- Can they accommodate an expansion or new facility if required?
- Is there adequate parking and exterior room for apparatus to maneuver?

### **Community Profile**

The 2020 census has Baldwin's population at 1,520 year-round residents. By definition, with a density of 43 people per square mile, Baldwin is regarded as rural. Located in Cumberland County and bordered by the towns of Standish, Limington, Cornish, Hiram and Sebago, Baldwin covers an area measuring 36 square miles. At the conclusion of 2020, and after completing a revaluation, the town's assessed value, which includes both real and personal property, was set at \$174,575,550. According to the State of Maine's Department of Revenue, the town's valuation was figured at \$194,050,000 for 2022. The mil rate for 2021 is \$13.00.

The town of Baldwin is managed by a three-member board of selectmen and operates on a calendar year budget platform. The town is in the process of transitioning to a fiscal year budget cycle that will officially begin on July 1, 2022. In 2018, the administration developed a Capital Investment Plan (CIP) that outlines future large ticket expenditures.

The town's most recent Comprehensive Plan was written in 1991, and is the third iteration of that document. The town is contemplating an update of the plan in the near future. Baldwin has a growth cap of 15 new residential structures per year in an effort to manage development and limit the impact on town services, as well as maintain the community's rural character residents embrace.

According to the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, the average age of the residential population in Baldwin was 42.4 years in 2010. It was 46.0 in 2020, and predicted to rise to 47.9 years of age by 2025. In 2010, those residents over 65 years of age accounted for 14.3% of the population. In 2020, the percentage went to 19.6 and is predicted to rise to 24.6% by 2025.

## The Baldwin Fire Department

It appears that the Baldwin Fire Department has become a function of the municipality. A fire department ordinance was drafted in 2007, although it is not clear whether it was ever officially adopted by the townspeople. Fire protection has been provided by three separate volunteer incorporated fire associations, which continue to exist to this day. The three associations are in good standing with the State of Maine's Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, and have been filing annual reports as required. What is unclear at this point in time is what the mission or function of these individual organizations is.

The East and West Baldwin Fire Companies own their respective buildings, and the West Baldwin Company owns a fire truck, Squad #3. The North Baldwin fire station is privately owned by a resident and leased to the town for a nominal fee. The lease has typically been re-signed on a short-term basis, even though this practice has been ongoing for a long period of time. Although the town does not own any of the fire stations, municipal funds are appropriated to operate, insure and maintain them. The town has declared these facilities tax exempt.

The three fire stations were constructed shortly after the devastating wildfires of 1947 that swept across large swaths of southern Maine. As a result, the three village districts of North, East and West Baldwin created their own autonomous volunteer incorporated fire associations.

The municipal fire chief's office is located in a sizable room at the Baldwin Town' Office and Community Center at 534 Pequawket Trail, as none of the fire stations offer a satisfactory workspace to conduct administrative duties.

The fire department appropriated expenses for calendar year 2021 are:

\$60,000	Operations (\$20,000 for each of the three stations)
\$10,000	Fire Truck Maintenance
\$ 6,000	Radio Purchases/Repairs
\$ 1,000	Radio Reserve
\$10,765	Stipends for fire chief and assistant fire chief
\$ 1,615	Stipends for three stations captains
\$22,000	Fire Fighter Training / Wages
\$56,466.51	Fire Equipment Reserve Account. (This account is currently paying down a fire truck payment. The final payment will be made in 2022)

What is not included in the fire department budget is the cost of the various insurance policies that cover the department. It appears these expenses are bundled with the town's other insurance needs.

Associated public safety expenses include the following:

\$49,077.74	Ambulance service agreement with the town of Standish
\$11,544.00	911 Dispatch service with Cumberland County
\$20,000.00	Automotive Fuel Account shared between the fire department and the public works department
\$ 1,500.00	Baldwin Emergency Management

Any of the "operational" funds the town appropriates for the fire department that are not expended during the budget year, are transferred into "reserve" accounts. During the past number of years, there have been three reserve accounts dedicated to each of the three fire companies. Those escrowed funds can be utilized at a future date for special projects or unforeseen expenses not otherwise funded. It is understood that as the town moves toward implementing a "fiscal year budget process," which is scheduled to begin July 1, 2022, the annual appropriation for fire department operations will be streamlined to one warrant article and not three. This arrangement can serve as another indication that the semblance of three separate fire associations is fading and that managing fire protection services in Baldwin comes under the direct authority of the Board of Selectman and the appointed municipal fire chief.

At the end of 2021, the three fire department reserve accounts had the following balances:

East Baldwin:	\$ 6,956.81
West Baldwin:	\$12,822.97
North Baldwin	<u>\$12,379.24</u>
	\$32,159.02

There are several additional reserve accounts associated with the fire department. The "Radio Reserve Account" currently has a balance of \$9,595.40, the "Fire Department Insurance Reimbursement Account" has a year-end balance of \$4,631, and the "Fire Equipment Reserve Account" has \$33,538.72 remaining.

As for the "Fire Fighter Training Account," any remaining monies in that one account at the end of the budget year are transferred to the town's Surplus or General Account. At the end of 2021, this account, which had been allocated \$22,000, had a balance of \$10,405.98.

The Fire Fighter Training Account is utilized to pay tuition for members to attended educational enhancement and skill building programs. The account is also used to pay fire fighters their hourly wages, which are distributed once a year in December.

For year 2021, there are two wage-grades in the fire department; \$12.15/hour as a base wage, and \$14.65/hour for a fire fighter who is qualified and certified as an "Interior Fire Fighter." The position of captain is also classified at the higher wage grade, but may not necessarily be required to meet the qualifications of an interior fire fighter.

The budget allocates funds for several stipend positions in the fire department. The position of fire chief is set at \$8,000 per year and is paid every other week. The fire chief

does not earn additional wages for time spent responding calls or attending training sessions. The position of assistant fire chief is stipend at \$2,000 per year and is paid in December. The assistant chief is allowed to earn wages similar to the other members of the fire department. It is unclear as to why the fire chief is not allowed to earn additional wages whereas the assistant chief is.

There are three additional stipend positions that are entitled "Station Captain." Each captain is stipend at \$500 per year and is assigned to and in charge of a station. They receive payment at years end.

The Baldwin Fire Department has a list of fire fighters that currently consists of nine active personnel. This number may fluctuate from time to time as members depart for various reasons. Unfortunately, the number of new recruits looking to join the fire department has not kept pace with filling the gaps created by those resignations.

The roster consists of personnel who fill various roles within the fire department. Of those members, there are some who are classified as "exterior fire fighters." This means that these personnel are not qualified to operate within a hazardous environment. There are several personnel who are classified as apparatus operators, while others are considered "support or attendant," or who manage traffic flow at emergency scenes. There is one member that is pursuing their State of Maine Bureau of Labor fire fighter certification that is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2022. About one-half of Baldwin's fire fighters are qualified as "Interior," meaning they are credentialed to enter into hazardous atmospheres wearing regulated personal protective equipment in an effort to rescue imperiled people, suppress fires and mitigate dangerous situations. Two of these qualified fire fighters are the fire chief and the assistant fire chief.

The department utilizes an electronic management software program for tracking its activity and record keeping. The program also allows the department to catalog its calls for service electronically, and the information is uploaded into the state of Maine Fire Incident Reporting System (MEFIRS). The MEFIRS program is an information and data gathering system initiated and supported by the Office of State Fire Marshal. The goal of the system is to encourage the use of a standardized incident reporting system as a means of addressing the state's fire problem and related emergency service issues. MEFIRS can play a major role in reducing injuries, fatalities, and economic losses from fire and related emergencies by facilitating the collection, compilation, analysis, and use of data to produce and disseminate the information needed by decision makers. Maine statute, Title 25 MRSA 2395 requires that fire chiefs shall submit to the State Fire Marshal an incident report for each response made, regardless of whether or not an actual fire occurred.

