



NEW BERN



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2022-2027

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan



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New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	<u>3</u>
Organizational Background.....	<u>4</u>
Organizational Structure.....	<u>6</u>
Definition of a Community-Driven Strategic Plan.....	<u>7</u>
Summary of Findings.....	<u>9</u>
Mission/Values/Vision.....	<u>10</u>
Programs and Services.....	<u>11</u>
Critical Issues and Service Gaps.....	<u>12</u>
Strategic Initiatives.....	<u>13</u>
Goals and Objectives/Performance Measurements.....	<u>14</u>
Appendix A: Process and Acknowledgement.....	<u>22</u>
Appendix B: Performance Measurement.....	<u>24</u>
Appendix C: Business/Community Leaders Findings.....	<u>26</u>
Appendix D: Citizens Survey Findings.....	<u>29</u>
Appendix E: Internal S.W.O.T. Analysis Findings.....	<u>32</u>
Appendix F: Works Cited.....	<u>36</u>



New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of New Bern has an extremely rich fire service history of service and dedication. That tradition is being upheld today by the men and women of the department who desire to provide an exceptional level of service to the people that they protect.

In 2021, the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department embarked on a journey to assess the department from the inside out, engaging citizens, community leaders, department personnel, and city leaders. When combined with past lessons learned, the anticipation of future needs, and acknowledgment of today's successes and challenges, these assessments and feedback are the foundation for this strategic plan. [\(See Appendix "A" for more details\).](#)

Citizens and community leaders have expressed their desire for the fire department to be professional, provide excellent response times, provide exceptional medical care, and be well trained and ready for the crises to which they are called to respond. They want their firefighters to be firm, fair, and consistent, and be involved in the community as well as be recognized as the premier fire department in Eastern North Carolina.

Firefighters participating in the S.W.O.T. analysis positively recognized their strength is within their people. Firefighters identified high-quality personnel, customer service, compensation package, and support for formal education as strengths.

While this situational responsiveness has served the city in the past, there is a need for a better-defined pathway that is solidly anchored in the core services of the department and builds upon those core services to deliver an equitable level of fire and emergency services citywide.

Change is often challenging; however, change is necessary for progress to occur. With the world around us changing so quickly, so must the fire service change to be able to meet the needs of the people being served and that need to be protected. Plotting a successful course forward is difficult unless you know your destination. This initiative is to help the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department set a course for the coming years.

During this process, no critical voids in service delivery were identified. However, the need for additional attention to health/wellness, structure/staffing, and community outreach were determined to be the highest priority recommendation in constructing the department's strategic plan. Aligning resources with outcome-based goals in a more measured way will empower the Fire Chief and City leaders to make sound decisions. The strategic plan provides a path towards a healthier environment for firefighters, structure/staffing needed to provide better response and meet the expectations of our community.

Another critical piece of strategy that needed review is in the area of emergency medical services. The business of emergency services revolves around quick response because the saving of lives depends upon a quick response. North Carolina statutes define primary responsibility for patient treatment and transport to counties, and secondary or support responsibilities at the municipal level. However, a more strategic and/or sophisticated level of involvement and engagement from the fire department with the emergency medical service delivery system could ultimately result in improved service delivery for the people of New Bern. The department is at an important decision point regarding what role they will play within the emergency medical response system within Craven County. This decision point will need to be made following joint city and county staff discussion and potential discussion among elected officials.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

The history of the City of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department, *as it is known today*, is both rich and unique. Originally, the services were provided by three companies: 1) the Atlantic Fire & Hook & Ladder Company, 2) the New Bern Steam Fire Engine Company No. 1, and 3) the New Bern Fire Company No. 1. The first chartered fire-fighting organization was the Atlantic Fire & Hook & Ladder Company formed on May 14, 1845; however, this company became inactive due to the members volunteering for military service at the break of the War Between the States.

During the Civil War occupation of New Bern, the New Bern Fire and Steam Engine Company, No. 1 was organized on January 1, 1865, by Union soldiers, many of whom remained after the war. During this time, the Union troops received a hand pump from the North. This contraption reached its maximum output when eight men exerted their weight on each end of the pump's crossbeam lever. A 16-man crew pulled the vehicle to the scene of the blaze. The pump drew water from one of New Bern's strategically located wells at Middle and Pollock Streets, Broad and Middle Streets, South Front Street, Bern Street (in Five Points), and North Craven Street at Pelletier's Knitting Mill. If the fire was near the Neuse or Trent Rivers, water was pumped from these. After pulling and pumping the Yankee apparatus for about three years, firemen persuaded the Town Council to purchase a steam fire engine. When the new steam fire engine arrived in 1868, it too, had to be pulled by hand but was later converted for horse pulling.

In 1879, the Atlantic Fire & Hook & Ladder Company received a new Silsby steam fire engine, and in 1884, the city traded the New Bern Steam Fire Engine Company, No. 1's steam fire engine for a new "Button Steam Fire Engine." Shortly thereafter, the nickname "Button Company" came to be. The rivalry between the two companies played an important part in their advancements, and with the arrival of this new steam fire engine, the competition gained momentum. Which fire company reached the blaze first became more important to New Bernians than the damage done or whose house was on fire. The rivalry continued until 1927 when the city housed both companies in a central fire station on Broad Street. Even then, however, the two companies still held separate meetings.

Although these fire companies were the "leaders," they were not the only firefighting organizations. There were several others, both white and black, in addition to a junior fire company. The junior fire company was made up of young men between the ages of 16 and 18 and was called the "Excelsior Bucket and Axe Company." Upon reaching manhood, these junior firefighters were "absorbed" by the Atlantic and Button Companies. Other fire companies that came about were: the Mechanics, the Fourth Ward, the Riverdale, the Holden Company (named for Governor Holden), the Axe, the Rough and Ready Fire Company, and the Independent Colored Fire Company.

