

## Why does Larchmont already spend \$400,000 more than the Town of Mamaroneck on career 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, who are met by volunteer firefighters at the scene of a fire for a combined response.

Even though TMFD protects more property over a larger area, **their career firefighter budget is \$400,000 less**, 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:

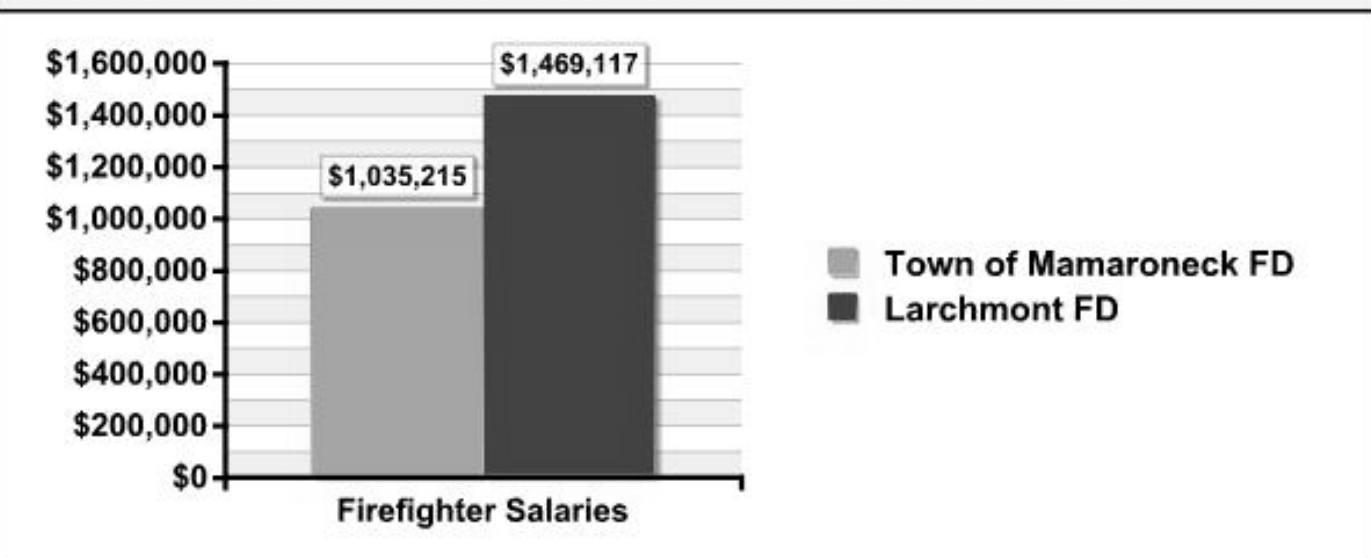
- save money,
- improve response times,
- maintain firefighters and fire engines responding from Larchmont Village Hall, and
- preserve Larchmont's fire service traditions.

