



23 Public Safety Millage

MARCH 25, 2023



4 Overarching Questions and Concerns

- How did we get here?
- What happens if the millage is approved?
- What happens if the millage is denied?
- Where would this revenue go and how would it be spent?

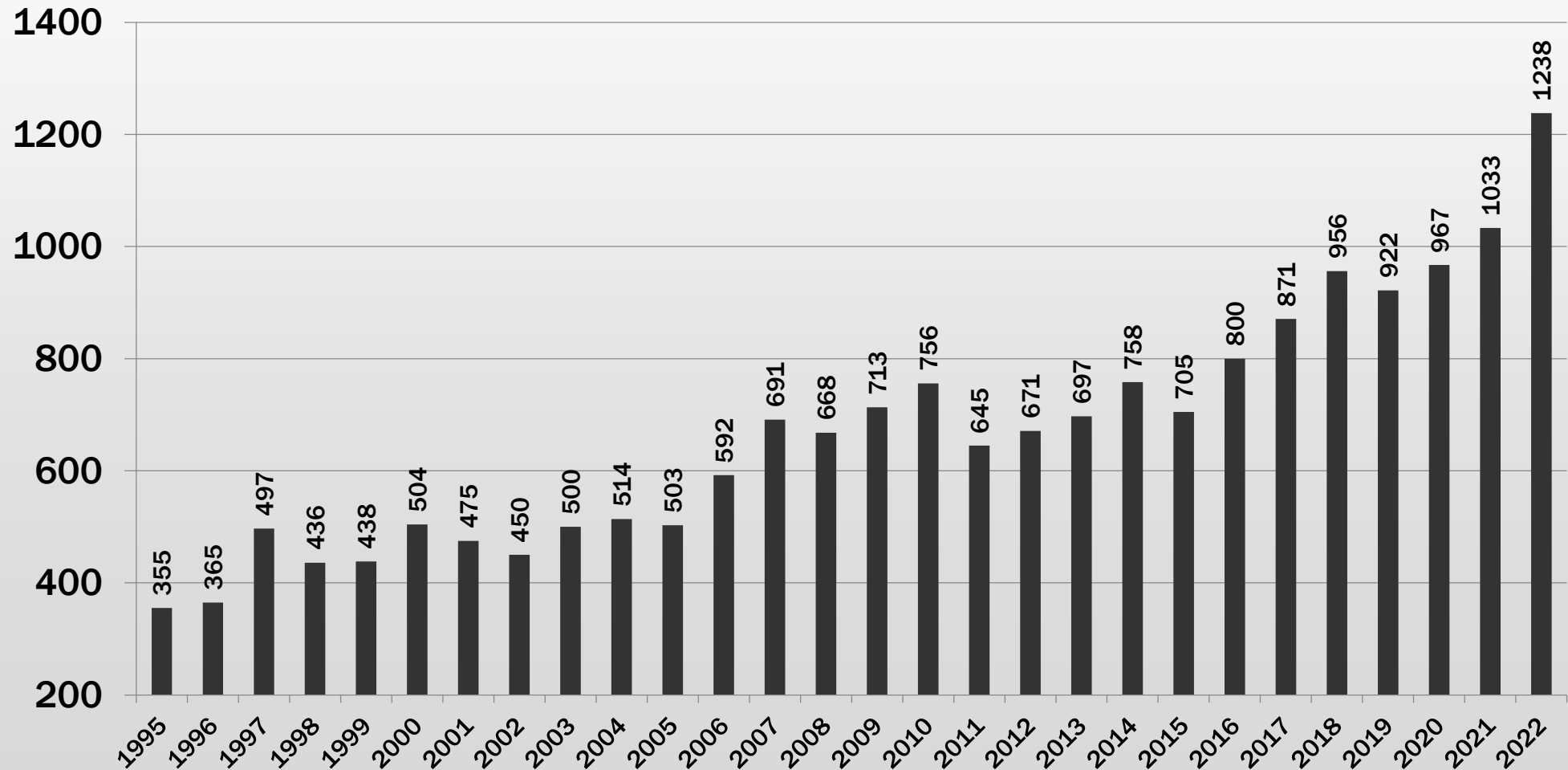
How Did We Get Here?