The New Bern Fire Department kept abreast of the city's growth. With the arrival of the steam fire engines, the city's streets were paved with oyster shells. The driver's seat of the engines was equipped with leather straps to keep the driver from being thrown off when an engine struck a hole in the street. Later plans included paving the streets with bricks; however, this was delayed until a water system could be installed. The project was finally completed just before 1900. Because of these improvements, the fire departments were in a better position to fight several destructive fires that came a few years later.

The old Button and Atlantic fire engines were eventually replaced by motorized trucks. Purchased for \$1,500 (versus today's price of \$250,000) in 1914 and delivered in 1915, both trucks were American LaFrance. The Atlantic

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Company truck was white; the Button Company was red. The first motorized ladder truck was purchased in 1927 by Atlantic Company for \$27,000 (versus today's price of \$750,000).

Atlantic Company

- Organized May 14, 1845
- Incorporated January 5, 1847
- Oldest chartered fire department in North Carolina
- One of the oldest fire departments in the United States
- Fire Station was located behind the Chelsea Restaurant until 1910
- Held World Record - quick steam until Button Company took it
- First to use drop harnesses for horses
- Reel racing championship three times



Button Company

- Organized January 1, 1865
- Incorporated December 20, 1865
- Formed by Union troops who remained in New Bern after the Civil War
- First Steam Fire Engine was named "Amoskeag"
- Fire Station was the old City Hall building on Craven Street, across from Mitchell's Hardware
- Holds 3 world records in hose wagon competitions in early 1900's that remain unbroken today

New Bern Fire Department

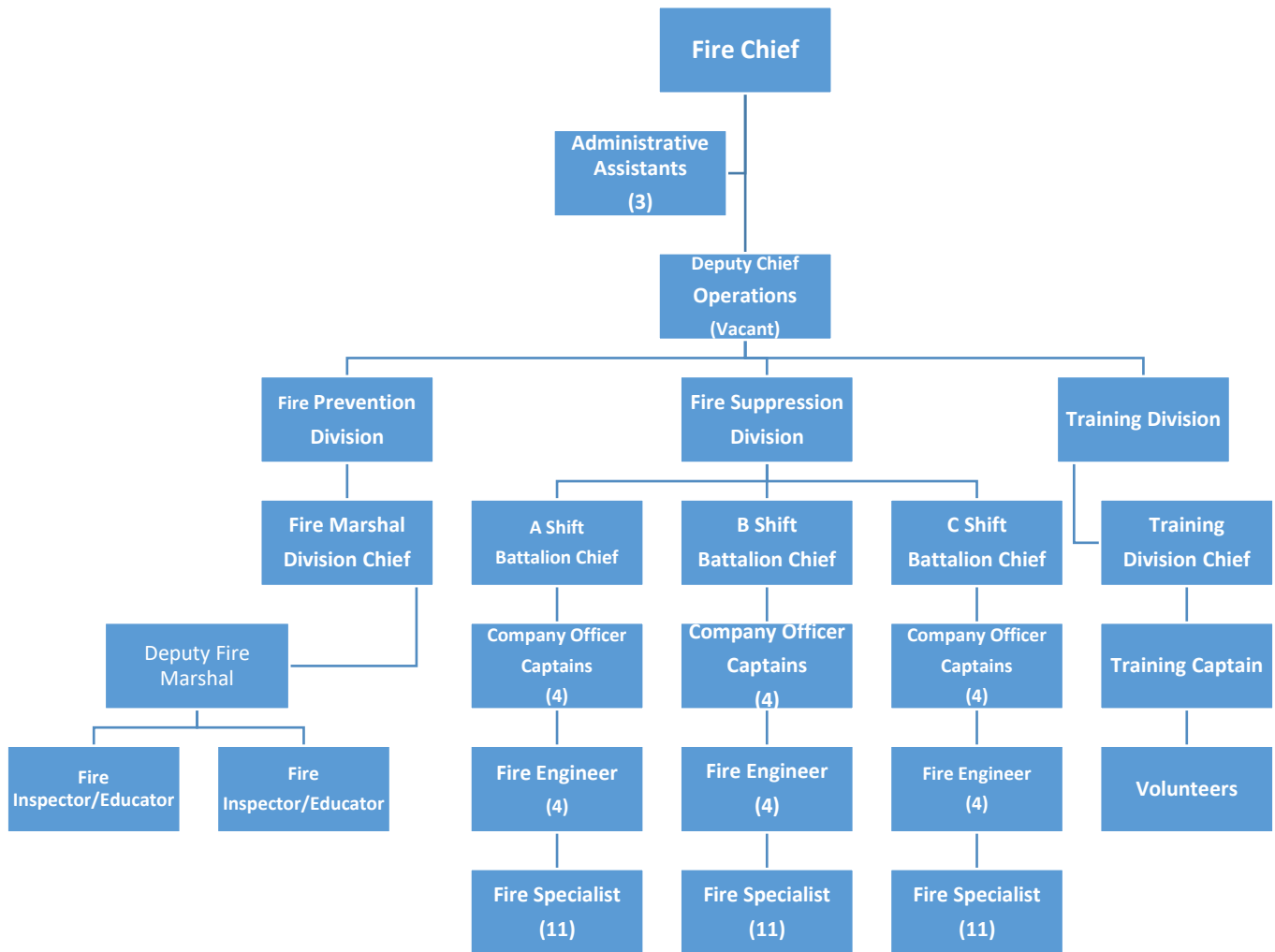
- Atlantic and Button Companies merged in 1927
- Both companies were housed together into one central station on Broad Street in 1927
- Opened Station 3 located on National Avenue
- Opened Station 4 located on Elizabeth Avenue
- Moved into current Headquarters Station (Station 1) located on Neuse Boulevard in June of 2000
- Opened Station 2 located at West Thurman Road in 2003
- Closed Station 3 on National Avenue in 2003
- Combination department with 66 career personnel and 10 volunteers

New Bern Fire-Rescue

- Received Fire-Rescue recognition and officially became known as "New Bern Fire-Rescue" in 2004.
- Hired 6 career personnel for additional coverage for Thurman Rd. District in 2019.
- Purchased a new Engine and new Aerial Platform in 2021.
- Placed an Engine and Aerial in service with a minimum of 6 personnel in Thurman Rd. District in 2021.
- Became an accredited fire department in 2021.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLAN

The fire service has entered into a critical competitive evolutionary cycle. Public demands and costs continue to increase, while dollars and other resources continue to shrink. These trends place increased pressure on the modern fire service manager, policymakers, and full-time and volunteer staff to develop ways to be more effective and efficient. In many cases, the public is demanding the accomplishment of specific goals, objectives, and services with few resources. To do a more efficient job with the available resources, organizations must set objectives based on constructive efforts while eliminating programs that do not serve the customer.