It should be noted that in order to qualify for Federal grant funding through the Department of Homeland Security, a fire department must participate with that state's Fire Marshal's Office in filing activity reports. Baldwin participates in the MEFIRS data collection program.

The department uses an electronic communications program utilizing fire fighters' cell phones called "I Am Responding (IAR)." This web-based automated crew confirmation tool is designed to help manage emergency response and messaging capabilities among all Baldwin fire fighters. The IAR platform uses the cell phone network to convey messages among system users. Each active member of the department is also issued a portable two-way radio.

The Baldwin Fire Department responded to a five-year annual average 119 calls for service from 2017 to 2021. These calls ranged from building, vehicle and vegetation fires, to motor vehicle accidents, hazardous conditions, service calls and rendering assistance to other public safety agencies.

The Baldwin Fire Department responded to the following number of incidents over the past five years:

2017	122
2018	115
2019	122
2020	127
2021	111

**Fleet of Apparatus**

The Baldwin Fire Department has a fleet of apparatus consisting of eight vehicles. There are three Class "A" pumpers, a squad, two tankers and two-forest fire fighting units.

Designation	Year/Manufacturer	Pump(gpm)/Tank(gal)/Other	Features
Engine #1	1997 Ford / E-1	1,250/1,000	Piped Deck Gun^
Engine #4	2002 IH / E-1	1,250/1,000	Piped Deck Gun^
Engine #5	2006 IH / E-1	1,250/ 970/30 foam	Piped Deck Gun^
Tanker #1	2019 Freightliner / E-1	750/2,000	2,000 Fold Tank
Tanker #2	2010 Kenworth / E-1	750/2,500	2,000 Fold Tank
Squad #3	1991 IH	500/ 800	4 wheel drive
Forestry #1	2003 LMTV*	106/ 300	4 wheel drive
Forestry #2	1997 Stewart*	106/1,090	6 wheel drive

Currently Assigned to East Baldwin
Currently Assigned to North Baldwin
Currently Assigned to West Baldwin

^ A piped deck gun is also referred to as an "apparatus-mounted master stream device." The deck gun can be put into operation quickly by a minimum number of personnel, and can be very effective in squelching a moderate volume of fire and hold fire extension in check. Due to constraints in the West Baldwin fire



station, the deck gun on Engine #4 is kept demounted, as the height of the overhead doors is a limiting factor.

\* Former military vehicles, obtained by the town of Baldwin via government surplus. Baldwin's fire fighters retrofitted these two vehicles for off-road wildland fire fighting purposes utilizing matching grant funds.

The number of apparatus for Baldwin may appear excessive. To a degree, the fleet of apparatus is a function of the number of fire stations serving a community. The mere fact of having three fire stations—to an extent, warrants sufficient units to serve the demand area where the stations are located. This configuration of Baldwin's fleet correlates with the three separate fire companies that were incorporated more than 70 years ago, and to a point, still operate in that fashion due to the distribution of fire stations. The fire department houses one pumper at each of the three fire stations, and one tanker at the East and West Baldwin stations. Squad #3 is at West Baldwin and there is one forestry unit at East and one at the North fire stations.

### **Baldwin Fire Stations**

The three Baldwin Fire stations are located at the following street addresses:

- Station #1 - East Baldwin at 209 Pequawket Trail
- Station #2 - North Baldwin at 67 Wiggin Road
- Station #3 - West Baldwin at 960 Pequawket Trail

The East Baldwin fire station, which is owned by the East Baldwin Fire Company, a non-profit association, is sited on a plot of land that is .13 acres in size. The land and the two-bay wood frame fire station are assessed at \$8,100 and \$154,000 respectfully.

The North Baldwin fire station, which is privately owned by a town resident, is located on a plot of land that is .13 acres. The lot is assessed at \$9,000 and the four-bay wood frame building at \$196,200.

The West Baldwin fire station occupies a .20-acre lot. There is a smaller nearby parcel that comprises another .10 acres. Together these two lots are assessed at \$12,600 and \$6,800. The two-bay fire station is assessed at \$126,800.

In total, these tax-exempt properties assessed value equals \$513,500.

### **Public Protection Classification for Baldwin**

For the town of Baldwin, the Public Protection Classification (PPC) was assigned a split classification 7/9 after its scheduled assessment was completed in 2012.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) PPC program measures and evaluates the effectiveness of fire mitigation services in communities throughout the country. For each

fire protection area, the ISO assigns a PPC code—a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. This grading system is utilized by the insurance industry to set fire insurance premiums.

The Class 7 rating applies to those areas of Baldwin that are within five miles of a fire station, and within 1,000 feet of a credible water supply, such as a pressurized fire hydrant, suction point, or dry hydrant. The second number in the split classification, 9, applies to those areas of town that are within five miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a credible water supply.

When considering ISO's PPC, it must be noted that any region within a community that is beyond five road miles from a fire station is deemed unprotected. ISO assigns a value of "10" to those properties. (Note: Baldwin's 2012 PPC was calculated by the ISO using the 1980 version of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, and not the newest version which was revised in 2013.)

In July 2014, ISO effected a new classification, "10W." This classification considers properties that are located more than five but less than seven road miles from a responding fire station with a credible water source within 1,000 feet had better loss experience than those farther than five road miles from a responding fire station with no credible water source. Class 10W is property specific and not all properties within the five to seven mile area around the responding fire station will qualify. Credible water supplies include fire protection systems utilizing hauled water, also known as tanker shuttle operations. This new classification is reflective of the potential to reduce property insurance premiums.

### **Automatic Aid**

The town of Baldwin has been adequately served by the three-station configuration with regard to the ISO criteria that states a property is considered "protected" if it is located within five road-miles of a fire station. However, when examining the location of fire stations in the adjoining towns of Standish, Cornish, Hiram and Sebago, there is notable benefit to Baldwin as there are several fire stations in those communities that meet the five-mile ISO response matrix for certain locations within Baldwin.

A robust "Automatic Aid" response program among a cluster of communities, in some cases, can meet ISO's five-mile distance criteria without individual communities having to add or retain multiple fire stations. The ISO will recognize engine companies that respond from another community as part of a predetermined deployment arrangement between two or more fire departments. Automatic aid agreements must be formalized, definitive, well-versed, and practiced consistently in order for ISO to qualify the relationship and quantify the allowable credit.

**Automatic Aid:** Outside assistance that responds immediately on the first alarm to building fires beyond their boundaries. Two or more departments that

participate in an automatic-aid arrangement operate as one fire department for dispatching fire apparatus. As such, it appears the arrangement with Standish could be considered "automatic aid."

**Mutual Aid:** Outside assistance requested by one community from another after a fire has occurred. Assistance by the outside fire department is rendered upon request.

Baldwin and several of the neighboring fire departments have crafted a system known as "Run Cards." Run cards are established prearranged response protocols that take into account the region's collective fire and EMS assets. These time-honored directives are utilized by dispatch centers in the programmatic deployment of individual fire and rescue departments to one another's emergencies, better ensuring sufficient resources from multiple agencies respond.

The long-standing practice of fire departments assisting one another is known as "Mutual Aid." Mutual aid allows for reciprocal, cross-border responses between prescribed fire departments in order to provide additional resources during moderate to large-scale emergency incidents. These resources are deployed on an "as needed" basis under mutual aid compacts. To an extent, mutual aid was the precursor to today's automatic aid.

Not only does having automatic aid companies fulfill the advantage of having the closest fire apparatus respond to structural fire incidents, automatic aid is designed to bring sufficient numbers of fire fighting resources needed to mitigate those emergencies from the very onset of the incident and without hesitation. This has become of ever increasing nationwide importance with the reduction in the number of volunteer and on-call fire fighters.

