

Why does Larchmont already spend \$400,000 more than the Town of Mamaroneck on paid firefighters?

The Town of Mamaroneck Fire District operates out of the Weaver Street firehouse. In many ways TMFD is similar to the Larchmont Fire Department. They normally schedule three career firefighters who respond to alarms with apparatus. They are met at the fire scene by volunteer firefighters for a combined response.

Even though TMFD protects more property over a larger area, **their career firefighter salary and overtime budget is \$400,000 less than LFD,** based on figures from the 2006 Town of Mamaroneck Budget and the FY 2006-2007 Village of Larchmont Budget. There are two important differences:

- Larchmont adds a 4th firefighter, a captain, to supervise the crews on four days each week, which **adds cost.**
- At the Weaver Street firehouse, when a career firefighter calls in sick for the night shift, when more volunteers are available, the career firefighter staffing is reduced to two, and a volunteer operates one of the fire engines. **This reduces costs.**

Is this the right approach for Larchmont? Could we negotiate a labor contract change to permit Larchmont volunteers to operate fire engines?

Larchmont's volunteer firefighters have recommended that the Village Board meet with TMFD officials to learn about their approach.

Incredibly, the Larchmont Mayor and Trustees think that a better approach is to spend more tax funds to hire a paid fire chief!

Before we **spend some more money,** shouldn't the Village Board examine whether our neighbor fire department in Town of Mamaroneck has a better idea?

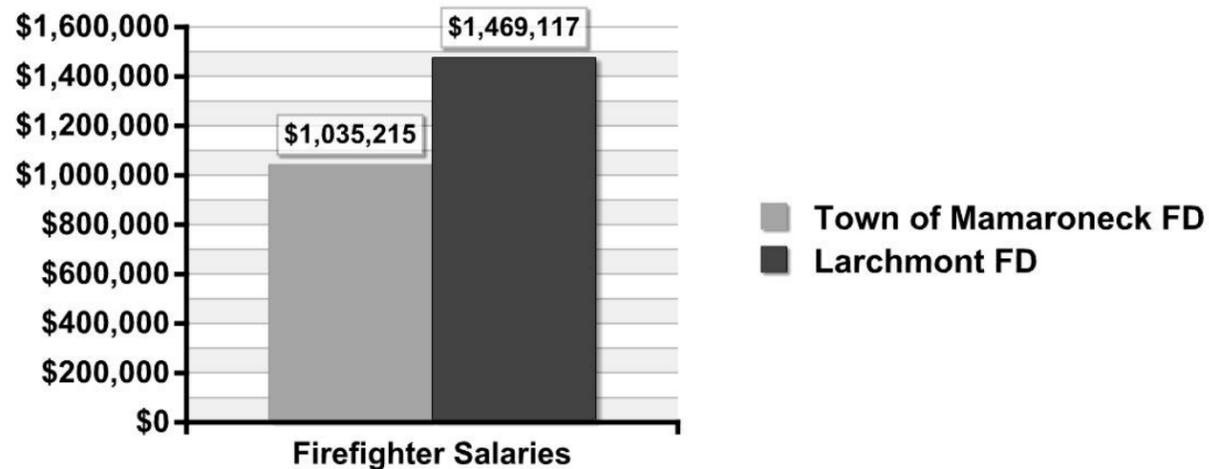
Better yet, maybe we should be seriously considering a **merger with the TMFD.** Based on our study (See for yourself at LFDNY.ORG) merger would:

- save even more money,
- improve response times,
- maintain firefighters and fire engines responding from Larchmont Village Hall, and
- preserve Larchmont's fire service traditions.

Once in a while, spending less is the best choice!

Career Firefighter Salaries

Why does LFD already spend \$400,000 more than TMFD?