To ensure that customer needs were incorporated, a community-driven strategic planning process was used to develop the New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan. Businesses employ this type of process to identify market trends, allowing the service provider to focus efforts while reducing risk and wasted effort. This process was adapted to meet New Bern Fire-Rescue's specific needs.

This document is the result of several strategic planning sessions and includes valuable community input.

What is a Strategic Plan?

It is a living management tool that:

- Provides short-term direction
- Builds a shared vision
- Sets goals and objectives
- Optimizes use of resources

What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow.

Peter F. Drucker,
Professor of Social Science
and Management

Effective strategic planning benefits from a consistent and cohesively structured process employed across all levels of the organization. A sense of urgency pervades the customer-driven organization. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. New information from customers, like providers, and life changes are to be factored into the planning process. ***The strategic plan should be an operationally useful document.***

Successful organizations, whether they are Fortune 500 companies, federal agencies, or state or municipal governments, have recognized that developing a customer focus is an absolute necessity. With this information, government agencies must strategically plan how they will deliver high-quality products and services to the public and their other customers through better, faster, and less expensive programs.

Once their strategic goals are established, agency leaders must establish performance measures, for which they are fully accountable, to assess and ensure that their departments and agencies are indeed delivering on the promises made in their strategic plans. Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the management, employees, stakeholders, and customers through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Where Does the Community Fit into the Strategic Planning Process?

For many successful organizations, the voice of the community drives their operations and charts the course for their future. Companies, as well as state and city governments, have begun focusing on their community of customers as one of the key motivators in planning for the future.



Performance Assessment

Implied within every stage of the planning process is the ability to determine progress made toward the goals or targets set. This assessment ability is a monitoring function that simply tracks activities. It may be as simple as a “To Do List” or as complicated as a plan of action with milestones and performance measures. Also implied within the planning process is the ability to measure the effectiveness of the actions taken in the conduct of the organization’s business. [Information on performance measurement can be found in Appendix “B.”](#)

A “community-driven organization” is defined as one that “maintains a focus on the needs and expectations, both spoken and unspoken, of customers, both present and future, in the creation and/or improvement of the product or service provided.”

The specific steps of the process are as follows:

1. Define the services provided to the community.
2. Establish the community’s service priorities.
3. Establish the community’s expectations of the organization.
4. Identify any concerns the community may have about the organization and its services.
5. Identify those aspects of the organization and its services the community views positively.
6. Develop the Mission Statement, giving careful attention to the services currently provided and which logically can be provided in the future.
7. Establish the values of the organization’s membership.
8. Identify the strengths of the organization.
9. Identify any weaknesses of the organization
10. Identify areas of opportunity for the organization.
11. Identify potential threats to the organization.
12. Establish realistic goals and objectives for the future.
13. Identify implementation tasks for each objective.
14. Develop a vision of the future.
15. Develop organizational and community commitment to the plan.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The process of updating the strategic plan for the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department (NBFRD) began in November 2021. The project's foundation was derived from three (3) key areas that included business leaders and community surveys, citizens survey, and an internal **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.)** Analysis. Information gathered was analyzed by the agency's accreditation team.



Business Leaders

Based on their feedback we learned that business and community leaders ([see Appendix "C"](#)) and citizens ([see Appendix "D"](#)) have a desire to see the fire department be professional, provide excellent response times, be well trained and ready for the crisis to which they are called to respond. They want firefighters to interact more with the community and research diversity issues in the fire service and determine measures that can be taken for New Bern Fire-Rescue Department to become a more diversified agency. Survey results determined that rescue, EMS, and fire suppression as priorities of services being offered by NBFRD.

Firefighters participating in the S.W.O.T. analysis positively recognized their strength is within their people. Firefighters identified high-quality personnel, customer service, compensation package, and support for formal education as strengths. Weaknesses include internal communication, upper management structure, EMS structure, and weak recruitment, hiring, advancement, and promotional plans. Participants identified more community involvement / social media use, formalizing the EMS program, formalizing fitness program, properly using accreditation recommendations, external funding, and employee compensation as opportunities. Threats identified during the process included financial issues, management issues, employee wellness, accountability and decision making, public perception and politics, and performance issues. Participants identified the need to provide quality services to the customer.

The accreditation team reviewed the above results from the internal and external stakeholders, in conjunction with the recommendations from the peer assessment team and CFAI board of commissioners, did not find any critical voids in service delivery. However, employee wellness and community outreach were determined to be of the highest priority. [More detailed results of the S.W.O.T. Analysis can be found in Appendix "E."](#)



Accreditation Team Workshop

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

MISSION/VALUES/VISION

Mission Statement

The City of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department is committed to providing continual protection from the devastation of fire and life-threatening emergencies. We are steadfast in providing quality risk awareness programs, training, and other related services to the citizens we protect.

Value Statement

The employees of the City of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department believe in and promote personal and professional growth through honesty, professionalism, loyalty, and dedication.

- **Honesty:** Through fairness and sincerity in all efforts.
- **Professionalism:** Through making a conscious effort to protect those who entrust their lives and property to our service.
- **Loyalty:** Through allegiance to the department's vision.
- **Dedication:** Through our passion and commitment to serve the public and fellow employee.

Vision Statement

The City of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department will be the premiere fire department in our region as a result of our commitment to community risk reduction.