Another benefit of an automatic aid program may be the avoidance of having to expand a community's fire department. The need for additional fire stations and apparatus may be unnecessary if the location of an existing neighboring town's fire station can effectively protect an adjacent area of that community which may be under protected by its own department. To be considered "protected" by ISO standards, a property must be within five miles of a fire station. A number of Maine communities have areas that are more than five miles from the closest fire station within their boundaries, but are closer to a fire station located in a neighboring town. Under a bona fide automatic aid program, the ISO will give credit to those areas of town that may be better served by another town's fire station, which could also impact fire insurance premiums. It appears the proximity of several fire stations to Baldwin fits this profile quite well.

Mutual aid response protocols to Baldwin from participating communities are currently in place. Automatic aid procedures should be qualified and validated to ensure full compliance with ISO standards of practice in order to attain maximum credit. Here again, well-grounded programs that qualify the process could result in both cost savings and enhanced service delivery, in essence, achieving economies of scale.

## The Standish Fire - EMS Department

Baldwin has a fee for service agreement with the town of Standish for emergency ambulance transport service. It is an agreement and not so much a contract, where town appropriated funds pay for one full-time Standish fire/EMS career position. The primary ambulance for Baldwin is located at #870 Boundary Road, the Steep Falls Fire Station. This Standish Fire Station is located 1.4 miles from the Baldwin/Standish town line along Route # 113. The Steep Falls station is staffed with two personnel around the clock who respond to emergencies with either a fire apparatus or an ambulance. A second ambulance and other fire and rescue apparatus are housed at the Standish central station located at 175 Northeast Road, which is 7.2 miles from the Steep Falls station.

Standish is a primary department that is technically equipped and trained to provide cold-water and swift-water rescue service, not only to Baldwin, but also to a multitude of the regions communities. Standish is also outfitted for off-road wilderness rescue incidents, which is one more service made available to its mutual-aid partners.

Over the past five years, the Standish Fire - EMS Department has responded to an annual average of 228 calls for service in Baldwin. In addition to providing emergency medical transport services for Baldwin's citizenry, the agreement has Standish respond along with Baldwin fire fighters on many types of incidents. This arrangement bolsters the emergency response capacity to incidents in Baldwin by including Standish resources, which are sent immediately, and from the onset of an incident. As such, the total number emergency calls for service to Baldwin that are handled by Standish Fire - EMS not only includes ambulance calls, but fire and hazardous condition incidents as well.

The Standish Fire & EMS Department responded to the following number of incidents in Baldwin during the past five years:

2017	202
2018	207
2019	227
2020	245
2021	261

The additional benefit to this arrangement is the augmented fire and rescue service provided to Baldwin as evidenced in the letter to the town from the Standish Fire and EMS Department for 2017. The context of the year-in-summary letter states the following:

### Statement of purpose

*"As part of our Automatic Aid, Standish currently provides a fire engine and a tanker on all reported building fires in Baldwin, all our members are crossed trained in fire/EMS, so when the initial call goes out, the two staff in Steep Falls would bring an engine and*

*tanker immediately and the second ambulance would be dispatched from our central station. This would give you a minimum of four people responding at the time of the call with three pieces of apparatus and at "NO POINT" would our staff deviate from the types of calls they would respond to, unless otherwise requested by the incident commander"*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Terminology**

The Baldwin Fire Department should no longer be referred to as a "volunteer service." The fact that personnel are remunerated for their hours of service changes the complexion of the department to one that is classified as "on-call."

### **Volunteer Fire Companies**

The continuation and the relevance of the East, North and West Baldwin Fire Companies comes into question as the Baldwin Municipal Fire Department has become the prevailing fire protection agency to serve the community. This transition may leave remnants of the companies that over time should be dissolved. Perhaps the overarching issue that will need to be addressed is what to do with the East and West Baldwin fire stations, which again are owned by the fire companies. The companies and the town will have to determine the best course of action in how to handle ownership and perhaps liquidation of the facilities. This will most likely come to light if the town does move forward with a fire station construction project that would render these stations vacant.

Should the members of the existing fire companies see a need to continue with some form of benevolent organization not directly affiliated with the municipal department, they could amalgamate and create a new singular association that would have fire fighters as well as interested residents serve in a support role that reinforces the town of Baldwin Municipal Fire Department.

### **Redraft and adopt a municipal fire department ordinance**

Although the town drafted a fire department ordinance in 2007, it appears it may not have been officially adopted. With the issuance of this report and examples of similar town ordinances from other communities provided the Board of Selectmen, this may be an opportune time to develop a new ordinance that would eventually be adopted.

Any policies and procedures that guide the fire department and its employees should not be adopted as part of the ordinance. Guiding principles such as town employee policies, rules and regulations, and standard operating procedures, should be referred to in the ordinance but stand separately, not as part of the ordinance.

### **Develop a Mission Statement with supporting vision declaration, and a list of values and beliefs**

The fire department should develop a mission statement that conveys the nature of the department's assignments and responsibilities to the community. A vision statement should be crafted to support the mission, as well as a list of corresponding "values and beliefs" that would provide the foundation for these statements.

Found within the Junior Fire Fighter SOP #24, the junior fire fighter program has adopted a mission statement, vision statement, core values, commitment to the community, and a code of conduct edict. The fire department could use this template to formulate the department's own guiding principles. Found within the Baldwin Fire Department's policy statements are two existing SOP's that would support a mission statement. They are SOP #18, the department's "Code of Conduct," and SOP #35, "Ethical Behavior."

### **Automatic Aid**

The consortium of towns in the greater Baldwin region should seriously consider instituting the concept of "automatic aid" into their collective deployment scheme. This model incorporates a prescribed method of allocating fire and rescue assets to a reported incident by sending multiple agencies from the initial E-911 call to the regional dispatch center. In many sections of the country, particularly those that depend upon on-call and volunteer fire fighters, this process has become an essential tool in ensuring an adequate response is underway. Too often, individual fire department responses to today's incidents are insufficient and not meeting industry standards. There is a hesitancy to request additional resources until it is actually determined they are needed, which in many cases is too late.

As noted in this report, Standish responds to Baldwin's emergencies automatically. Baldwin on the other hand does not respond to Steep Falls automatically, but does reciprocate when summoned, which is based on a predetermined "run card" assignment.

### **Revise the Department's arrangement of "Run Cards"**

Although the region's fire departments cooperate with one another, there may be an opportunity to improve emergency response to fires and other moderate to large-scale emergency incidents. The Baldwin Fire Department has a well-devised system known as "Run Cards." Run cards are established prearranged response protocols that take into account a region's collective fire, rescue and EMS assets. These time-honored directives are utilized by the Cumberland County Regional Dispatch Center in the programmatic deployment of individual fire and rescue departments to one another's emergencies better ensuring sufficient resources are sent out in a timely fashion.

The long-standing practice of fire departments assisting one another is known as "Mutual Aid." Mutual aid allows for reciprocal, cross-border responses between prescribed fire departments in order to provide additional resources to emergency incidents. These resources are deployed on an "as needed" basis under mutual aid compacts.

As an immediate suggestion, the current "Run Cards" should be revamped to include a new decree of "Automatic Aid." The towns of Cornish, Hiram and Sebago would be included as immediate responders to emergency calls in Baldwin that are reported either as a building fire or a potential fire. This arraignment would work both ways, where all fire department would respond to one another's calls in unison. The Maine Fire Incident Reporting System should be referred to in determining what types of incidents constitute

a fire within a building. In reviewing Baldwin's Run Cards, Cornish, Hiram and Sebago only respond to fire incidents when additional resources are requested. This should change.

### **Strive to meet the objectives of NFPA 1720**

NFPA 1720, the standard: *For the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, is the nationally recognized consensus on staffing and deployment by volunteer and on-call fire and rescue departments.