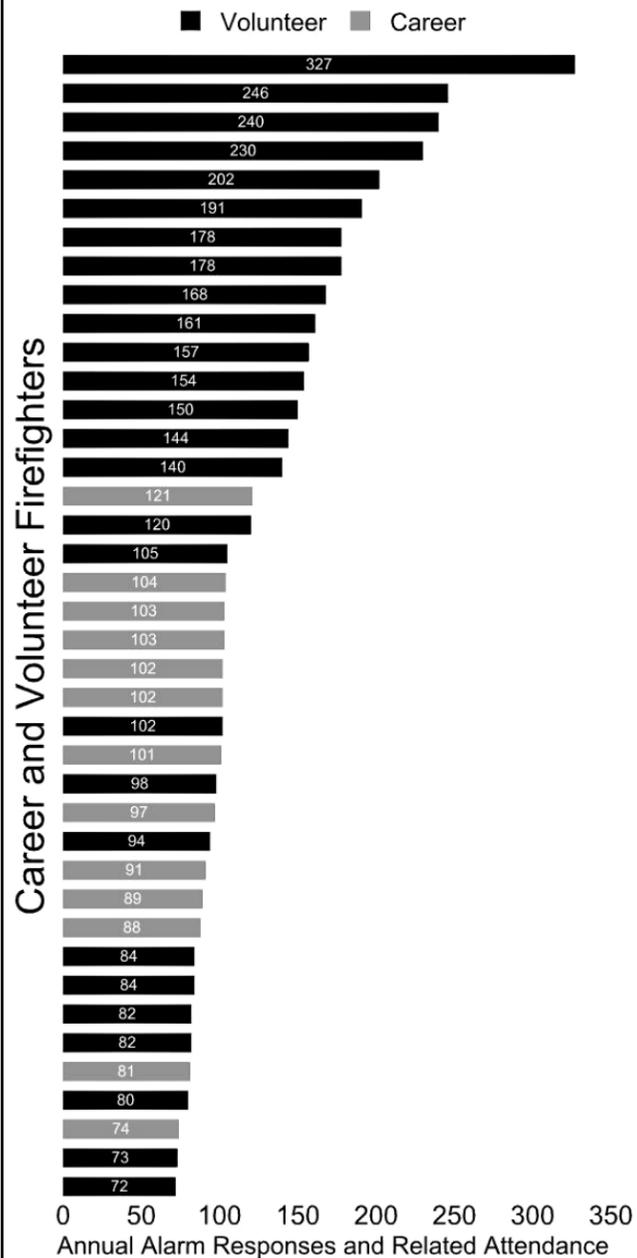


Larchmont's volunteer firefighters don't think so!

- *Read inside and decide for yourself.*
- *Answer our online poll at: lfdny.org/poll*
- *Attend the Village Board meeting*

Wednesday night the 16th!

Who Responds When Duty Calls? Alarms Responses and Related Attendance



Each volunteer can respond 24 hours every day, while only 3-4 paid firefighters are on duty at any time. Therefore, the Larchmont firefighters with the highest response rates are the volunteers.

During an actual emergency, responding volunteers greatly outnumber the paid firefighters on duty to respond.

Is a \$152,000 Fire Chief Right for Larchmont?

The Village Board will meet next Wednesday evening, May 16th at 7:00. The primary agenda item is to deciding whether to hire a paid Fire Chief. The Chief is to be paid an annual salary of \$115,000 with \$37,000 in fringe benefits.

Consider these questions:

Cost: The Village already spends \$400,000 more each year on firefighter salaries than the Town of Mamaroneck Fire District (which is a comparable paid/volunteer firehouse) to protect 43% less property (based on assessed valuation.) The annual cost of a paid fire chief, including fringe benefits, will involve an annual cost of more than \$150,000. Is this a wise expenditure?

Legality: New York State law, and Larchmont's own Fire Department Bylaws, require the Village Board to consider only those nominated for Chief to the Board by the Fire Department membership. Shouldn't the Village Board follow the law?

Personnel: The Board proposes to appoint a candidate who has not yet passed the state civil service test to qualify as a paid fire chief. No job announcement has been posted or applications solicited. Is it good practice to choose a candidate first, and then see if the candidate qualifies for the job?

Public Safety: If the Board tries to appoint a chief in a way that violates the law while the Department nominates a chief who the Board of Trustees refuses to recognize, we have a serious leadership crisis. Is this a prudent way to run Village government?

What do the volunteers recommend?

Reconsider our nominee: We have nominated a chief to the Village Board who is fully qualified, highly trained, with six years of experience as a deputy chief of the Fire Department. This fire chief, like those before him, will serve as a volunteer.

Consider Other Options: The Fire Council met with the Village Board and offered alternatives, including visiting the Weaver Street firehouse to learn about their less expensive approach, and asking for an Attorney General's opinion on the legality of what the Board proposes to do.

Consider Compromise: We're meeting again with Trustee Millstein on Monday evening to make another effort to reach a compromise.

Consider Consolidation: Consider, after study involving both municipalities, merging Larchmont's fire services with those of the Town of Mamaroneck Fire District. The Fire Council has completed a thorough study, which is available on our website:

LFDNY.ORG

Consolidation will improve services, improve response times, and save money.

We need your help!

- Attend the Village Board meeting on Wednesday, May 17th at 7:00 pm.
- Express your opinion to the Board.
- Add your name to our poll at

LFDNY.ORG/POLL

What's Larchmont saying?

Read all of the letters posted in the Larchmont Gazette. Here's some selections...

"Before voting on the question of a paid fire chief for Larchmont Village, I think it would be wise to re-visit the old League of Women Voters recommendations on merging town and village departments. It seems to me that this small village would best serve its inhabitants by conserving its money and consolidating resources, rather than hurrying to hire yet another village employee."

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"Without an adequate volunteer contingent, all sides agree, the Village will be rendered incapable of defending itself against a major fire. The mayor has indicated that she will call for aid from surrounding communities in that eventuality. This is, at best, a short-term solution that comes with inherently longer response times in emergencies. The only long-term solution available to the board, aside from somehow recruiting adequate replacement volunteers, would be to hire enough paid firefighters to provide 24-hour staffing capable of fighting a fire the size of which we would likely see very infrequently, if ever. The additional expense would be monumental for a small village."

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"The mayor and board are playing with fire, and local fire volunteers and taxpayers are going to get burned."

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"I am stunned that you and members of the Village Board would so hastily hire a paid fire chief and jeopardize the future of the fire department."