- **Vision Goals**
 - Organize a collaborative effort for reducing risk that represents our community's demographics.
 - Identify potential stakeholders for developing a community partnership.
 - Utilize collaborative planning to develop, implement, and evaluate prevention programs.
 - Analyze and identify pertinent information about our city's demographics, leading causes of community risk, and high-risk populations.
 - Evaluate the significance of prevention programs through community synergy in determining the program activities, efficiency, and effectiveness.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The agency's internal stakeholders identified the following core programs provided to the community, as well as the services that enabled the organization to deliver those programs.

Table 1
Core Programs

- ❖ Fire Suppression
- ❖ Rescue
- ❖ Fire Prevention
- ❖ Disaster Preparedness
- ❖ Emergency Medical Services
- ❖ Public Safety Education
- ❖ Fire Investigation
- ❖ Hazardous Materials Operation



Table 2
Supporting Services

- ❖ Communications Center
- ❖ Law Enforcement
- ❖ Human Resources
- ❖ Finance
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Red Cross
- ❖ NC Task Force 10 Team
- ❖ Medical Direction
- ❖ Auto/Mutual Aid
- ❖ Facility Maintenance
- ❖ Emergency Management
- ❖ Hospital
- ❖ Craven Community College
- ❖ Salvation Army
- ❖ Information Technology



New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

CRITICAL ISSUES AND SERVICE GAPS

A review of New Bern Fire-Rescue's core programs and support services identified internal strengths and weaknesses along with external opportunities and threats. The internal stakeholders recognized their primary critical issues and service gaps as the foundation for the development of goals, objectives, critical tasking, and timelines to meet their future vision

Table 3

Critical Issues and Service Gap Issues Identified

- ❖ EMS Program
- ❖ Structure and Staffing
- ❖ Internal Communication
- ❖ Personnel Empowerment
- ❖ Employee health and wellness
- ❖ Recruitment, hiring, and career development
- ❖ Community outreach



New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Table 4

Strategic Initiatives of the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- ❖ Employee Wellness
- ❖ Structure and Staffing
- ❖ Community Outreach
- ❖ EMS
- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Policies



New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

The community-driven strategic planning process to this point has dealt with establishing the mission, values, S.W.O.T., critical issues and service gaps, and strategic initiatives of the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department (NBFRD). To achieve the mission of the NBFRD, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established to enhance strengths, address weaknesses, provide members with clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. The accreditation team was tasked with completing this phase of the process and making recommendations to command staff.

The accreditation team held two work sessions to review the data and develop the strategic initiatives, goals, objectives, and critical tasking needed to accomplish these goals. The findings were presented to command staff and approved as seen below. As goals and objectives are management tools, they should be updated on an ongoing basis to identify what has been accomplished and to note changes within the organization and the community. The leadership of the NBFRD will evaluate the progress toward these goals and objectives and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. The attainment of a performance target should be recognized and celebrated to provide a sense of organizational accomplishment.

The goals and objectives will now become a focus of efforts within the agency. By following these goals and objectives carefully, the agency will be directed into its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: Employee Wellness

Contribute to a safe environment for the employees of New Bern Fire Rescue Department

Objective 1A

Determine measures and initiatives to reduce cancer exposure.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: DC James McConnell

Critical Tasks

- Research leading causes of cancer in the fire service and actions that can reduce the chances of exposure.
- Research and explore the best fit diesel exhaust removal system for NBFR.
- Research and compare gear contamination extraction systems.
- Review and update department policies on PPE use, maintenance, and cleaning.
- Review and update exposure policy.
- Research and identify early detection measures and awareness programs.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 1B

Create a culture promoting Mental health within the agency.

Timeframe: 6 months

Assigned to: Capt. Jack Parker

Critical Tasks

- Research and determine the impact mental health issues are having in the fire service.
- Determine measures needed to increase morale and prevent burnout within the department.
- Research and evaluate the potential implementation of Fitness Initiative and Peer Support Training.
- Create policies addressing the importance of addressing mental illness in the department.
- Research and evaluate the potential Critical Incident Stress Management and Peer Support Training.
- Coordinate and conduct in house training on recognizing the signs of mental illness through the City EAP.

Objective 1C

Enhance New Bern Fire Rescues Physical Fitness Program

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: FE Nic Fortier / FE Stephen Jasset

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the department's current physical fitness program for effectiveness.
- Evaluate the condition and effectiveness of the department's current fitness equipment.
- Research and evaluate the potential for peer fitness training.
- Establish a program and policies providing opportunities for maintaining a physically fit lifestyle.
- Establish a policy and procedure for conducting annual physical fitness testing.
- Research the need to have personnel perform an agility test more frequently.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: Structure / Staffing

Provide quality services by establishing adequate staffing, training, personnel management, organizational development, and fire department structure. Align recruitment and retention practices to support department programs and services.

Objective 2A

Improve the effectiveness of the department's leadership.

Timeframe: 18 months

Assigned to: Command Staff

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the need to reorganize the command structure.
- Assess the benefit of empowering the captain with more authority and responsibility.
- Research and provide more opportunities for quality leadership training.
- Evaluate time management issues.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 2B

Improve service delivery by evaluating the effectiveness of the department's apparatus, equipment, and facilities.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: Battalion Chiefs

Critical Tasks

- Analysis of current system and process associated with the agency's physical resources.
 - Facilities
 - Apparatus
 - Equipment
- Perform a risk assessment of each district.
- Evaluate service gaps in each district.
- Complete a needs assessment for each category of the agency's physical resources for each district.
- Evaluate the needs of the training facility and equipment

Objective 2C

Maintain adequate and well-trained staffing to provide effective service delivery for our community.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: Command Staff

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the current staffing model used by New Bern Fire-Rescue for efficiency in accomplishing the service demands of the agency.
- Perform a staffing analysis based on those of like cities.
- Perform staffing needs assessment based on the community service demands.
- Develop alternate staffing solutions based on the staffing needs assessment.
- Evaluate the efficiency of current staffing policies.
- Research and explore grant opportunities to assist with staffing needs.
- Explore ways and implement measures to enhance the volunteer program.
- Explore the benefit of contract opportunities with neighboring agencies.
- Evaluate the training budget and explore the need to increase funding for more training opportunities.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 2D

Enhance the quality of our employees through the evaluation of our recruitment, hiring and promotional programs.