"The standard includes minimum requirements relating to the organization and deployment of fire suppression operations, emergency medical operations, and special operations to the public by volunteer, on-call and combination departments. The requirements address functions and outcomes of fire department emergency service delivery, response capabilities, and resources. This standard also contains minimum requirements for managing resources and systems, such as health and safety, incident management, training, communications, and pre-incident planning. This standard addresses the strategic and system issues involving the organization, operation, and deployment of a fire department and does not address tactical operations at a specific emergency incident."

NFPA 1720 establishes strategic objectives for the organization and operation of agencies similar to the Baldwin Fire Department. The standard has become the benchmark yardstick that the United States Department of Homeland Security utilizes when evaluating applications for staffing grants under the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER).

This may be a lofty pursuit, but it is a template that should be followed in formulating a fire rescue department's method of operation. The crux of this standard is directly correlated with ISO's PPC and the value associated with "Automatic Aid." The number of fire companies and personnel assigned to first alarm fire incidents within a prescribed time frame can have significant outcomes with regards to fire suppression efforts as well as fire fighter safety. In many small to medium size communities, the realization is that most fire departments cannot effectively handle a typical building fire with their own resources, thus the reliance on outside agencies from the onset may be paramount.

### **Shared Fire Officer**

The local fire chiefs should develop protocols that allow for a fire officer from an outside community to take control of an incident in another jurisdiction should a local fire officer not be available or may be delayed. The intent is to have a qualified fire officer no matter what fire department within the region he/she may be affiliated, take immediate charge of an incident. This recommendation goes hand-in-hand with the recommendation to fully implement an automatic-aid deployment program and compliments the objectives found within NFPA standard #1720.



This recommendation should go further to include a safety officer. The position of safety officer on the fire ground or large scale emergency incident is imperative and is as important as personnel wearing personal protective equipment, having a well-grounded accountability system established, and is an essential component of the incident command system.

### **Establish a Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) Protocol**

Fire fighter safety on the fireground is of vital importance. The purpose of a RIT team is to stand at the ready should a fire fighter get lost, trapped or suffer a medical event while engaged in mitigating an emergency incident. The team assigned to RIT must be highly qualified and fully understand the role and responsibility they are tasked with.

This is not an endeavor the Baldwin Fire Department can undertake on its own. It would require a consensus of the region's fire departments to plan, devise and implement an adoptable program. At this point in time, it may be a difficult venture as many fire departments are struggling not only with diminishing numbers of fire fighters, but the lack of qualified seasoned interior fire fighters. Nevertheless, this important role in prudent fireground tactics needs to be a focal point.

### **Training of Personnel**

The fire department should take on a more vigorous training regimen. The goal would be to attain at least two hours of training each month, or the equivalent of 24 hours per year, an ISO requirement in order to receive full credit in that criterion. The department already meets every month to discuss departmental matters, and time should be allocated to improve critical skills, introduce new techniques, or reinforce learned behaviors, whether through cognitive or hands-on instruction.

As recommended in this report, the assistant chief should be tasked with managing the training needs of the department. The department should contact Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI) in Brunswick for assistance in setting up short and long-term training programs not just exclusively for Baldwin, but include those surrounding towns that work alongside Baldwin fire fighters. This recommendation emphatically suggests joint training programs as a matter of routine and not just on occasion.

The town should consider revamping the manner in which funds are allocated the fire department in at least one particular category. The town budget consists of a warrant article labeled "Fire Fighter Training." The intention of this account is twofold. It is used to pay tuition costs and associated training expenses, and to pay fighters' wages. It is recommended that the two aspects of this budgeted item be broken out into two separate categories; one exclusively earmarked for "Training," and one exclusively earmarked for "Wages." This would give clarity and allow for better tracking of those funds.

## Fixed Facilities

There are three approaches to consider with regard to improving the facility needs for the fire department.

- 1) Construct one new central fire station and decommission the three current buildings
- 2) Construct one new fire station and retain the North Baldwin station
- 3) Construct two new stations and close the three at East, North and West Baldwin

### Option #1 - A pragmatic approach

The town would build one new fire station that would serve the entire community. This venture would eventually have the three existing stations shuttered and all resources, personnel and operations transferred to a new municipally owned and operated fire station, which would be a first for the town of Baldwin. The general location would be somewhere between the current East and West Baldwin fire stations along Pequawket Trail in an effort to capitalize on those fire fighters who are currently assigned each of those stations, and the quick and easy access afforded this general location.

A recent fire and rescue study undertaken in neighboring York County looked at the configuration and distribution of fire stations in a number of communities. That project revealed that over a course of time, a number of communities have reduced and realigned the placement of stations.

The decision to redress the arrangement of a community's fire rescue stations may be due to myriad circumstances, such as a reduction in the number of dependable volunteer or on-call firefighters, overlapping coverage areas by existing stations, deficient facilities, further collaboration amongst a cluster of communities, as well as the opportunity to streamline and centralize operations in an effort to contain costs or to shift financial resources towards a more proficient enterprise.

To illustrate that point, the following list identifies those rural York and Oxford County towns that have reduced the number of stations:

Limington	From three to two	Population	3,900	43 Square Miles
Newfield	From two to one	Population	1,650	33 Square Miles
Waterford	From three to one	Population	1,570	53 Square Miles

### *Newfield, Maine*

More than 30 years ago, the Newfield fire department had two fire stations that were considered deficient and outmoded. In the mid 1990's, a new station was constructed halfway between the two outdated stations. All fire department assets were transferred to the facility and first responders began working from one centralized public safety

building. Newfield is home to 1,650 year round residents and encompasses 33 square miles.

*Waterford, Maine*

In the late 1980's, the town of Waterford, Maine commissioned a study of its fire protection system in an effort to develop a strategy for modernizing that service. At that time, three separate fire companies operating from three village fire stations served the town. In 1995, the town approved funds for building a new fire station. When completed, the three separate fire associations disbanded and conveyed their assets to the newly created municipal fire department. This community of 1,570 residents, who live within its 53 square miles, is now protected by the Waterford Fire Department, which operates from one fire station.

These York and Oxford County communities operate from a single fire/rescue station:

Brownfield	Population 1,630	45 Square Miles
Denmark	Population 1,200	50 Square Miles
Shapleigh	Population 2,920	41 Square Miles
Acton	Population 2,670	41 Square Miles
Porter/Parsonfield*	Population 3,400	93 Square Miles

\*The Kezar Falls Fire Department serves these two towns

Although Option #1 points to the construction of one new facility, it would be vitally important to enhance the relationship between all the on-call and volunteer fire departments that surround Baldwin. Nationally, many small to medium-size departments are experiencing a major decline in recruiting and retaining capable, qualified, and available personnel in sufficient numbers who can safely and effectively execute the role of fire fighter. This phenomenon has required authorities—the risk managers, to revamp their deployment strategy by enlisting other fire departments to function cohesively.

The recommendation to have just one centralized fire station in Baldwin would be predicated on the opportunity to expand the relationship among the regions fire departments by embracing a very definitive automatic aid response program as recapitulated throughout this report. The towns of Cornish, Hiram and Sebago would respond to fire calls in Baldwin at the absolute same time the Baldwin Fire Department would be dispatched. To reiterate, the purpose of dispatching multiple fire companies in unison is in reaction to the diminishing numbers of qualified fire fighters in any given town. Furthermore, this initiative would be a major step toward meeting certain ISO criteria, NFPA standards, and the industry's best practices, all in an effort to achieve an efficient and effective use of limited resources.

