

MINNETONKA FIRE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Our mission is to continuously protect and preserve life and property through quality education, prevention, disaster preparedness and rapid emergency response.

*Service
Before
Self*



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FROM THE CHIEF

Dear Members of the Minnetonka Community,

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to present the annual report of the Minnetonka Fire Department. For 2024, it is my honor to highlight the dedication and hard work of our firefighters and staff in serving our community. Every response reflects our core values: **Be Safe, Be Effective, Be Nice**. These guiding principles shape how we approach every emergency, ensuring we operate with skill, professionalism and compassion in every situation. From structure fires and medical emergencies to hazardous material incidents and rescue operations, our team has remained steadfast in delivering the highest level of service.

In 2024, we responded to 5,700 calls for service—each one a reminder of our unwavering commitment to public safety.

Beyond emergency response, we continue to invest in extensive training to ensure our firefighters are prepared for the evolving challenges of our profession. Firefighting is not what it once was—the materials in modern homes burn faster and emerging technologies like lithium-ion batteries present new hazards, including intense fires and re-ignition risks. As electric vehicles, energy storage systems and advanced building materials become more common, our tactics and training must continuously evolve to address these unique challenges. To meet these demands, we prioritize continuous education, advanced equipment and proactive fire prevention efforts. Our community education programs remain a cornerstone of our mission, empowering residents with the knowledge to prevent fires and respond more effectively in emergencies.

Looking ahead, we face increasing call volumes, including higher demand for emergency medical services, rising operational costs and an ever-changing environment for fire suppression and emergency response. As we navigate these challenges, we remain committed to being fiscally responsible while ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. Strategic planning, resource management and community partnerships will be key as we work to meet growing demands without compromising service.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our firefighters, staff, community partners, and residents for their continued support. I look forward to the next year as we stand together in service.



Kevin Fox, Fire Chief

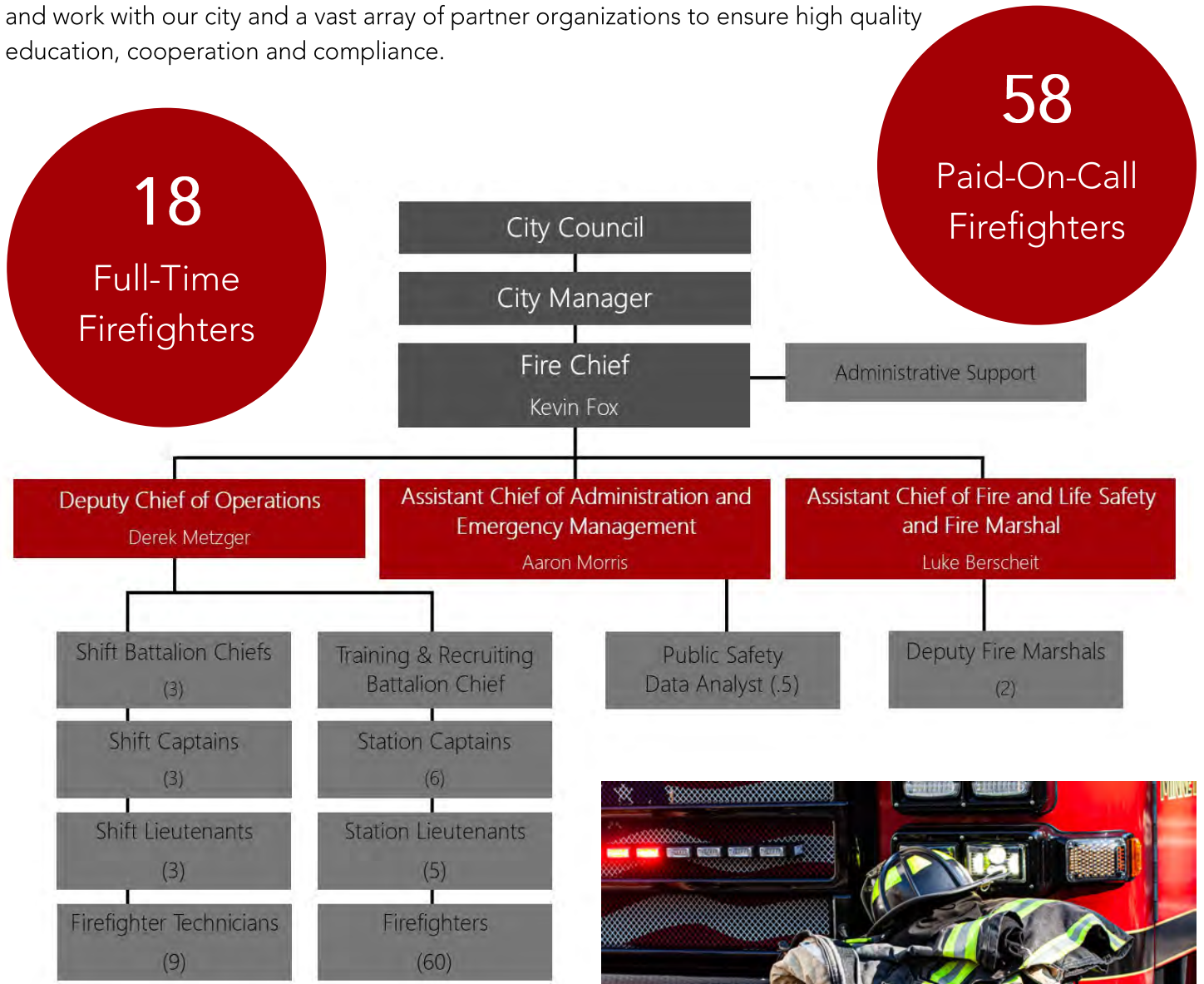
Chief Fox was promoted from Deputy Chief to Fire Chief in 2024 after the retirement of Chief Vance.