Since the beginning, OFD has operated with an on-call firefighter staffing model. Historically, this model could always handle the call volume including medicals.

That is until the recent spike in medical calls. The OFD staffing model is built to handle a call load of around 500 calls per year. Looking back at past year's numbers, you will notice a steady 20 year increase and a sharper increase in the most recent 6 years. The increase from 2016 (800) to 2022 (1238) is a 55% increase with no sign of slowing down going forward. In 2022; 76% of all calls were medicals.

How Did We Get Here?, Contd

Call Volume Historical Trending



How Did We Get Here?, Contd

What have we done to help the situation?

- In 2018, we hired 1 FTE to handle M-F 8 am to 5 pm calls. It did what we needed it to, but we should have established additional triggers to add additional staffing. However, money was the #1 reason that we did not plan additional staffing. We pursued PA 33 in 2022 and since have continued to pursue multiple grants with hopes that the call volume would simply come down. Obviously neither of those avenues were fruitful. We now need to right the course going forward.
- This is not a new problem, it is just that our old solution (finding a way with no additional money) is no longer an option. We are now at a breaking point.

How Did We Get Here?, Contd

- There were signs of firefighter burnout along with retention issues in recent years due to the increased call volume. It became obvious that the single FTE was working very hard to simply keep the status quo. On top of that the call volume only increased making it that much more frustrating and downright impossible.
- When the single FTE in this position took another job at a much larger department in January; we analyzed the situation. This coinciding with a significant grant denial, brought us to the millage proposal as the only path forward. In the meanwhile we opened the time to existing firefighters in 4 hour blocks and expanded it to M-F 8 am to midnight (sit-times) as a temporary fix.

How Did We Get Here?, Contd

Why can't we just continue without a change?

- We just have too many calls to depend on an on-call model. Every call not only requires a firefighter to physically respond, they also must complete a state required written report. A call may be brief but depending on the circumstances it could require an hour or 2 to complete the report. This is only one of the administrative requirements that are placed on firefighters. The more calls and reports that are required, the less time everyone has to complete other requirements like truck checks among other tasks. Meaning that the increased call volume is effecting all activities at the fire station. This sort of squeeze will obviously have an effect on firefighters' morale and will lead to burnout and resignations.

What Happens if the Millage is Approved?

If the millage is approved; then OFD will make the transition to a 24/7 staffed station. This will allow for a certified firefighter to be placed at the station and respond immediately to any emergency. When they are not responding to an emergency, they will complete other administrative and station tasks that are departmental requirements. This model will still occasionally need on-call firefighters to respond to large medical calls and/or simultaneous medical calls (along with other types of calls). This model will assure response and improve on response times by roughly 4 minutes.

Having a determined schedule will provide security to not only the community but to the firefighters as well. They will have the ability to know that they can attend a child's sporting event without being called away, or can plan on getting a full night's sleep without any interruptions.