Shutting down Baldwin's three fire stations and building one new one may leave citizens apprehensive, believing their level of fire protection may be somewhat compromised. This concern could be eased by enlisting the Sebago, Hiram and Cornish Fire Departments as part of the response plan to incidents throughout Baldwin. This is not an

unfamiliar arrangement for Baldwin as the town has such a relationship with Standish. In addition to the ambulance service provided by Standish, that agreement has Standish fire apparatus respond into Baldwin upon any initial fire call as well. Furthermore, the location of the staffed Steep Falls fire station is of tremendous importance to Baldwin's fire protection needs and adds an additional layer of service capacity to the town without Baldwin having to expand its department.

The matrix of fire stations in nearby Standish, Sebago, Hiram and Cornish all provide added-value fire protection to Baldwin. As illustrated in the following list of the four-neighboring communities, the location of those fire stations are beneficial to Baldwin's fire protections needs. To restate, in order to meet the ISO parameter, the objective is to have properties no more than a five-road mile distance from a fire station in order to be considered protected.

Distances *from* a neighboring community's fire stations *to* specific Baldwin locations: (NOTE: These measurements are approximate and were acquired through a digital web-based mapping program)

### **Baldwin**

The three Baldwin Fire stations are located at the following street addresses:

- Station #1 - East Baldwin at 209 Pequawket Trail
- Station #2 - North Baldwin at 67 Wiggin Road
- Station #3 - West Baldwin at 960 Pequawket Trail

- 9.5 miles      The length of Route #113 that courses through Baldwin
- 5.9 miles      The distance between the East Baldwin and West Baldwin fire stations along Route #113
- 4.3 miles      The distance between East Baldwin and North Baldwin fire stations along Route #107 to Wiggin Road
- 3.8 miles      The distance between East Baldwin and North Baldwin fire stations by way of Route 107 to Cram Hill Rd

### **Standish**

The Steep Falls fire station is located at 870 Boundary Road in Standish.

- 1.4 miles      The distance from the Steep Falls fire station to the Standish-Baldwin town-line along Route #113
- 2.5 miles      The distance from the Steep Falls fire station to the East Baldwin fire station
- 4.7 miles      The distance from the Steep Falls fire station to the intersection of Sebago Road and Bridgton Road
- 5.0 miles      The distance from the Steep Falls fire station to the Baldwin town office
- 6.6 miles      The distance from the Steep Falls fire station to the North Baldwin fire station via Route #107 and Cram Hill Road

**Cornish:**

The Cornish Fire Department is located at 37 School Street in Cornish.

- 1.5 miles      The distance from the Cornish fire station to the Cornish-Baldwin town-line along Route #5—at the Saco River
- 3.6 miles      The distance from the Cornish fire station to the West Baldwin fire station
- 5.3 miles      The distance from the Cornish fire station to the Baldwin town office

**Hiram:**

The Hiram Fire Department is located at 60 Main Street in Hiram.

- 1.4 miles      The distance from the Hiram fire station to the Hiram-Baldwin town line along Route #113
- 3.4 miles      The distance from the Hiram fire station to the intersection of Wards Hill and Douglas Hill Road in West Baldwin
- 3.9 miles      The distance from the Hiram fire station to the West Baldwin fire station
- 7.7 miles      The distance from the Hiram fire station to the Baldwin town office

**Sebago**

Two of Sebago's three fire stations are proximal to the Baldwin/Sebago town-line.

Station #1 is located at 406 Bridgton Road  
Station #2 is located at 242 Sebago Road

- 2.1 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #1 to the Sebago-Baldwin town-line along Bridgton Road
- 4.5 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #1 to the North Baldwin fire station along Bridgton Road
- 4.9 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #1 to Graffam Road in West Baldwin by means of Douglas Hill Road
  
- 1.0 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #2 to the Sebago-Baldwin town-line along Route #11
- 2.9 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #2 to the intersection of Routes #11 and #107 along Route #11 in Baldwin
- 3.6 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #2 to the North Baldwin fire station along Route #11 and Route #107
- 4.8 miles      The distance from Sebago fire station #2 to the East Baldwin fire station along Route #11

The purpose of reviewing the distances between fire stations, to include those in neighboring communities, is to portray the benefits that the collective distribution of stations provides the entire region and not just the individual communities. Some areas

of one town can be accessed by responding fire apparatus from a neighboring community perhaps sooner due to specifically to travel distance. This is greatly evidenced in parts of Baldwin when considering the placement of the ring of stations circling Baldwin.

When the ISO reviews the fire suppression capabilities of a community, the location and the relationship amongst those fire departments can be beneficial with regard to the setting of fire insurance premiums, providing they work in collusion with one another. More and more communities are adopting "Memorandums of Understanding's" (MOU's) that define inter-local government agreements regarding the delivery of certain services, and to say again, the value of "Automatic Aid" is but one of those tangible benefits.

Should the community decide to downsize to just one fire station in Baldwin from three will present challenges, and at the same time, yield dividends. This would cause a major shift away from how the fire department has operated for decades. It will take careful planning and buy-in from the fire fighters themselves, and Baldwin citizens alike.

#### Option #2 - Blend new with old approach

The town would construct a centralized fire station and retain the North Baldwin station. This recommendation would have a new facility built somewhere along Route #113 that would allow for the merging of both personnel and capital assets from the East and West Baldwin fire stations.

Although the North Baldwin fire station is outdated and lacks the features found in new facilities, the town may want to continue operating a single engine from here. This consideration would in effect act as a placeholder as the town pares the number of fire stations and builds one new one. Over the course of several years into the future, the town could gauge the effectiveness and the need of retaining, improving, replacing or decommissioning the fire station in this section of town, which should become evidential.

#### Option #3 - An ideal approach

The town would construct two new buildings and close all three current fire stations. A new station would be built somewhere within the West Baldwin precinct along Route #113 in the vicinity of the Route #5 intersection. A second station would be constructed in the East Baldwin district along Route #11/107 towards the Sand Pond Road intersection. One of the two new buildings would be designed as the central station, while the other as a substation. This option would essentially combine the East and North Baldwin stations into one new facility, while a replacement for the west would be built on a new repositioned site.

#### Synopsis

Although any of these options would reshape the manner in which the department has operated since the inception of the three separate fire companies generations ago, the

need to streamline fire department operations by working from modern, efficient and high-quality facilities is vital to the Baldwin Fire Department's effectiveness.

The point of this account is to show that there may be an opportunity to realign the arrangement of fire stations in Baldwin. But in order to move forward with any plan to construct new facilities in different locations, it is imperative that any programming includes an enhanced understanding and commitment by all involved parties that sharing a common goal with a keen interest in economies of scale be a guiding principle. As part of any consideration in reshaping a fire department and particularly when readjusting fire station locations, a more universal scope of the arrangement should play a strong part in those deliberations.

One only has to look at the mutually beneficial relationship between the towns of Scarborough, Gorham, Windham and Standish with respect to their affiliation in the delivery of fire and EMS services to realize collaboration can be successful and competent.

### **Fire Apparatus Replacement Programming**

The town has been responsible for the replacement of five pieces of apparatus: three pumpers and two tankers. The West Baldwin Fire Company purchased squad #3 with its own funds years ago, and the town acquired the two forestry trucks through a government surplus program. The town has reserve accounts for specific purposes, which to a degree follows the intent of Baldwin's Capital Investment Plan (CIP). The fire department has endorsed a strategy of cycling apparatus out after 30 years of service and there is a dedicated reserve account that is replenished periodically for purchasing new vehicles.

One facet of Baldwin's plan to replace apparatus in the future may be influenced by the direction the town chooses to follow regarding the number of fire stations it may build, maintain and operate. Whether Baldwin operates from one, two, or even three fire stations, the configuration of the fleet of apparatus will correspond with the number of stations from which the town will eventually operate.

