



Antioch Fire Department First Fire Protection District

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PRESS RELEASE Friday Five (#FridayFive) #5

We at the Antioch Fire Department/First Fire Protection District of Antioch continue to monitor social media since first announcing the proposed Fire District referendum in February.

To be completely transparent to voters, we will continue to do a #fridayfive (#Friday5) until the referendum vote is concluded on June 28. We feel this is the best way to get the truth out to everyone in a clear concise manner. Remember, these are your questions you placed on social media and we uncovered them while monitoring social media across multiple outlets.

Now, we realize there continues to be questions after previous #FridayFive entries. As we have proven, we will continue to answer those soon. However, we are trying answer questions in the order we received them. These next five questions are from previous press releases and #FridayFives. We will circle back to questions we missed along the way. Also, if you asked us questions on Absolutely Antioch or Absolutely Antioch - Unhinged – we are trying to get to those as well. But, because those boards are active, the first releases have cycled through quickly and we are having trouble keeping up. If we have not answered your questions and you still want us to do so, you can either email it to us at info@antiochfire.org or post it on our Facebook page.

Ultimately, we want the truth out there to give the most accurate information possible before residents vote. If we didn't get to your question this week, we'll try to get to it next week.

Q: No one looked at the cost of Labor. No one looked at the cost of building and equipment maintenance. No one looked at the cost of replacing equipment. No one looked at the cost of training and retaining the Personnel that has been trained.

How much is the cost of labor, how much is training, how much is retaining personnel?

A: We continually look at ALL our costs. Just like you do with your household budgets, we constantly must weigh priorities with the funds we have. Like most employers, our employees are our most valued asset and, therefore, take the biggest chunk of the budget. To insure we have medical personnel on duty we have contract staff.

For the 21-22 Budget year:

The approximate cost for payroll is \$3,330,000 (See our scale below in Question # 4). Training cost have been addressed in the Friday 5.3 and Friday 5.4. After the initial certification training, training is ongoing. Paramedics and EMT's need continuing education

hours to stay current with the medical trends. Firefighters also need continuing education hours to stay current.

On average we spend approximately three hours per day training while on duty.

We believe our retention issue is due to our lower wages coupled with a benefits package that is not even close to that of our neighbors. Currently, retention in the EMS and fire science field is struggling nationwide. To combat that problem, departments in Lake and Cook counties have become very competitive in their benefits package. But, even they are struggling to recruit new candidates because very few people are pushing to enter this field.

We have a vehicle replacement plan; however, we continue to push the limits because we need to direct monies to a list of priorities in the payroll and buildings. As we have stated in previous #FridayFive entries, we have a long list of needed building fixes.

Here is a breakdown of the cost of vehicles we are consistently watching:

- Cost of an ambulance: \$300,000 (lasts approx. 8 years)
- Cost of a Fire engine: \$700,000 (lasts about 20 years)
- Cost of a Ladder Truck: \$950,000 (lasts approx 20 years)
- Cost of a Tender (water truck): \$600,000 (Last Approx. 20 years)
- Utility vehicles: \$50,000 (lasts approx. 8-10 years)
- We also have to keep track of Dive Vans and Boats due to the Chain O' Lakes being in our coverage area, and Brush Trucks to fight slough fires.

Q: Please explain salaries of the current fire department personnel. You claim there are people there are EMTs making \$15 an hour and paramedics making \$15.50. Explain the breakdown.

A: Our contract EMT's are paid \$15.00 per hour (\$50,000 per year) and our contract Paramedics are paid \$15.50 per hour (\$53,000 per year). These positions have health benefits, opportunity for 401K, minimal sick and paid time off.

Other personnel include:

- Part-time Fire District EMT's are paid \$16.96 per hour
- Part-time Fire District Paramedics are paid \$18.04 per hour

These positions have NO benefits, NO opportunity for 401K, NO sick time, and NO paid time off. Because there are no benefits, we try to compensate them more.

Q: Are you a contracted department or do you have inhouse employees?

A: We are a combination department that staffs 12 positions per day, 24 hours a day seven days a week. Seven of these positions are contract employees to ensure we have medical personnel on duty at all time. These contract positions work 24 hours on and are off for 48 hours. The other five positions are part-time Fire District employees. Part-time positions work 12-hour shifts and cannot exceed 130 hours per month.

Historically all personnel working contract positions came from the ranks of our part-time employees looking for full-time hours. The Fire District currently has 81 part-time (includes the 22 Contract employees) and four full-time employees that respond to emergency calls for service.

Q: How do the Antioch Salaries compare to those in Lake County?

A: It is difficult to compare hourly wages because many traditional full-time departments do not employ part-time workers. In that regard, our part-time employees are paid based on the certifications and ranks they have. See the below chart for a further breakdown:

<u>2021-22 Part-time Wages/hour</u>	
Assistant Chief	\$22.62
Battalion Chief	\$21.54
Training Officer	\$21.54
Captain	\$20.47
Lieutenant	\$19.71
Firefighter, Paramedic and Engineer	\$19.18
Firefighter and Paramedic	\$18.04
Firefighter, EMT and Engineer	\$17.23
Firefighter and Engineer	\$16.96
Firefighter and EMT-B	\$16.96
Firefighter	\$16.70
Paramedic	\$17.23
EMT-B	\$16.70
Rehab/Support Services	\$16.15
Administrative Assistant/PT	\$15.76

Below is a comparison of how our full-time employees compare to the county average. (** denotes a starting, entry-level position.)

<u>Antioch</u>		<u>County Average</u>	
FF/PM **	\$53,000	FF/PM **	\$68,900
Lieutenant	\$60,000	Lieutenant	\$109,500
Battalion Chief	\$76,800	B/C	\$132,200
Deputy Chief	\$87,000	Deputy Chief	\$144,000
Fire Marshal	\$62,000	Fire Marshal	\$99,200
Admin Assist	\$63,100	Admin Assist	\$73,400
Medical Officer	\$67,000	M/O Lieut.	\$109,500
Fire Chief	\$115,900	Fire Chief	\$162,000

Q: Do you actually believe folks are reading these. Attention span is noted at not more than 180 characters. If you want to be read, break these manifestos down to paragraphs of 180.

A: We apologize if you or others do not wish to read the whole thing, but we feel it remains EXTREMELY important voters are informed when voting. While you may be correct in that people do not want to read a "manifesto," we strive to give ALL the information about your fire

district. If we answered these questions with a simple "yes" or "no," it wouldn't give you the complete information about your fire district. Sometimes the answer to a question is more complex and take longer than people like.