What Happens if the Millage is Approved? Contd

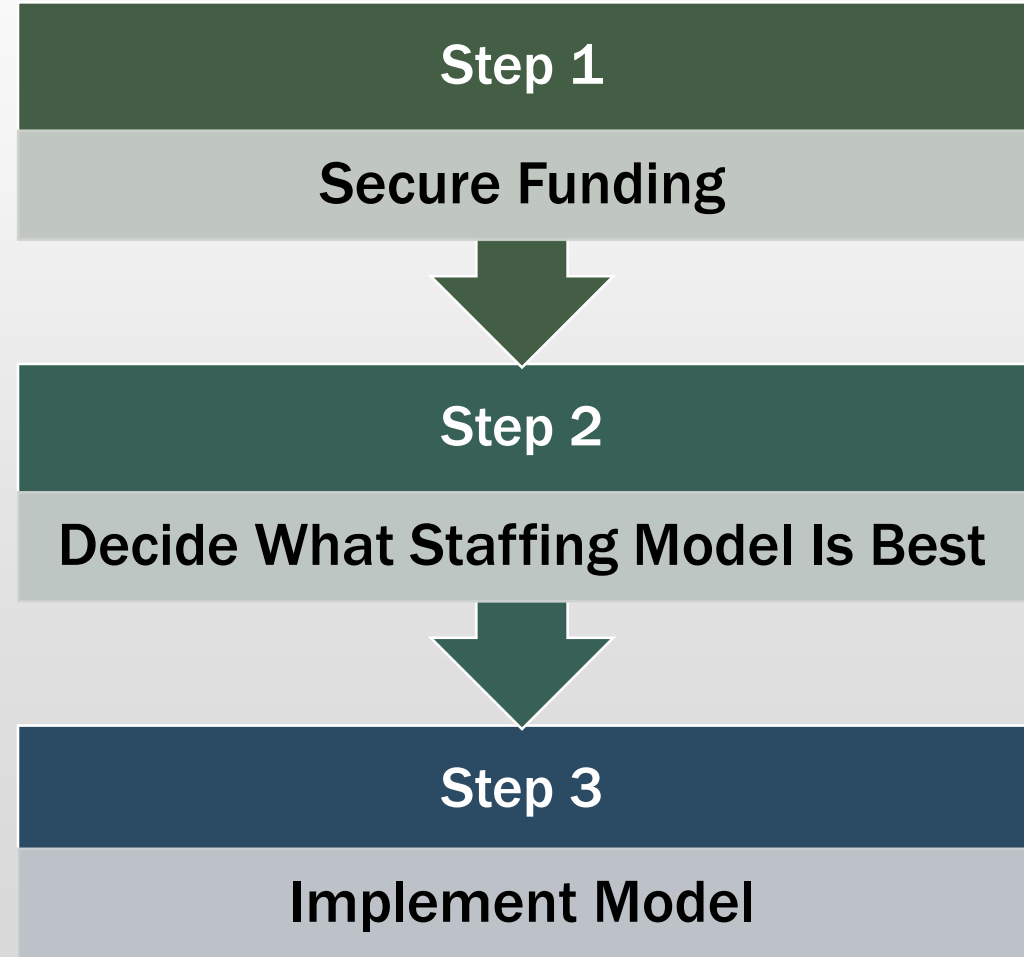
Staffed Station could include:

- 3 FTEs (or)
- 100% sit-times (or)
- A combination of the first 2

These decisions will not be finalized until after the funding is secured

Focus will be coverage and dependability

Preference will be to utilize existing firefighters



What Happens if the Millage is Denied?

Due to the uncontrollable call volume and the financial position of the City without an increase in revenues; OFD would no longer respond to medical 1s and 2s. This would mean that only the ambulance would be dispatched for those emergencies.

The inability to change the staffing model from the on-call firefighter model would make coverage impossible going forward and create an environment that would eventually cause OFD to lose members and not be able to respond to other emergencies such as fires.

This change would take place most likely on July 1st (end of fiscal year) and if not then it would on October 1st (license expires).

What Happens if the Millage is Denied? Contd

OFD would continue to respond to the following calls:

- Fires
- Wires Down
- PI Accidents
- Lift Assist Requests

Where Would This Revenue Go And How Would it Be Spent?

This ballot initiative is entitled as Public Safety, which means that it would go into the City Public Safety Fund. The Public Safety Fund provides revenue for the Fire, Police and Building departments. There are other revenues that go into that fund.