He served as interim Chief from January to June of 2024 and applied for the Chief position along with other highly qualified internal and external applicants. He started with the department as a paid-on-call firefighter in 1993.



K M. Fox

Minnetonka Fire is proud to be a combination department with a 24/7 duty crew. Our 18 full-time firefighters, officers, and battalion chiefs work rotating 24-hour shifts, coordinating station maintenance, equipment management, projects and ongoing training with the ever-present knowledge that the next 911 call will come at any moment. Our paid-on-call members also serve as officers and firefighters, scheduling duty crew shifts, coming in for all-department pages, and participating in on-going training and community events. Our full-time administrative chiefs manage our budget, fleet, buildings, personnel, training, fire code enforcement and work with our city and a vast array of partner organizations to ensure high quality education, cooperation and compliance.



OUR DEPARTMENT

OUR YEAR IN CALLS

5,700

Total Calls
for Service

63 Fires

385 Hazardous Condition

625 False Alarms/ no Hazard

733 Service/ Community Call

3,894 Medical & Rescue

August

busiest month:
575 calls

Monday

busiest day of
the week

10:00 AM

busiest time of
day

4:00 AM

least busy time
of day

1,431

overlapping
calls, 25%

16

average
calls
per day

12

structure
fires

70

busiest
call day:
August
storms

11:06

dispatch
to
arrival
time

one
sprinkler
save

Lithium Ion battery fires are a major source of concern for fire departments across the country. They represent fast and unpredictable fire conditions. This year, we had one sprinkler save above a fire where boxes of returns were gathered, many labeled with Lithium Ion warnings. We also had a tragic death after an electric vehicle collided with a traffic pole. The vehicle was fully engulfed in flames within seconds.

Our large training room also functions as a local Emergency Operations Center. We are equipped with a wide range of technology to help us to better serve our community in a larger emergency, such as a natural disaster or large weather event, civil unrest, active shooter, or other emergency that requires the collaboration of many of our city departments and other local agencies. This year we partnered with our local schools to do practice versions of some of these events so that we know where we can train more and where we can be more prepared if we were to ever have a tornado or active shooter situation in Minnetonka. Six times we partially activated the EOC to deal with an emergency or anticipated incident: a sheriff's deputy shooting, a planned protest, Minnetonka SummerFest, an October 7th memorial event, the Minnetonka Open House, and a Halloween snow event. The EOC is a common place where our Chiefs and other leaders can be in one place to monitor the situation, manage personnel and vehicles and make decisions quickly and face-to-face.



Severe Weather Shelter

Evacuation/ Fire Drill

Run, Hide, Fight

Shelter-in-Place

Minnetonka Fire is committed not only to serving those who call 911, but to all those who work for the City. Our Assistant Chief of Emergency Management has worked with all departments to develop a plan for each of these types of responses. Building delegates in each division have reviewed the Crisis Management Plan and have posted information where all employees can see them. While firefighters will be heading to the emergency, we encourage the rest of our city staff to stay away from fire and other dangers.