#### Priority #1 Dispose of Forestry #1

The town of Baldwin has two similar government surplus trucks that were converted for forest fire fighting purposes. There is however, glaring differences. Forestry #1 is a four-wheel drive truck that carries 300 gallons of water whereas Forestry #2 is a six wheel drive unit and carries in excess of 1,000 gallons. The town should hand-off the less purposeful truck to another community, dispose of it in whatever manner the town chooses, or follow any compulsory guidelines that were accepted when the town took ownership of the vehicles.

## Priority #2 Remove Squad #3 from service

To stay in sync with a phased approach of cycling out the oldest fire truck, Squad #3, after 31 years of service life would be next in-line. Squad #3 is in actuality a pumper although the department reclassified it as a squad when it was relegated to a different function. The truck does carry the department's secondary set extrication tools, traffic control signage, and two-Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Some of the functions associated with this vehicle should be transferred to Engine #4, the pumper housed alongside Squad #3 at West Baldwin. Engine #4 has only two SCBA and according to ISO and NFPA, a fully compliant engine company should have a minimum of four. The set of extrication equipment should also be transferred if there is sufficient compartment space. As for off-road duties associated with wildland fire fighting, the department's forestry apparatus should be assigned those types of incidents.

## Priority #3 Replace Squad #3 and Forestry #1 with one new multifunctional unit.

In place of these two apparatus, the town should consider acquiring a smaller more versatile multifunctional vehicle that can achieve many of the functions both the squad and Forestry #1 were assigned. The recommendation is to procure a heavy-duty four-wheel drive, standard size pick-up truck chassis with a utility style body. The town would also purchase a wildland fire fighting skid-unit. These skid-unit modules can carry as much as 300 gallons of water and can be removed and stored off-season. This "utility" truck would also carry some the department's traffic control signage, and other equipment that may not be included in any of the pumper's inventory.

## Priority #4: Plan to replace Engine #1 within the next five years

If the town has not scaled back the number of fire stations within a prescribed time frame, the need to continue with current apparatus replacement plan should be followed. Engine #1 is a conventional pumper and will be 30 years old in 2027. The proposed replacement for engine #1, which is currently assigned to the East Baldwin station, should be designed as a rescue-pumper. The basic premise of a rescue-pumper is to achieve the maximum amount of storage space on a single vehicle designated as a dual-role truck. The new apparatus would not only be used to suppress fires, but to carry the array of extrication tools and equipment needed at motor vehicle accidents.

The current Engine #1 does carry extrication equipment but the truck has limited capacity due to its design characteristics. A rescue pumper would offer more compartment space and adaptability that may be desirable as the mission and methodology of the fire department morphs in the coming years. The overall dimensions of rescue pumpers are usually larger in-scale when compared to conventional pumpers. For Baldwin, the constraints of the current East and West stations may be an impediment to housing a rescue pumper.

*Abstract: Should the town decide to remove squad #3 and Forestry #1 from service and replace it with one new vehicle, this would downsize the fleet from eight to seven pieces*



*of apparatus. If the town decides to construct one new fire station and decommission the three current ones, there may be an opportunity to forgo replacing one engine in the future. This would further downshift the rolling stock to just six pieces, with having two pumpers, two tankers, one multifunctional vehicle and one forestry unit. In the distant future, when the time comes to replace the two tankers, they should be designed as combination pumper-tankers. The optimal number of apparatus would stand at six, as described, whether operating from one or two stations at this place in time.*

### **Consider revising the remuneration program**

Members of the Baldwin Fire Department are classified as on-call municipal employees and are paid once a year in December for the hours they are engaged in department activities. Although it is understood this has been the preferred method of compensation by the majority of the fire fighters, the town may want to offer the option to pay personnel more frequently, perhaps quarterly. The rationale supporting this recommendation is to attract newcomers and to retain all personnel. More frequent sequencing of imbursement may help personnel with their financial needs over the course of a 12-month period. In essence, structure the department as a part-time job.

Currently, there are two wages grades within the department, with a base rate of \$12.15 for non-certified personnel, and \$14.65 per hour for credentialed fire fighters. At the end of budget years 2020 and 2021, the fire department did not expend more than \$10,000 of the \$22,000 allocated the "Fire Fighter Training Account." Any residual remaining at the end of the year is not carried forward, but is transferred to the town's General Fund.

In reviewing the amount of money dedicated to the training and wage account, and the fact that almost one-half of the appropriation went unexpended, the question arises as to whether the rate of pay could be increased without triggering any negative financial impact on the town's budget. There appears sufficient capacity in the account to absorb a higher rate of pay. The minimum hourly wage in Maine for 2021 was \$12.15 per hour, and in 2022, the rate goes to \$12.75, and in 2023 it goes to \$15.00 per hour. This recommendation urges using a scale that exceeds the state mandated minimum wage as a base rate. Once more, trying to find solutions to retaining and attracting fire fighters will likely require a variety of perks, with adequate compensation being part of that strategy.

The town's administration should stay abreast of what other fire departments are paying their fire fighters and use that as a guide to achieve parity. As an example, the town of Standish currently pays their on-call personnel who are certified as a Fire Fighter I, \$15.02 per hour, and a Fire Fighter II earns \$15.79. A basic fire fighter earns \$12.85 and member who is assigned as a fire-police (traffic control) is compensated at \$14.18 per hour. The rate of pay for Sebago personnel is \$15 for an exterior fire fighter and \$17 for a qualified interior fire fighter.

## **Job Descriptions**

Baldwin has adopted a range of titles that fit the various job functions required to effect prudent emergency incident operations and systematic department management. As such, those titles include; chief, assistant chief, captain, lieutenant, interior fire fighter, exterior fire fighter, attendant, support, fire/police and driver/operator. It appears there are only two written fire department job descriptions, that of fire chief and fire fighter. During research for this project, several documents referred to district chiefs, although it is likely these are no longer valid.

A complete set of job descriptions need to be written that depicts the various roles and responsibilities of all personnel. Each position within the Baldwin Fire Department's chain of command must have a written job description that defines the position's job function, responsibility, required qualifications, and any other attributes deemed appropriate.

One particular issue that should be considered regarding the fire chief position is to assign the chief as the town's liaison to oversee the delivery of ambulance service to Baldwin. The chief has a working relationship with the Standish fire chief and any communications between Standish and Baldwin regarding the ambulance could filter through the fire chief.

Although there is an assigned assistant fire chief, there is no job description outlining the function of the second in command. There is need for a training officer, which in many departments is assigned to a chief officer, and in the case of Baldwin, the assistant chief could be assigned the responsibility of devising, implementing and delivering a quantitative training program.

The term "division of labor" is described as "the separation of work into a number of tasks, with each task performed by a separate person or group of persons." A good example of this practice within the Baldwin Fire Department is the position of "Station Captain." Here again, a job description does not exist for this position, but in all likelihood there are expectations.

The fire department administration, perhaps in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, should revise the two currently in-place job descriptions and add those that are missing. The objective would be to associate the various talents and levels of knowledge, skills and abilities of the diverse make-up of the department, and to ensure there is a place within the organization's flow chart for all levels of interest and capabilities.

### **Consider reclassifying the position of fire chief to part-time**

The municipal fire chief in Baldwin is defined as a stipend position. This means the chief is paid a flat annual rate and there is no set number of hours the chief is expected to perform his or her duties each week. To adequately meet the intentions of a proposed rewritten job description, and to undertake any short and long-term fire department

planning, let alone handle the day-to-day operations and administrative functions, the town may want to deliberate revising the position. With an increasing workload demanding more time to ensure accountability and compliance with the associated responsibilities and mandates, a more structured work schedule with established goals and objectives should be considered. Upgrading the position should provide a definitive allotment of time per week in an effort to accomplish strategic goals and objectives. This recommendation would allow for enhanced program management, visibility, and accessibility. It would also provide adequate time to attend professional development programs, and to work alongside other town employees and administrators, etc.