Timeframe: 18 months

Assigned to: Command Staff

Critical Tasks

- Complete and implement the agency’s career development policy.
- Research recruitment strategies and develop a plan.
- Participate more in the high school firefighter training program.
- Build a framework for personal and professional growth throughout each rank to enhance professional development.
 - Acting Engineer packet
 - Acting Captains packet
 - Acting Battalion Chiefs packet
- Engage with community leaders for recruitment opportunities.
- Review the current promotional policy and make it readily available to the department.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: Community Outreach

Continue to enhance the Community Outreach Program to meet or exceed community expectations.

Objective 3A

Evaluate measures needed to better market New Bern Fire Rescue

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall

Critical Tasks

- Explore the need for and develop a ride-along program with the community.
- Research public events and allow companies to be present.
- Examine and determine the effectiveness of current community-driven events at the fire department.
- Explore and initiate opportunities to have “meet and greet” sessions with Fire Department personnel.
- Explore the benefits and use of multiple social media platforms.
- Share agency accomplishments with the public.
- Develop a “Who we are, What we do” campaign.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 3B

Develop a community risk reduction model that identifies, targets, and reduces/eliminates risks and hazards within the community.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: Capt. Gareth McDaniel / Insp. Johnathon Gaskins

Critical Tasks

- Conduct a needs analysis to determine community risks that are specific to each response district.
- Provide community risk reduction training for all personnel.
- Evaluate current community risk reduction programs offered by New Bern Fire Rescue.
- Research and develop programs that match the risks impacting the senior citizens of New Bern.
- Explore the idea of more participation in the high school fire education program.
- Categorize risk reduction messages into campaigns with targeted audiences.

Objective 3C

Develop a partnership with community and business leaders to enhance the agency's community outreach.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the benefit from different levels of community partnership.
- Solicit community leaders' assistance on recruitment and handling of diversity issues.
- Determine opportunities to use business leaders to assist in the growth of New Bern Fire Rescue.
- Facilitate a stronger bond with Craven County Emergency Management and Craven County fire departments.
- Build a stronger bond with Local Media (Television, radio, and newspaper)
- Facilitate periodic community leaders and business leaders' meetings.
- Solicit training opportunities from business leaders in leadership, human relations, etc.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #4: Formalize the EMS Program

Provide quality medical services to the community by establishing policies, adequate staffing and training, and better response times.

Objective 4A

Evaluate the EMS Program for Service Delivery and Customer Expectations.

Timeframe: 6 months

Assigned to: Capt. Tony Heckman / Capt. Jack Parker

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate the EMS program's performance through established objectives and performance measurements.
- Analyze the EMS program's performance for each response district with the following criteria:
 - Baseline and benchmark response time
 - Staffing objectives based upon type and magnitude of the event
 - Areas not meeting program performance objectives
- Determine program needs through an evaluation of annual program reports.
- Determine external customer satisfaction utilizing survey tools.
- Develop and implement a quality assurance process to improve department performance.

Objective 4B

Evaluate Emergency Medical System Delivery

Timeframe: 6 months

Assigned to: Capt. Tony Heckman / Capt. Jack Parker

Critical Tasks

- Identify service demand by reviewing historical data and projected city growth.
- Evaluate the use of Emergency Medical Dispatch to determine the impact is having on the EMS system delivery.
- Clearly define the roles of the EMS Committee.
- Identify what level of service the fire department will provide the citizens of New Bern.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 4C

Implement procedures and develop policies to ensure personnel are operating properly within local protocols.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: Capt. Tony Heckman / Capt. Jack Parker

Critical Tasks

- Evaluate local protocols and develop specific policies for New Bern Fire Rescue.
- Solicit input from the Medical Director and EMS Director regarding specific policies needed by the fire department.
- Identify legal/liability issues associated with providing non-transport medical care and develop policies based on such liabilities.
- Work with the department SOP Committee to publish needed policies.

Objective 4D

Implement an enhanced EMS training program involving Craven Community College and local EMS agencies.

Timeframe: 12 months

Assigned to: Capt. Tony Heckman / Capt. Jack Parker

Critical Tasks

- Perform an objective analysis of the training needs based on historical data and the quality assurance process.
- Explore enhanced training opportunities through Craven Community College.
- Identify training opportunities with local EMS agencies.
- Explore online training opportunities in EMS operations.
- Identify the need and develop critical task drills to evaluate company-level skills.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #5: Communication

Create a culture of inclusion for our internal and external stakeholders by developing a process that embodies consistent, transparent, and honest communication.

Objective 5A

Evaluate and improve external communications to benefit the community and the agency.

Timeframe: 9 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall / Capt. Gareth McDaniel

Critical Tasks

- Facilitate a meeting with local media groups to strengthen relationships, including suppression personnel.
- Evaluate the current platforms used in social media for the agency.
- Work with the city PIO to enhance media and social media opportunities.
- Develop public service announcements explaining the benefits of our achievements to citizens and business leaders.
- Participate in more community events (Be seen in public)

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Objective 5B

Evaluate and improve the agency's communications with its internal stakeholders.

Timeframe: 9 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall / Capt. Gareth McDaniel

Critical Tasks

- Better communicate the vision of the city and the department to all levels of personnel.
- Maintain transparency and clarity of the agency's direction.
- Identify and determine the effectiveness of current communication pathways used by the agency.
- Develop a system of weekly reports.
- Explore different opportunities for communicating department information.
- Explore the need for more computer access for personnel

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #6: Policies & Procedures

Provide personnel a clearer direction through the review and update of department policies and procedures.

Objective 6A

Evaluate current Standard Operating Procedures for accuracy and legitimacy.

