Proposed Staffing Deployment

How can we match the goals of the Arcata Fire District Board of, "staffing, staffing, staffing…" while staying within the revenues approved by the voters?

Current Situation

- Current Staffing of 3 (2) person engine companies
- Measure A public concerns
- SAFER Grant staffing
- Measure R outcomes
- Staffing, Staffing, Staffing

Current Financial Situation (as of November 2025)

The board approved the preliminary budget as proposed at the 6/10/25 meeting. This included an operating revenue of $7,427,000.00 and total expenditures of $7,501,000.00. These expenditures show an increase in our reserve fund transfer out, and a slight increase in capital expense funding.

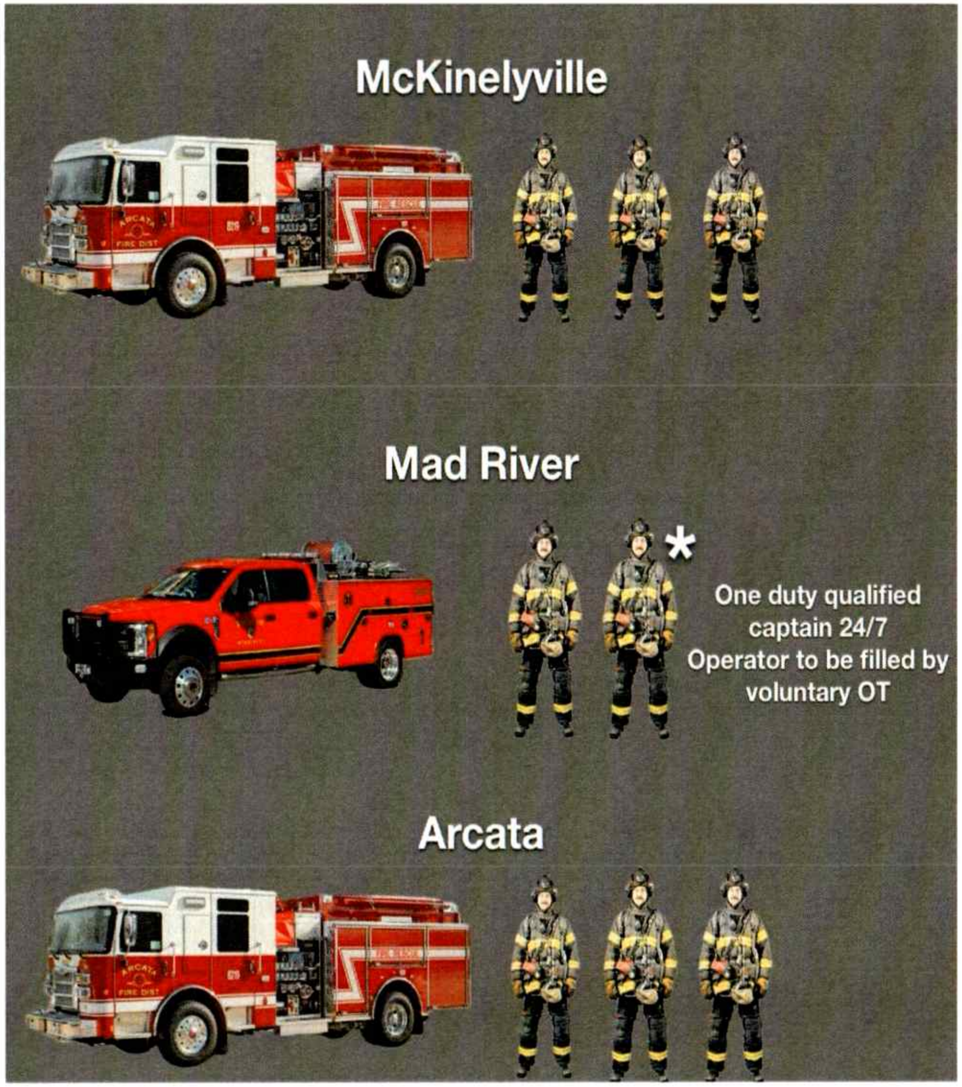
Budget categories 5010-5035 shows an estimated expense of $4,894,000. This includes all employees fully benefited total cost.