The fire chief's current annual stipend is set at \$8,000. This budgeted item includes an additional sum to pay the town's share of federal payroll tax (FICA). The stipend amounts to \$153.85 per week, and if one were to consider what this equates to using the 2023 minimum wage of \$15, that would allow for 10.25 hours, or approximately 7.75 hours at \$20 per hour of dedicated time per week. To reiterate, the chief does not or is not allowed take the hourly wage, which is allocated to all others.

Much of a fire chief's time is dedicated to myriad administrative functions that are not always noticeable. Most chiefs who are intrinsically involved in the management of their department and strive to move the organization forward put in far more time than they are compensated for.

At some point in the future, Baldwin should review and scrutinize the position of municipal fire chief to determine if there should be adjustments made in the expectations of the office and whether the compensation is just. With the issuance of this report, in all likelihood, the workload for the chief will exceed the current output should the town commit to making improvements in the fire department.

### **Emergency Management**

In an effort to streamline administrative and operational functions, the town should consider merging Baldwin's Office of Emergency Management within the framework of the Baldwin Fire Department. The fire department has certain resources that can be made use of in addressing incidents that come under the purview of emergency management. Invariably, fire departments are usually called upon to assist with town-wide incidents that fall under the direction of the local EMA director. A single, interconnected agency would put everyone on the same page.

It is unclear as to the yearly activities of Baldwin's Office of Emergency Management as there was no information found within the most recent annual town reports. Should the town consider revising the fire chief position to part-time, dovetailing the duties of the emergency management director within the office of fire chief may further justify the benefit of such a realignment of duties.

## **Support the adoption of a statewide Length of Services Award Program (LOSAP)**

The 130th Maine Legislature, the bill LD 1083, entitled "An act to attract and retain firefighters and Emergency Medical Services through the Maine Length of Services Award Program," is moving through the Maine legislative channels that would provide a statewide annuity based retirement program for volunteer, on-call, and per diem fire fighters and emergency medical technicians. Seen as a potential aid in enlisting new and keeping hold of the current troupe of emergency first responders for the long-term, this endeavor may entice people to remain active in their local department knowing there is a financial reward at the end of their community service.

Laws in at least 40 states authorize LOSAP plans and nearly 20% of the volunteer firefighters in America participate in some form of LOSAP. Most follow a model, which involves an annual minimum of training and service hours, with financial credit given toward a LOSAP program. After receiving a minimum number of years of credit, and beginning at a specified age, the volunteer is eligible for a monthly annuity.

The program will establish a statewide pension type program under which Maine volunteers will be paid "length of service awards" for performing qualified services. The term "qualified services" are defined in the bill as firefighting and prevention services, emergency medical services, and ambulance services. Under the program, volunteers will have a program account which will be credited with an annual contribution as of the end of each year during which the volunteer participated in a minimum required level of volunteer activities set forth by the Maine Length of Service Award Program Board of Trustees.

When a volunteer reaches the age of sixty, and has attained a vested status in the program—met the minimum requirements for at least five years—he or she will be paid the contributions credited to his or her program account, plus the net investment income earned on those contributions.

Members would also have to pass all physical requirements set in place by the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). If during any year a member did not meet requirements then that year would not be counted as usable time. In addition, training must include the mandatory set forth by the Maine Bureau of Labor Standards (MBLS). The terms volunteer, paid on-call and per diem are synonymous with regard to the LOSAP program.

Fire fighters from the towns of Berwick and North Berwick, Maine have been enrolled in a LOSAP retirement program offered through the Volunteer Fireman's Insurance Services (VFIS) for many years. These programs are afforded the fire fighters by their individual communities and are not part of any statewide program.

*(Note: Alna, Maine {population 710} At the March 26,2022 town meeting, voters approved \$18,000 to establish its own LOSAP with the expectation of integrating their program with that of the State of Maine's once it is fully operational)*

### **Restart a junior fire fighter program**

The Baldwin Fire Department had implemented a junior fire fighter program, however, the program is not currently operational. The National Volunteer Fire Council's junior fire fighter program supports fire departments by fostering relationships and engaging youth in learning about and ultimately becoming members of fire and rescue departments. The program serves as an umbrella for junior fire fighter programs nationwide to promote youth participation within the fire and emergency service community. It is crucial to attract people into the emergency services while they are young so that they form a lifelong connection, whether as a first responder or as a community supporter.

Junior fire fighter programs give our nation's youth the chance to learn about local fire departments in a safe, controlled, educational, and enjoyable way and provide them with valuable life skills such as teamwork, leadership, responsibility, and commitment. It also provides the department with non-operational support and a powerful recruitment mechanism.

To implement a junior fire fighter program would require selfless individuals who are or have been members of the fire department willing to dedicate time and effort to such a cause. If and when Baldwin decides to construct a replacement fire station, a new facility may present significant appeal and draw the youth of Baldwin to join as junior fire fighters.

### **Ensure the equipment carried aboard all fire apparatus is compliant with NFPA 1901, the standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus**

This National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard lists the minimum type of equipment that must be carried aboard fire trucks. ISO has adopted this standard and in order to achieve their highest score in this specific area, the fire department should reference the standard and make every effort to meet the criteria.

### **Static Water Sources**

The fire department has identified numerous water sources throughout Baldwin that can be accessed and used to draft water from in the event of a fire. These sources need to be maintained and on occasion, repaired. In the future, the department may identify additional bodies of water that could be included for fire suppression.

Currently, the town does not allocate any funds in the budget for this purpose. It is recommended that a line-item be added to the fire department budget for the purpose of maintaining, repairing and installing "dry hydrants" and "draft sites." The allocation should be established so that any unexpended funds from one year are carried forward to the next. Rural water supply from a number of sources in communities like Baldwin is an absolutely essential commodity that requires focused attention.

## **Alternative Water Supply**

The town should attempt to develop, practice, apply, and quantify a "Alternate Water Supply" strategy that meets the ISO/s objectives." The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) recognizes alternative water supply systems, including dry hydrants, suction points, large-diameter hose relays, and hauled water using tanker shuttles. There may be an opportunity to improve upon the town's Public Protection Classification (PPC) if the fire department can deliver water from a static source to a scene of a fire by adhering to ISO's prescribed metrics.

The water delivery system must be available 365 days a year and provide 250 gallons per minute (gpm) for a two-hour duration within five minutes of the arrival of the first apparatus. If a community uses a dry hydrant or suction supply point, ISO may need certification of the water capacity available during a 50-year drought cycle — by a state-certified professional — and many state and local governments have geological engineers or hydrologists who can provide that information. A good place to start is with the local department of environmental conservation. ISO treats suction points — with or without dry hydrants — in the same way it treats standard fire hydrants. Any property within 1,000 feet of a creditable suction point may be eligible for a protection class better than Class 9, provided the building is within five road miles of a responding fire station and the community has obtained 20 percent credit or more under the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

ISO may extend credit beyond 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant when the company uses large-diameter hose — if the fire department can demonstrate a standard procedure for deployment of hose and establish a relay operation.

To determine the fire department's eligibility for recognition of a tanker shuttle, ISO needs to understand the delivery capability of each apparatus.

ISO considers the following:

- Fire-site pump capacity
- Drop-tank capacities
- Distance of responding apparatus from the fire station to the fire site
- Distance of responding supply pumper to supply site
- Distance from the fire site to the supply site
- Amount of water carried by apparatus
- Discharge rate of water supply apparatus
- Fill rate of water supply apparatus
- Quantity of water available and the rate available from the supply source
- Set-up times

The procedure for determining the system's capability involves running a timeline analysis. ISO considers apparatus arrival times, travel times, discharge rates, fill rates, fire flow at the fire site, wait times for apparatus to fill or discharge their water supply, and supply delivery capability.