Timeframe: 6 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall (SOP Committee)

Critical Tasks

- Prioritize and review current SOP's.
- Remove obsolete SOP's, that no longer pertain to NBFR.
- Review and update current SOP's to match NBFR's current operations.

Objective 6B

Evaluate Current operations of NBFR and determine the need for additional SOP's.

Timeframe: 6 months

Assigned to: BC Dennis Tyndall (SOP Committee)

Critical Tasks

- Review Programs offered by NBFR to determine the need for additional SOP's.
- Review the Self-Assessment Manual for required SOP's
- Create a method to track SOP updates and reviews.
- Develop a proposal and adoption procedure for new SOP's.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX "A" PROCESS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In September 2021, Fire Chief Robert Boyd requested the accreditation team to review and update the department's current strategic plan. Preliminary meetings were held in October 2021 to outline the process. The accreditation team held work sessions on December 29, 2021, and January 24, 2022, to analyze the data received, create strategic initiatives and objectives for the agency, and develop the updated Strategic Plan.

Request to focus work in five (5) core areas:

1. Evaluation of Services
2. Community Expectations and Concerns
3. SWOT Analysis
4. Staffing Levels / Structure
5. Establish Strategic Initiatives and Objectives

Cornerstones of the project (in no particular order):

- Stakeholder involvement
- Building a vision
- Setting goals and objectives
- Short term direction
- Self-Assessment
- Resources development strategies

**Table 5
Accreditation Team**

Dennis Tyndall	Accreditation Manager
Steven Jerome	Assistant Accreditation Manager
Johnathon Gaskins	Fire Prevention Representative
Jackson Parker	B Shift Representative
Gary McDaniel	C Shift Representative
Nic Fortier	A Shift Representative
Craig Woolls	C Shift Representative
Stan Sutton	A Shift Representative

**Table 6
Materials Reviewed by Accreditation Team**

- ❖ 2017-2022 Strategic Plan
- ❖ Community Leader Survey Report
- ❖ Community Online Survey Report
- ❖ Internal SWOT Analysis Report
- ❖ 2021 Accreditation Report
- ❖ Recommendations from the CPSE/CFAI Board of Commissioners
- ❖ Fire and Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual
- ❖ Other materials as deemed necessary

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Business and Community Leaders Feedback Session

A business and community feedback session was held on November 5, 2021, at 11:30 AM. The objective of the session was to inform attendees of the programs and services the New Bern Fire-Rescue department has to offer and to gain a better understanding of their acknowledged expectations; 36 business and community leaders in attendance.

Firefighter S.W.O.T.

Group feedback session with emphasis on a) internal strengths, b) internal weaknesses, c) internal opportunities/perceived external opportunities, and d) perceived external threats. This session was conducted with ten (10) New Bern firefighters representing a cross-section of rank, experience, and demographics at the New Bern Fire-Rescue Training Grounds on November 19, 2021, at 1:00 PM.

Table 7
Fire Department stakeholders participating in S.W.O.T.

Ashley Jones	Fire Captain
Justin Sawyer	Fire Captain
Tony Heckman	Fire Captain
Jeremy Blalock	Deputy Fire Marshal
Glenn Kiely	Fire Engineer
Allen Howard	Fire Engineer
Chris Highsmith	Fire Engineer
Hunter Nobles	Fire Specialist
Joshua McCormick	Fire Specialist
Barry Gohn	Fire Specialist

General Public Feedback

The accreditation team and City of New Bern Public Information Officer collected data through a survey posted on the New Bern Fire-Rescue website. The survey was advertised on the City of New Bern website and Facebook.



Internal Stakeholders Work Session

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX “B” PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

“Managing for Results”

As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on the assessment of progress toward achieving improved output. According to Collins (2009), what matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a *consistent and intelligent* method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor. They must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes. It has been stated that:

Successful strategic planning requires a continuing review of actual accomplishments in comparison with the plan...periodic or continuous environmental scanning to assure that unforeseen developments do not sabotage the adopted plan or emerging opportunities are not overlooked (Sorkin, Ferris and Hudak [1984]).

Why Measure Performance?

In order to establish that the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department’s Strategic Plan is achieving results, performance measurement data will be implemented and integrated as part of the plan. An integrated process known as “Managing for Results” will be utilized, which is based upon the following:

- The identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- The determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- The analyzing and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

A “family of measures” that is typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes the following:

- **Inputs:** Value of resource used to produce an output.
- **Outputs:** Quantity or number of units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- **Efficiency:** Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- **Service Quality:** The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely service is provided.
- **Outcome:** Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer. Outcome focuses on the ultimate “why” of providing a service.

The Success of the Strategic Plan

The New Bern Fire-Rescue Department (Nbfd) has approached its desire to develop and implement a Strategic Plan by asking for and receiving input from the community and members of the agency during the development stage of the planning process. The agency utilized professional guidance from the Office of State Fire Marshal and the community-driven strategic planning process to compile this document. The success of the Nbfd’s Strategic Plan will not depend upon the implementation of the goals and their related objectives, but from support received from the authority having jurisdiction, membership of the agency, and the community at large.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

A community-driven strategic planning process supported by effective leadership and active participation will provide considerable opportunities to unify internal and external stakeholders. Through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction; how all vested parties will work to achieve the mission, goals, and vision; and how the organization will be measured and held accountable for its progress and/or success provides the dynamics of this planning process.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX "C"

BUSINESS/COMMUNITY LEADERS FINDINGS

On Friday, November 5, 2021, the City of New Bern invited key members of the business community and community leaders to a luncheon designed to provide an educational opportunity about the department and to solicit feedback from these community leaders about their perceptions about the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department. The peer-review process was explained, and Chief Boyd provided an approximately 15-minute presentation on the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department's services and operations. Chief Tyndall explained the accreditation process and the advancements made by the agency since the first Strategic Plan was developed. Attendees were asked to complete a written response form rating the services provided by the department, expectations of the department, positive strengths of the department, concerns, and general comments.

