

**Brooklyn Board of Fire Commissioners**  
**Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2024-2025**  
*Prepared by: Brooklyn Fire Commissioners*

**East Brooklyn Fire Department**

**The total budget request of the East Brooklyn Fire Department unanimously approved by the fire commissioners is \$101,270.00**

\$80,000 – Operating Budget

\$21,270.00 – Safety & Capital

	22-23 Budget	22-23 Actual	23-24 Budget	24-25 Proposal	\$ Increase	Percent
Operating	\$75,126.00	\$74,184.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$0.00	0%
Safety & Capital	\$21,270.00	\$24,750.00	\$21,270.00	\$21,270.00	\$0.00	0%
Total	\$96,396.00	\$96,934.00	\$101,270.00	\$101,270.00	\$0.00	0%

East Brooklyn's original budget request to the Board of Fire Commissioners was \$115,770.00, a 14.32 percent increase.

**Mortlake Fire Company**

**The total budget request of the Mortlake Fire Company unanimously approved by the fire commissioners is \$228,315.00**

\$114,500 – Operating Budget

\$30,775.00 – Safety & Capital

Ambulance Offset - \$83,040.00

	22-23 Budget	22-23 Actual	23-24 Budget	24-25 Proposal	\$ Increase	Percent
Operating	\$104,147.00	\$119,750.00	\$114,500.00	\$114,500.00	\$0.00	0%
Safety & Capital	\$30,775.00	\$30,775.00	\$30,775.00	\$30,775.00	\$0.00	0%
Ambulance Serv.	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,040.00	-	-
Total	\$134,922.00	\$150,525.00	\$145,275.00	\$228,315	\$83,040.00	57.16%

The Board of Fire Commissioners voted unanimously to adjust both fire departments' budget proposals for "fire operations" to a **zero** percent increase from the previous year. The notable difference between Mortlake's requested and approved budget amounts this year is attributed to additional funding allocated to maintain ambulance operations. Factors such as increasing call volumes, higher personnel expenses, reduced reimbursement rates, and escalating supply costs have significantly strained the financial resources required to run the ambulance service. Consequently, Mortlake's internal revenue stream is insufficient to support the existing service levels without further financial support from the town.

***For detailed budget request information, please see the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting minutes for March 13, 2024, and March 29, 2024.***

### **The Fire Commissions goals & visions for the next year:**

#### Volunteer recruitment & retention

- Tax abatement – Needs final approval from the Board of Selectmen.
- Stipend program for active and qualifying members.

#### Blending of Organizations

- Dual Response from both departments for emergencies town-wide.
- Interagency Training
- Cost sharing (licensing, physicals, equipment)

### **Future of the Brooklyn Emergency Services:**

The Brooklyn fire departments face recruitment and retention challenges that reflect broader national trends. Both organizations must carefully assess and enhance their strategies to address these persistent issues. This is crucial for maintaining a strong volunteer workforce and ensuring that the community has access to dependable and skilled emergency services at all times.

Although both departments have made significant strides in supporting each other's operations on an emergency scene, there is an ongoing concern about the commitment and understanding of all stakeholders regarding the urgency of implementing beneficial changes on a higher level, both operationally and administratively. This transformation is essential for the well-being of Brooklyn residents and visitors.

Moving forward, continued collaboration between the departments is crucial to smoothly transition to the town's most effective emergency service model. However, the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Town must guide the development of this model.

These inevitable changes necessitate a careful examination of several critical factors:

- **Cost:** Assessing the financial impact of employing full-time, part-time, or per-diem staff, each presenting unique advantages and challenges.
- **Volunteerism:** Considering how these changes might affect the town's current volunteer participation.
- **Management:** Determining who will manage the new staff to ensure effective administrative control.
- **Staffing:** Choosing the suitable staffing model for the Town of Brooklyn.

Transparency in these organizations is crucial because it fosters an open and accountable decision-making process for all involved. As the town considers expanding roles, enhancing personnel qualifications, and strengthening administrative oversight, a clear understanding of these issues is essential.

Ultimately, the responsibility to navigate these challenges rests with the town while requiring a collective effort from all parties. Through an ongoing comprehensive study of the fire departments, the Board of Fire Commissioners aims to provide informed recommendations that optimize emergency services economically and effectively. This collaborative approach is fundamental to developing sustainable and practical solutions that align with the town's needs, responsibilities, and capabilities.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Podzalne".

Michael Podzalne  
Chairman  
Brooklyn Fire Commissioners