As an example, the town of York, Maine which is comprised of 56 square miles, achieved a PPC of "4" across the entire community when it proved to ISO its ability to deliver sufficient fire flow in the non-hydranted areas of town. A number of other Maine communities have also achieved improved PPC with demonstrating a rural water delivery evolution that meets the intent of ISO's alternative water supply criteria.

This may seem a daunting project, however, undertaking a long-term approach in achieving this benchmark may yield significant benefits not only to Baldwin, but Baldwin's neighboring community's. To pursue this opportunity to improve upon Baldwin's ISO rating will unequivocally require those nearby fire departments be part of the strategy.

### **Incorporate NFPA #22; the standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection, and NFPA #1142; the standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting within the Town of Baldwin's Subdivision Ordinance**

In an effort to ensure that static water sources identified for fire protection meet certain standards, the town should consider the inclusion of these two National Fire Protection Association documents that are focused on rural water supply.

The town's subdivision regulations of 2001, has a provision regarding water requirements for fire suppression. The provision is found on page #48, Article #12 - Design Guidelines, Section 12.1 - B. Fire Protection, items 1, 2 and 3. This requirement should include the full text found within NFPA #22 the standard for Water Tanks for Private Fire Protection as a guiding principle. The standard provides for the minimum requirements for the design, construction, installation and maintenance of tanks and accessory equipment that supply water for private fire protection.

Another related standard is NFPA #1142; the standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting. This standard identifies a method of determining minimum requirements for alternative water supplies for structural fire fighting purposes in areas where the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) determines that adequate and reliable water supply systems do not otherwise exist.

An adequate and reliable municipal-type water supply is one that is sufficient every day of the year to control and extinguish anticipated fires in the jurisdiction, particular building, or building group served by the water supply.

### **Certified First Responders**

The town of Baldwin relies upon the Standish Fire and EMS to treat and transport the sick and injured from Baldwin. Although the town's fire fighters are not intrinsically involved with providing EMS, there may be times they would be requested to assist the ambulance. At some time in the future, it may behoove interested members of the department to become trained to the basic first responder level. The strain on EMS provider services is impacting ambulances services across Maine. As a default, when ambulances are tied up attending to calls, fire departments that are not usually involved

with treating the sick and injured are being thrust into action, with many not fully prepared to address the issue.

### **Baldwin Fire Department Policy Statements**

The department has a compendium of "Standard Operating Procedures" that are compiled in a policy manual. Universally, policy manuals are considered an ever-evolving, continual work in progress. Baldwin has a solid foundation of SOP's.

The department should continue its efforts to remain current with any additions or revisions to its policies. As a recommendation the following areas of operation should be considered.

- Swift and cold water rescue operations
- Structural fire fighting operations
- Wildland fire fighting operations
- Hazardous Material Response
- Emergency Medical Response (assist the ambulance/first responder)

### **Develop a public-private partnership with local businesses whose employees are on-call first responders or may be interested in joining the Baldwin Fire Department**

The Town of South Berwick, Maine crafted a unique relationship with at least one local business, reimbursing the employer for any time one of its employees leaves work and responds to emergency calls for the South Berwick Fire Department. The employee continues to receive his/her regular wage from their place of business, plus earn his/her fire department wage.

This town-initiated program is in place for its own employees as well. Several town employees such as highway department personnel can leave their regular assignment and go to the fire call, all while remaining on their regular payroll, plus receiving their hourly fire department wage. This arrangement has been viewed as a cost effective measure ensuring a viable on-call system. The South Berwick Fire Department is strictly an on-call department and responds to approximately 350 calls for service annually.

Although Baldwin does not have a sizeable business community to draw upon, this could be attractive to tradesmen or those who work from home. The Baldwin leadership team, and not just the fire department, could work toward developing a "symbiotic" relationship between the business community and the town. The effort here would be to explore what businesses could potentially allow some of their employees who are fire fighters or would be interested in becoming fire fighters to respond to emergency incidents during working hours. To an extent, this would hark back to a time when volunteer fire fighters used to respond to calls from their places of business where production would cease so the fire fighters could respond.

The former Limington Lumber Company, which has recently been acquired by Robbins Lumber, Inc. of Searsmont, Maine, could be such a catalyst for adding additional fire



fighters to the roster of Baldwin's Fire Department even if only during the workday. The Searsmont plant has a policy that allows employees to leave the workplace to respond to emergencies. Robbins realizes the importance of having a capable fire department as they have facility risks that require adequate protection.

### **Incentivize public works personnel to become members of the fire department**

Baldwin has a municipal public works department that funds several full-time positions. It is recognized that there are insufficient personnel available in Baldwin to respond to fire department calls for service, especially during the weekday hours. The town could offer incentives to public works employees to become involved in fire department operations. As future potential new hires apply for employment with the Baldwin Public Works Department, a qualified fire fighter, even if it's with another community, could be included as a member of the Baldwin Fire Department. In essence, the employee would be doing double duty should a fire incident occur while he or she was working as a public works employee.

The town has a host of options at its disposal as how to entice employees to be part of the fire department, most which will undoubtedly require additional compensation.

### **Pursue achieving the Maine Bureau of Labor's Safety and Health Award for Public Employees (SHAPE)**

This award program defers scheduled safety inspections once your workplace is recognized for excellence in safety and health management. The Safety and Health Award for Public Employers (SHAPE) recognizes public sector employers who maintain an exemplary safety and health management system. Acceptance into SHAPE by the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards is an achievement that distinguishes your organization as a model for workplace safety and health. Upon receiving SHAPE recognition, your worksite will be exempt from programmed inspections during the period your SHAPE certification is valid.

To Participate in SHAPE, the specific city or town department or the municipality must:

1. Request a consultation visit that involves a complete hazard identification survey
2. Involve employees in the consultation process
3. Correct all hazards identified by the consultant
4. Implement and maintain a safety and health management system that, at a minimum, addresses the Self-Assessment Form Guidelines
5. Lower your company's Lost Workday Injury and Illness Rate (LWDII) and "Total Recordable Case Rate" (TRCR) below the state average
6. Agree to notify the Workplace Safety and Health Division prior to making any changes in the working conditions or introducing new hazards into the workplace.

*(Excerpted from Maine Department of Labor SHAPE program publication)*

## **Further Collaboration**

The group of towns around Baldwin should consider working closer with one another in an effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Some of the opportunities that could be pursued are:

1. Group purchasing
2. Cost sharing
3. Standardization and compatibility of equipment
4. Joint training
5. Sharing of chief officers at one another's incidents
6. Multi-agency pursuit of grant funding programs
7. Develop and implement common policies and practices
8. Develop alternate water delivery plans that can improve ISO rating
9. Recruitment and retention campaign
10. Establish an equivalent remuneration program among the departments
11. Minimize redundancy

*(Note: In 2015, Knox County, Maine funded a study to determine if there were more opportunities to enhance the cooperative mission of providing fire and life safety protection services within the region. That report delves deeper into those opportunities that are highlighted above. The full report is available upon request.)*

## **Addendum**

As the draft of this Comprehensive Study of the Baldwin Fire Department was delivered to the Board of Selectmen for review, the Insurance Service Office was initiating its own analysis of the town's fire suppression capabilities. As stated in this report, the previous survey was conducted eleven years ago that utilized the 1980 version of the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule. The latest version of the FSRs was implemented in 2013.

ISO's FSRs assesses three major components of a community's fire suppression system: Communications - the receiving and handling of fire alarms, the Fire Department and Water Supply - needed fire flows. There are myriad factors within the grading schedule that impact the final Public Protection Classification ISO assigns a community. As the town deliberates the future direction of the fire department, this report and ISO's forthcoming PPC can provide information that should help the community in establishing short and long-term goals and objectives in an effort to enhance the fire department's operational capacity.