Overall, responses from the leadership group were VERY positive about the department and the services provided. Detailed comment summaries are listed below:

Rankings

TOP RANKINGS = Rescue, EMS, Fire Suppression,

LOWEST RANKINGS = Fire Investigation, Fire Prevention, Domestic Preparedness, Public Education

Table 8

Business/Community Leaders Ranking Percentages and Service Priorities

SERVICE	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Rescue (Basic & Technical)	100%		
EMS	93%	7%	
Fire Suppression	87%	13%	
Hazardous Materials	80%	20%	
Fire Prevention	73%	27%	
Fire Investigation	73%	27%	
Domestic Preparedness	73%	20%	7%
Public Fire Education	60%	40%	

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Table 9

Business/Community Leaders Expectations of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- ❖ Proper training to handle community priorities and public relations. (2)
- ❖ Adequate funding for competitive hiring.
- ❖ Quick response time. (7)
- ❖ Respond to media and citizen questions and records request in a timely and thorough manner.
- ❖ Better fire prevention efforts and public education. (6)
- ❖ Develop better partnerships and improve community relations. (4)
- ❖ Sustainability – a great department has been built. Sustaining this is important.
- ❖ Prevent fires and put them out as soon as possible. (2)
- ❖ Maintain proper staffing with adequate equipment.
- ❖ Market to Public about services.
- ❖ Diversity – will create a more excellent department.
- ❖ Community facility with partnering organizations.
- ❖ Market to Public about services and career opportunities.
- ❖ Increase preparation in natural and manmade disasters.
- ❖ Increase efforts in fire investigation.
- ❖ Better back-up in medical emergencies.
- ❖ Increase Safety.

Table 10

Business/Community Leaders Positive Feedback about New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- ❖ Fire Department is more than willing to provide support at community events. (2)
- ❖ Staff has always been professional. (6)
- ❖ Firefighters at an emergency were compassionate and approachable. (3)
- ❖ Commitment to excellence (8)
 - Great fire rate
 - Accreditation
 - Education / Credentials (3)
- ❖ Community involvement (5)
- ❖ Well trained department (2)
- ❖ Child Safety Seat Program
- ❖ Experience, focused leadership (2)
- ❖ Provides many different resources for the community.
- ❖ Very impressed with the department and personnel. (2)
- ❖ Dedication to each other, strong cohesive team. (2)
- ❖ Good response times (2)
- ❖ They carry themselves in a way that inspires respect.
- ❖ Thorough occupancy inspections. Public safety initiatives.
- ❖ Vehicles and facilities are always 100%.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Table 11

Business/Community Leaders Concerns about New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- ❖ The department is understaffed.
- ❖ Interaction with the public that may, at times, lack empathy.
- ❖ Community involvement – The department and firefighters have a pretty low profile in the community.
- ❖ Partnering with other fire departments– departments seem somewhat insular.
- ❖ Volunteer Firefighters – what are the liabilities and issues around using volunteers for firefighting. (3)
- ❖ Racial diversity in your department. Encourage more minorities in your department. Women in your fire department? (3)
- ❖ Distribution of resources and services. (4)
 - West of New Bern Growth
 - Hwy 70 bypass project
 - No tanker trucks for MVC's with Fires in remote locations.
- ❖ EMS Training – additional attention needed working with EMS and providing medical services.
- ❖ Cell Phone towers – the fact that it takes so many transfers to get the department you need.
- ❖ Communications – radios are subpar. Increase communications with the public and other agencies.
- ❖ Shorten response times.
- ❖ Educate Senior citizen facilities on evacuation plans.
- ❖ Cooperation / develop relationships with the local community.
- ❖ Are they getting the support they need from the city, county, community?
- ❖ Continue joint training with all fire departments in the county

Table 12

Other Comments from Business/Community Leaders

- ❖ New Bern is fortunate to have a fire department on this level. (2)
- ❖ The City of New Bern Fire Department is an outstanding, dedicated, and well-trained group of firefighters. (3)
- ❖ The New Bern Fire Department has evolved from much hard work with a compassionate Chief and line officers with always a positive group of firefighters with a servant's heart to take care of the needs of our local hospital and medical facilities fire safety needs.
- ❖ The responding shift is always very cooperative, helpful, and never complains of the event at the time of need.
- ❖ The Fire Marshal is very compassionate. He is very dedicated and responds at a moment's notice.
- ❖ The fire department has been great to work with from the Fire Chief to the Fire Marshal to the firefighters in the field, including all types of emergencies.
- ❖ Thank you for your services. Very Proud. (3)
- ❖ Leadership is engaged with the community.
- ❖ Recommend working with other agencies to market the success of the department and encourage this career as an opportunity for individuals.
- ❖ With the success of the accreditation process, you should quantify what that does for the insurance rates. Tell homeowners and businesses what your efforts save them.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX “D” CITIZENS SURVEY FINDINGS

The citizen’s survey was conducted on the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department’s website for six (6) weeks. The purpose was to inquire of the public about the services they feel are most important. The survey also provided the public the opportunity to rank the agency’s response, professionalism, focus. This summary focuses primarily on those responses illustrative of the overall responses received from the feedback summary.

Table 13
Service Priorities

Rescue
Emergency Medical Services
Fire Suppression
Hazardous Materials
Fire Investigation
Fire Education
Code Enforcement
Domestic Preparedness

➤ Customer service is NBFR’s Focus	Strongly Agree	63%
	Agree	20%
	Somewhat Agree	14%
	Disagree	3%
➤ Focus on Fire Prevention & Education	Strongly Focused	42%
	Focused	52%
	Somewhat Focused	6%
➤ NBFR’s Emergency Response	Excellent	58%
	Good	32%
	Fair	6%
	Poor	4%
➤ NBFR’s Professionalism	Excellent	77%
	Good	20%
	Fair	0%
	Poor	3%

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Table 17

General Public Comments about New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- ❖ I have trust and faith in the Fire Dept that they will do the right thing when taking care of us.
- ❖ Would like to see more partnerships.
- ❖ I think increasing public awareness of the Home Inspection Program would be helpful.
- ❖ New Bern emergency responder departments and the city government is struggling to catch up with growth and changing demographics of the surrounding area and greater society.
- ❖ You are on the right track. Thanks for your work.
- ❖ I have been around an emergency and seen personnel just standing around but do not appear to communicate to the public.