This fund was created in 2016 when the voters of the City of Otsego approved the existing Public Safety millage. Up until that point these departments operated within the General Fund. The need to approve a millage was to provide some additional revenue to help a dwindling General Fund fund balance. Unfortunately, 2 mills was not nearly enough to fund the Public Safety Fund alone, but it helped. The GF continued to subsidize the PS Fund, significantly.

Where Would This Revenue Go And How Would it Be Spent?, Contd

This helped stabilize the General Fund, or at least stopped the major bleeding. That is if we were able to stay near the same call volume for years to come. However, as you saw with the previous chart with call volumes greatly increasing and costs of operations going up we cannot continue down this path and provide for a staffed station. In fact we pursued PA 33 in 2022 to fill this very need. As you can see money shortcomings is not new to the City of Otsego.

Like I mentioned before, the Public Safety Fund is funded by a handful of sources. Please review the following chart that demonstrates the different amounts, including the significant portion that is transferred from the General Fund.

Where Would This Revenue Go And How Would it Be Spent?, Contd

22-23 Public Safety Fund Revenues

22-23 PS Revenues

GF Subsidy \$860,000

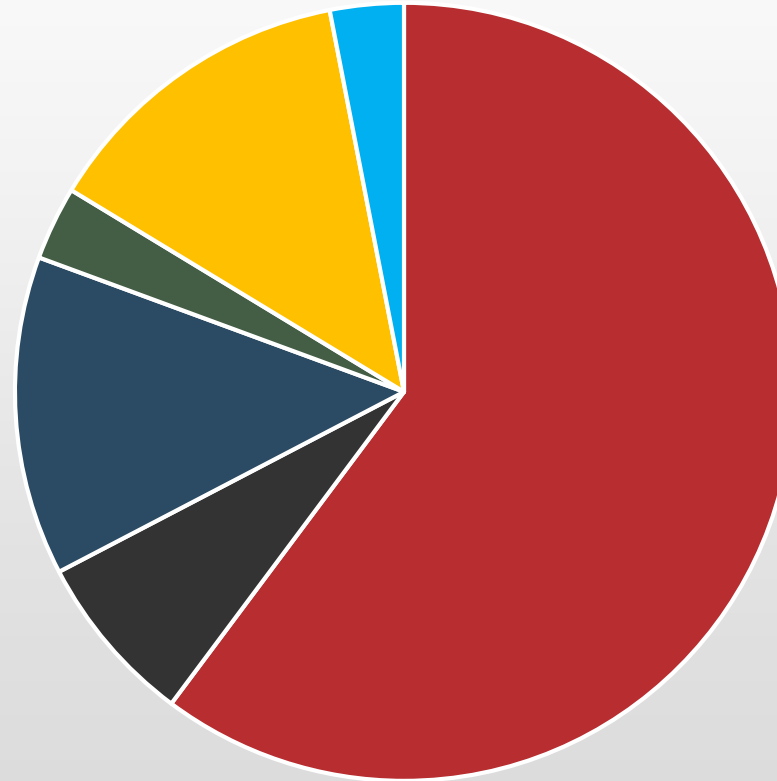
Appropriation from Fund Balance \$97,715

Property Taxes \$195,135

LCSA \$48,745

Township Revenues \$190,000

Other Revenue \$67,100



■ General Fund Subsidy

■ Appropriation from Fund Balance ■ Property Taxes

■ LCSEA

■ Township Revenues

■ Other Revenues

Where Would This Revenue Go And How Would it Be Spent?, Contd

22-23 Appropriations

Police Department \$946,900

Fire Department \$408,520

Building Inspection \$36,905

Transfers Out & Other Uses \$66,370

Where Would This Revenue Go And How Would it Be Spent?, Contd

- **Projected 23-24 OFD Budget (tentative)**

- **With Medicals**

Total Budget	\$660,465
Township	\$334,999
City	\$325,466

- **Without Medicals**

Total Budget	\$405,939
Township	\$199,036
City	\$206,903

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Aaron Mitchell, City Manager

amitchell@cityofotsego.org

269-694-6146

Thank you