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



## Career Firefighter Salaries

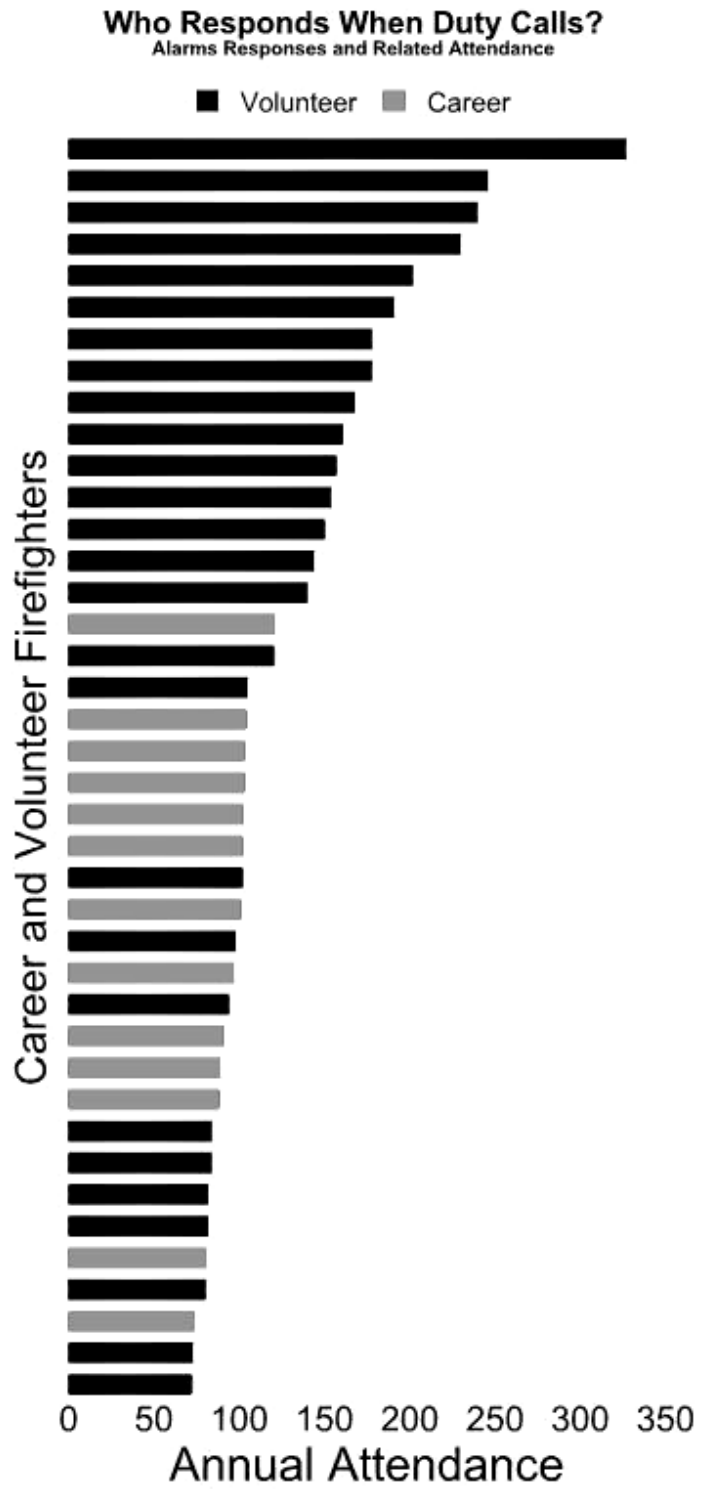
Why does LFD already spend \$400,000 more than TMFD?



*Larchmont's volunteer firefighters don't think so. Read inside and decide for yourself.*

*Answer our online poll at: [lfdny.org/poll](http://lfdny.org/poll)*

*Then come to the Board meeting Wednesday night!*



Because volunteers are available to respond 24 hours a day, every day, the Larchmont firefighters with the highest response rates are the volunteers. The volunteer firefighter response rates are in black; the career firefighter response rates are in gray.

# Is a \$152,000 Fire Chief the Best Approach for Larchmont?

The Village Board will meet next Wednesday evening, May 16th at 7:00. The primary agenda item is to hire a paid Fire Chief.

## 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 does not permit a Village Board to appoint a fire chief not nominated to the Board by the Fire Department membership. Shouldn't the Village Board follow state law?

**Personnel Management:** 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 we recommend?

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.

The Fire Council and the Village Board met and we offered ten ideas to explore, 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.

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

In the longer run, we recommend a thorough and open examination, involving both municipalities, of consolidation of Larchmont's fire services with those of the Town of Mamaroneck Fire District. Unlike the Mayor, whose proposal is not written and is only partially figured out, the Fire Council has completed a thorough study, which is available on our website:

### LFDNY.ORG

The proposal would continue to position firefighters and fire apparatus to respond to alarms directly from Village Hall. Consolidation will improve services, improve response times, and save money.

## We need your help!

- Come out to the meeting on Wednesday.
- 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."*

.....

*"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."*

.....

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

.....

*"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."*