McKinelyville
Mad River
Arcata
McKinelyville
Mon-Friday
8am- 5pm
Responding from home
outside normal business
hours

Proposed Deployment

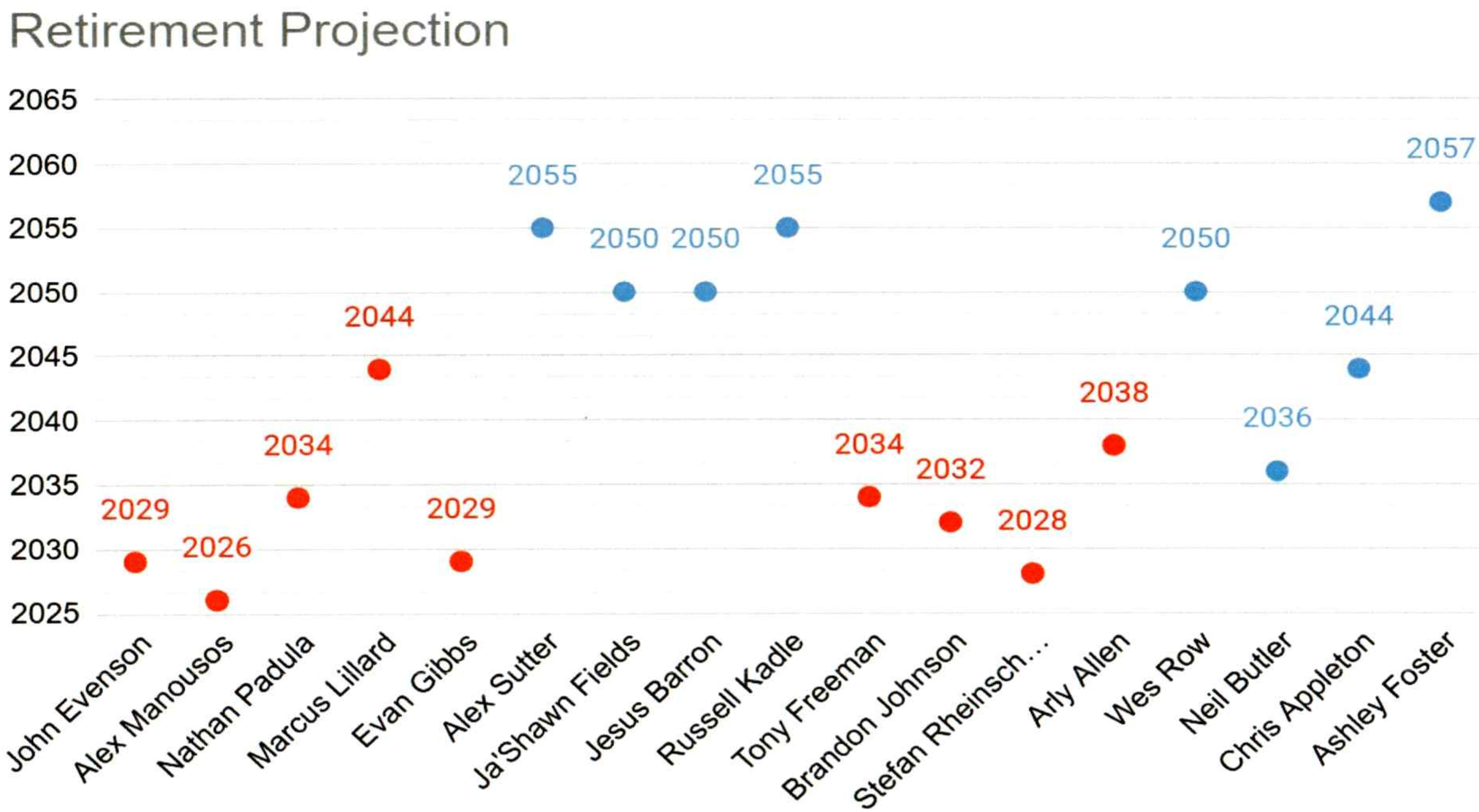
3/O staffed engines at McKinleyville and Arcata (requires 18 total members). Mad River is staffed with 3 Battalion Commanders that will have the following responsibilities: responding to all routine emergencies in the Mad River response area, duty officer coverage, daily staffing and scheduling, coordinate training, and handle day to day logistics and operations. They will operate out of a pick up truck/utility vehicle with a modest amount of hand tools, fire extinguishers, medical equipment and AED's. This plan involves hiring 3 additional firefighters. (Total of 21 members).