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX “E” INTERNAL S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS FINDINGS

S.W.O.T. Analysis

For agencies to be successful it is important to identify the positive and negative attributes contained within. A SWOT analysis is a good way to perform this evaluation. It allows the agency to identify areas in which it can capitalize as well as those areas that can produce harm for the agency. It allows the agency to find the correlation between the strength and weaknesses to the opportunities and threats that could be encountered. Once the **Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats** are identified, the agency can begin creating strategic ideas to help develop its future and better assist with reaching its goal of providing premier service to the community it serves. This group session began with a meeting at the New Bern Fire-Rescue Headquarters station, explaining the process and sharing information from the previous accreditation cycle. The group feedback session was conducted at the New Bern Fire-Rescue training facility on November 19, 2021, at 1:00 PM. Members of this group were contacted beforehand to let them know what to expect during the feedback session. The feedback session was held without department administration present and was conducted in an informal environment. The feedback session lasted for approximately three hours.

Component

A key element to any agency’s success is its membership. New Bern Fire-Rescue recognizes the importance of employee input to define the best goals for the agency while creating positive morale amongst the membership. Ten (10) members of the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department, representing a cross-section of rank, experience, and demographics were selected by the Fire Chief to be the voice of all the members of the department with representation from divisions, shifts, and stations. New Bern Fire-Rescue Department asked an outside source, familiar with the process, to facilitate the feedback session with employees of the New Bern Fire-Rescue Department (NBFD) focusing on organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Overall Observations

Overall, the group was very interactive and willing to freely share and discuss ideas. The group seemed very interested in improving the department with the theme of more community interaction coming up several times. The group did not seem to be fully engaged with the accreditation process. This seemed to be more from a lack of understanding as they cited specifically that they had not seen any concrete improvements since becoming accredited.

They seemed to feel that the biggest weakness and threat to department improvement was the organizational structure of the upper command and a lack of trust and delegation in company officers to make decisions. The group feels that all decisions must be run through the command staff before the company officer has the approval to make and act on a decision. They also feel that the department does not provide them with the freedom to interact with the community and tell the department’s story. They felt that the community does not have a solid understanding of what it is that the department offers and what their workday looks like. They cited several times that there is an issue with project management, describing that new projects begin before past projects are completed

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

They seemed very thankful for the quality equipment and facilities that the city provides for them and for the “Core Group” of personnel who are heavily involved in the department. The group was very engaged and presented with positive attitudes throughout. Not a single person complained as the meeting ran longer than initially forecasted. They all seemed to be focused on providing top-quality service to the customer and wanted to further engage with the public.

All these items can be found in the notes from the meeting. Below are the general feedback points.

Strengths

To move forward with improved or requested services from the city’s citizens and business/community leaders, New Bern Fire-Rescue Department must first identify their current strengths to ensure the capability of requested services. These strengths must also prove consistent with current issues facing the organization. To ensure that the proper rate of return on staff time and financial allocations are being met, the agency must make sure the organizational strengths line up with the primary functions of the agency’s programs. Through this planning process, the following strengths were identified for the fire department:

Table 18
Strengths of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Employees<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedication• Diverse skillset• Age/maturity of the core staff (10-20 year operations employee)➤ Compensation package<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retirement• Insurance➤ Fire prevention programs & personnel➤ Customer service & connection to the community➤ Availability of resources to support formal education

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Weaknesses

As with strengths, an organization must acknowledge its weaknesses to move forward. Areas of weaknesses should not be misconstrued as threats (which will be later identified), but rather looked upon as areas of concern that could prohibit our current processes/operations. An organization's performance and/or lack of performance relies heavily not only on identifying their weaknesses but effectively addressing them on their own. The following weaknesses of the fire department were identified:

Table 19
Weaknesses of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Upper management structure and decision making<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reactive vs. Proactive• Inconsistencies• Support & confidence in personnel• Unequal division of labor• Too many incomplete projects• Lack of a communicated vision (City and Department)• Time management• Command staff slow to empower or to make a decision➤ Communication / transparency➤ Budgeting & capital plan not effective➤ Poor hiring/recruitment➤ Career development plan➤ Lack of technology (redundancy)

Opportunities

Upon identification of strengths and weaknesses, only then can you assess your organization's program enhancement capabilities and/or restrictions. The focus of opportunities should not be exclusively on existing programs and services but expounding upon and development of new prospects within the fire service industry. Many opportunities exist for New Bern Fire-Rescue Department as identified during this strategic planning process.

Table 20
Opportunities of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Use of social media & more community involvement to share our story➤ Formal EMS Program➤ Compensation for certifications (at least those above what's required)➤ External funding opportunities<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants• 501.c.3 through volunteer agency➤ Formal fitness program & policy➤ Use accreditation as a business model

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

Threats

Another aspect of strategic planning is the peril of threats and/or potential threats to the organization. Implementation of new programs/processes oftentimes meets with new challenges or oppositions. However, by recognizing possible threats, the agency can reduce the potential for loss. The success with any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some current and potential threats are identified below:

Table 21
Threats of New Bern Fire-Rescue Department

- Accountability & decision making
- Employee wellness
 - Cancer Preparedness
 - Burnout
 - Morale
- Financial issues
 - Compensation time
 - Compensation attraction for recruitment
- Management issues
 - Lack of empowerment
 - Organizational structure
 - “Do as I say, not as I do” mentality
 - Battalion Chief’s time off & staffing issues
- Public perception and politics
- Performance issues (performance evaluations)

New Bern Fire-Rescue Strategic Plan

APPENDIX "F" WORKS CITED

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