

**Fiscal Year 2026**

**Warrant Article 7**

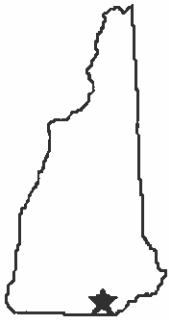
**Hire 4 Firefighter/AEMT's**

Shall the Town of Hudson vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$527,686 which represents the cost of salary, benefits, uniforms and personal protective equipment to hire four additional Firefighter/AEMT's? This appropriation is in addition to Article "A" the Operating Budget.

Tax Rate Impact is \$0.10

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0

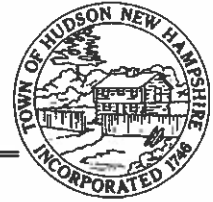
Recommended/Not Recommended by the Budget Committee



# TOWN OF HUDSON

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

39 FERRY STREET, HUDSON, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03051



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Business 603-886-6021  
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Scott J. Tice  
Chief of Department

### **Funding for (4) Firefighter/AEMTs**

The purpose of this warrant article is to increase the number of trained front line Fire and Emergency Responders in the Emergency Services Division of the Hudson Fire Department.

The Hudson Fire Department is looking to fund \$527,686 consisting of \$244,621 in salary, \$254,913 in benefits, and \$28,152 for uniforms and personal protective equipment for the purpose of hiring four (4) full-time Firefighter/AEMT's. With our continued growth in population and call volume, we still do not meet the minimum staffing level of NFPA 1710. This additional staffing will be the first step in implementing our long-term staffing plan that will coincide with our strategic plan that is in development.

Our most recent staffing increase in 2020 brought our shift staffing to 11 and was grant funded. At this time we are looking to increase shift staffing to 12 per shift.

As Hudson and the region continue to increase in population, it stands to reason our call volume will also increase. We already know our current staffing level is not adequate for our current call volume. We have seen several instances where our response to fire incidents was reduced due to companies being committed to other calls. We have been fortunate that these incidents did not present any life hazards and appropriate and aggressive fire tactics by responding personnel were able to control these incidents.

We continuously look for ways to deploy our resources in the most efficient manner to account for our increased workload. This has been achieved by the following:

- We have placed an ambulance in all three facilities. This allows for greater access to our Emergency Medical Services program and reduced response times.
- We have introduced and operate under an operational program that utilizes a smaller support vehicle for EMS and motor vehicle accidents. This has allowed us to take some of the road miles off our large fleet and provided better utilization of our operating budget for fuel and repair.

How does this increased workload affect the overall mission of the Fire Department?

- As you are aware, we are an all hazards organization. We are responsible to not only provide fire protection but also Emergency Medical, Hazardous Material, Technical Rescue and a multitude of service related responses. When an ambulance responds to a medical call we lose coverage for the fire engine in that district.
- We routinely find ourselves in a situation where our Emergency Services personnel are responding from one call to another or responding directly from one of the local hospitals. The increased EMS activity means that when all three Ambulances are assigned to an emergency incident, we reduce our overall fire suppression readiness. This has at points left us with no fire coverage at all because all on duty staff is committed. When activity levels are this high we are forced to call for emergency call back of staff creating an overtime costing if personnel are available.

#### Staffing

- We are recommending that we hire four (4) additional Firefighter/A-EMTs, as this will create a consistent staffing model of 12 members per shift 24/7/365.
- Staffing model each day would consist of the following;
  - Captain – 1
  - Lieutenants – 2
  - Firefighters – 9
- This additional member will allow us to staff Engine-2/Ambulance-2 with three (3) personnel. This will increase the effectiveness of the company. It will also reduce the number of medical incidents the Squad will respond to with A-2, leaving it available to respond to additional incidents.
- We would plan to reclassify four (4) Firefighter positions to Lieutenant positions in the future. This would give each shift a supervisor to be the hands-on leader of the company and allow the Shift Commanders to more effectively perform their duties.
- Adding these positions would be the first of a three step plan to increase staffing to fourteen (14) per shift. This would allow us to dedicate a two-person company to an Ambulance which would be the first EMS unit dispatched to EMS incidents town-wide. This would allow the Engine Companies to stay in service as Engine Companies for the first medical call. These Engine Companies would cross-staff additional ambulances for simultaneous medical calls providing the Town with better fire coverage and more total resources.

We recognize the additional cost associated with this program and the challenges for the community to meet the ever-changing service demands.

The costs associated with this request are inclusive of salary, benefits, uniforms, and personal protective equipment.

In 2018 and 2020, we were fortunate to have been awarded funding to hire a total of eight (8) Firefighters through the SAFER grant program awards. At this time, details for that funding opportunity have not been released.

We will be looking for the town to support the hiring of these four members by raising and appropriating the funds. However, should the opportunity to apply for the SAFER grant program with the non-supplanting waiver still in place become available prior to July 1, 2025, with the Board of Selectmen's approval, we would submit our application. This grant program has specifically been developed to assist communities address the additional demands of their emergency services program, which are experiencing increased call volume and limited staffing nationwide. The SAFER grant would provide some level of funding for associated salary obligations and benefits. In years past, this program has not funded uniforms, protective clothing, or overtime.