This staffing model will allow for the current administration to serve as secondary duty officers, and focus on the major issues that face this department and provide the true executive planning that this agency desperately needs.


McKinelyville
Mad River
*
One duty qualified captain 24/7
Operator to be filled by voluntary OT
Arcata

Proposed Financial Impact

- This staffing model carries a heavier financial impact at the beginning of the plan. Current financial projections based on an unofficial preliminary budget, estimate an increase of approximately $100,000 in year one.
- There are several budgetary options and future events that could offset this cost. For example, in the subsequent years of this plan, the attrition of Classic PERS members and replacement with PEPRA members–that share their retirement cost–will lessen the cost.
- Transitioning from todays staffing model to the proposed model can cause a duplication of ranks staffing the same engine. We currently have 9 Engineers, the proposed staffing model would only need 6 Engineers. This will be a temporary issue that will self mitigate.
- The average cost of a fully benefited FF at step 5 is $117,000.00. The high end for these positions at the end of our MOU is $124,000 per position. This brings a total between $353,000 and $372,000. These numbers include OT, and workers comp estimates as historically calculated by the District.
- It is important to note that the departure of Chief Peabody covers the cost of 2 of these firefighter positions.



Retirement Projection
2065
2060
2055
2050
2045
2040
2035
2030
2025
2029
2026
2034
2044
2029
2055
2050
2050
2055
2034
2032
2028
2038
2050
2036
2044
2057
John Evenson
Alex Manousos
Nathan Padula
Marcus Lillard
Evan Gibbs
Alex Sutter
Ja'Shawn Fields
Jesus Barron
Russell Kadle
Tony Freeman
Brandon Johnson
Stefan Rheinsch...
Arly Allen
Wes Row
Neil Butler
Chris Appleton
Ashley Foster

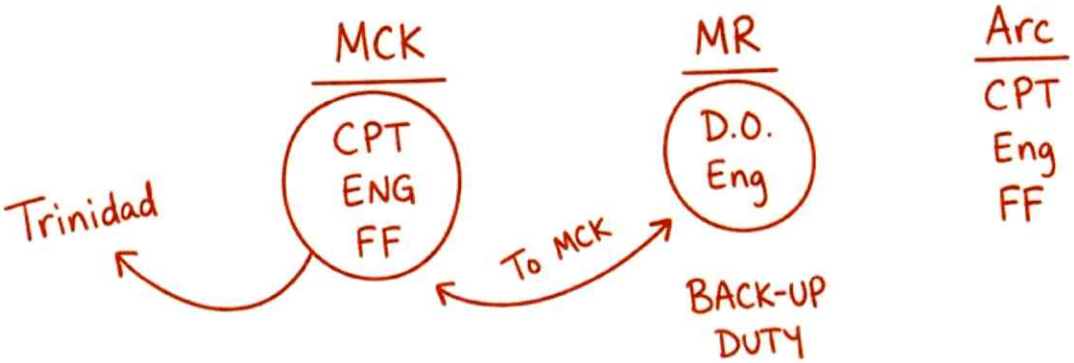
Questions

Will the potential of O.T. beat you guys up in the Battalion Commander role?

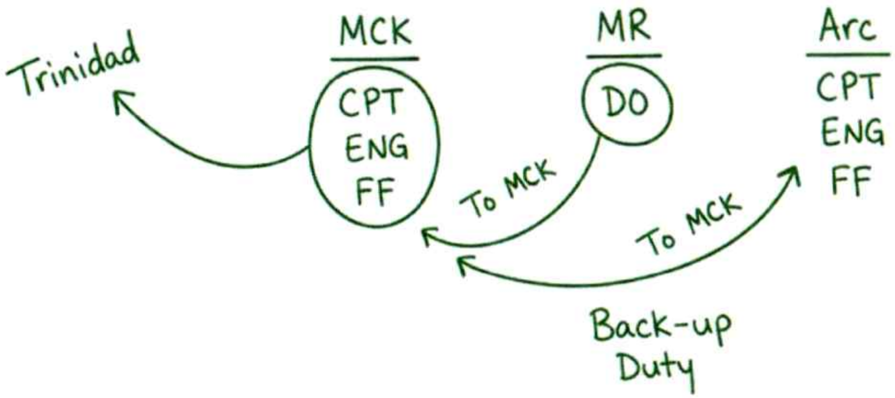
-This wouldn't be any different than the (3) shift BC's that HBF currently operates with? One difference is that the Battalion Commanders would still be part of L4981, and fall under the same time off rules. At HBF L652 can have (3) employees off per day, and the BC's can have someone off because they are under different contracts. The Battalion Commanders would fall under the L4981 contract and with (7) employees on per day would still only be allowed to have (2) off per the contract language.