As part of the fiscal responsibility of the city, the Fire Department applies for grants that may help to purchase equipment or pay salaries to reduce our budget needs while still maintaining proper staffing and current equipment. We applied for over \$8 million dollars in grants in 2024 for personnel, thermal imaging cameras, railroad rescue tools and portable radios.

\$8,504,197

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

TRAINING

We are an all-hazards fire department with regular on-going training in each area of response to ensure that every member is prepared for every 911 call.

Seven paid-on-call members were hired in May and started training for national certification as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and two levels of state-certified firefighting courses that include Hazardous Materials Operations. New members are also required to learn about Minnetonka's specific equipment, apparatus and driving routes. This process takes 12 to 18 months; upon successful completion of these requirements, they are promoted from probationary firefighter to firefighter.

We familiarize ourselves with every piece of gear and train extensively with our equipment to prepare for a wide range of emergencies, ensuring that our members are always "battle-ready". From regularly wearing our Personal Protective Equipment to setting up ladders and from using our hydraulic rescue tools to practicing relaying information over the radio, we train so that we can serve our community safely and with confidence. One yearly requirement for all members is performing a full scenario with a live fire. Our partners in Edina, Burnsville and at Hennepin Technical College have facilities where firefighters can prepare for and work within smoky, fiery and hot conditions to use equipment, teamwork and tactics to extinguish a real fire.



Training Highlights:

EMS Quarterly Trainings, Taught by HCMC	823
Blue Card Incident Command Scenarios	706
Hose Deployment/ Fire Attack Training	517
Ice and Water Rescue/ Boat Operations	445
PPE and SCBA Confidence/ Fit Testing	305
Fire Engine Pump Panel Operations	295
Live Fire Extinguishment Training	280
EMT Course for 2024 New Members	275
Apparatus Certification—Driving Course	259
Ground Ladders and Aerial Operations	220
Forcible Entry and Search and Rescue	180
Vehicle Rescue and Extrication	142

Total Firefighter Training Hours **8,588**

Three members of our administrative team are dedicated to fire prevention. While firefighters are preparing daily to maintain the skills to put out a fire, this team is working on fire code enforcement, new building permits and inspections along side of school and other fire and life safety presentations.

October is Fire Prevention Month

In October, our Deputy Fire Marshal did presentations in 108 elementary classrooms, teaching K, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. Her presentation focuses on fire safety, including maintaining working smoke alarms and having an escape plan in case of a fire and she sends home a letter encouraging families to check their smoke alarms, practice their escape plan and maintain working CO alarms within 10 feet of sleeping areas. We also hosted our popular Open House with over 3,000 attendees, serving 2,500 hot dogs with 430 fire truck riders!

We adopted an important addition to our city code that requires new buildings to provide adequate radio coverage across 95% of each floor of the building. Fire and Police were having concerning outages in radio coverage in some newer construction buildings due to a variety of building materials and other frequencies being used in buildings. Having strong radio connections is imperative to our service and safety.

322 Public Education Events, Presentations, and Tours

52 Quality of Life Follow-Up Visits

104 Smoke Alarm & Battery Installations

170 Fire Protection Permits Reviewed & Approved

256 Inspections for Fire Protection Permits

83 Building Follow-Ups and Citizen Complaints

112 Existing Building Inspections

If you're wondering about your own home safety, scan the QR code below for our Online Home Safety Assessment Tool to evaluate the safety of your home in regards to fire and life safety including CO emergency preparedness. Each question also includes education on what to do if those things are not in place.



14,158

total public education attendees

FIRE & LIFE SAFETY

After the promotion of Chief Fox, other internal promotion processes took place in order to fill the vacancies that each promotion left. Along with the hiring process for Chief, Deputy Chief and Battalion Chief of Training, we hired two new full-time Captains to fill vacancies, four new full-time Firefighter Technicians, seven probationary members, and promoted four paid-on-call members to station lieutenants and two paid-on-call members to station captains. Our strong internal candidates point to a great training and leadership program to develop our own people to guide our department into the future.



As we look ahead to 2025, we are excited to begin another hiring process for nine new full-time firefighters in order to have staff 24/7 at our Station 5, located off of 494 and 394. We have chosen this location in order to reduce response times to the Ridgedale area. Our next state-of-the-art pumper truck is already in production and should be delivered in the spring to coincide with this hiring. All of these opportunities in the new year are part of the next phase of our Public Safety Master Plan which was adopted by the City Council in 2023.

As we make these plans, we also consider the challenges all fire departments continue to face: increasing calls for service, challenges with EMS response, aging infrastructure and the rising cost of doing business.