Questions

What do we do if an immediate need OT or CalFire coverage request happens?



= 2 @ MCK
3 @ Arc } More staff than we currently have when an engine goes out



2 @ MCK
2 @ Arc } More staff than we currently have when an engine goes out.

Questions

Why do we have (3) Chiefs?

The main operational reason we have (3) chiefs is because of how the duty rotation is set-up. Three Chiefs allows for a primary duty officer rotation in any given week. By accepting this proposal and placing Battalion Commanders at Mad River, you will have a constant Duty Officer in place taking care of the main day to day operations. This is a critical step in advancing Arcata Fire, and having a consistent leadership position for our personnel on the three platoons. Reducing the Chiefs to (2) is more efficient, and allows them to focus on executive planning as an 8-5 employee. The Chiefs serving in the back-up Duty Officer role would be more manageable to having longer rotations. The need to spread it to (3) is not as much of a priority. Also, the off duty Battalion Commanders could fill back-up Duty Officer roles if we felt that needed to be staffed consistently.

Current Day to Day staffing: HBF: 16 employees; 3 Chief positions. AFD: 6 employees; 3 Chief positions

Amount of Staff at Arcata Fire

Current:	**Proposed:**
9-Captains	9- (3)Battalion Commanders/(6)Captains
9-Engineers	12- (9)Engineers/(3)Firefighters
2- Assistant Chiefs	1- Assistant Chief
1- Fire Chief	1- Fire Chief
*1-Prevention staff	*1- Prevention staff
1.5-Business Manager	1.5- Business Manager
Total: 23.5	Total: 25.5

Questions

How do we pay for this?

A fully loaded, top range AC costs $236k annually. We suggest not filling this current vacant position. With the restructuring of this rank we will absorb the cost of 2 new firefighter hires, without factoring in lower CalPERS cost of hiring PEPRA employees. This leaves a total cost of $136k annually to be accounted for at the last year of our current MOU. We need to closely evaluate our "self-sustaining" prevention program and how its funded.

Budget Estimate Simplified

*These numbers only reflect wages and benefits

351,000: 3 Firefighters

-236,000: Cost of one Assistant Chief

115,000

115,000

This number becomes very manageable in a 7.4 Million dollar operating budget

Also with attrition we will have 4 Captain positions open in the next five years, replacing employees at a much lower cost (PERS, wages, longevity, etc.)

What are the Next Steps?

- The AFD Board of Directors consider information received, discuss at a public meeting, invite public comment, approve or deny the Fire Chief to hire additional personnel to move forward with this plan.
- Side letter agreements to reflect any pertinent MOU changes to L4981.
- Testing for the Battalion Commander position, and hiring for Firefighter positions needed for this plan.
- *Fire Chief can implement a temporary deployment change of 3 at Arcata, 2 at McKinleyville, and 1 Mad River with no additional hiring required.
- Full implementation when all positions are filled.

Closing Thoughts

We have told the public that we need to increase staffing, and now is a perfect opportunity to show them what we have done with their money to provide a necessary building block for future growth. This will undoubtedly be an aggressive maneuver that many administrations have not chosen to do. In the mid 2000's McKinleyville was browned out indefinitely to change the deployment model from 2 1/O engine companies to 1 2/O company. This plan is different, because we are doing our absolute best to provide emergency response to all of our constituents without browning a station out. We are also making strides to bring our engine companies to an industry standard and will in turn provide opportunities for career development that do not currently exist. We are of the belief that this is the right time, with the right Board of Directors to make this unprecedented leap of faith with our organization.