



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## FITCH-RONA EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES DISTRICT

Proudly providing a high-level of emergency care to the families and visitors of the City of Fitchburg, City of Verona, and Town of Verona, since 1977.



## A Message from EMS Chief Patrick Anderson



My wife and I recently came back from a two-week trip to Hawaii. During a hike into a volcanic crater at Haleakalā National Park, our conversation centered around our travels and the perspective that it takes time and work to get to the places we go, but the sites we see are breathtaking.

As I look back at 2022 and apply that deep conversation to our EMS district, we ended our year with a record number of calls in December, on top of an overall increase of 2% in calls for service for the year. Our crews also provided more than 1,000 hours of EMS coverage to the Alliant Energy Center, Verona High School, and other events within our district. The paramedics and EMTs of the district continue to work hard to put in the time and energy to provide the best care possible for the residents and employers of the district.

With some additional funds released by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health that were earmarked for EMS services, Fitch-Rona was able to purchase IV pumps that will make medication administration easier for the paramedics and safer for patients who are critically ill. We were also able to purchase a replacement ambulance cot for one that is currently 12 years old, along with an electric Polaris utility vehicle that can be utilized during special events with minimal environmental impact. All of these additions to the Fitch-Rona inventory require additional training for staff on top of staying current in the ever-changing field of pre-hospital medicine.

We had eight paramedics complete high-angle rescue training along with firefighters from the Fitchburg Fire department, so they can integrate into special responses in our community, and they continue to attend quarterly training to stay proficient in the rarely used, but essential skills required for this technical rescue. Another demonstration of the hard work and commitment to excellence the providers at Fitch-Rona have shown.

Finally, two of our career paramedics announced retirements in 2022. Their positions were filled from our dedicated part-time paramedic pool. As we move into 2023, those new paramedics bring the commitment that our part-time staff displays to the ranks of the current devoted full-time staff. I am excited to continue to be the face of an organization that exemplifies the time and hard work that makes Fitch-Rona the outstanding, and breathtaking EMS agency that it is.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Anderson".

Sincerely,  
Patrick Anderson  
EMS Chief

## A Brief History-

In the summer of 1976, the Dane County Traffic Department announced they would no longer be providing ambulance services to municipalities in Dane County. This announcement was in line with the national movement that started during the 1960s to create an Emergency Medical Services program that was aimed to increase the survival rates of people involved in traumatic accidents.

With some guidance from Robert Breunnig from Dane County, the municipalities of the Village of Verona, and the Towns of Fitchburg, Verona, Springdale, and Dunn, started conversations about sharing the cost, and resources, of an EMS district. At the time, the Fire Departments of those municipalities were not interested in taking on the task of building an EMS service, so after many months of meetings, the Village of Verona, and the Towns of Fitchburg and Verona ultimately entered into an agreement, and effective September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1977, the Fitch-Rona EMS District was established.

It started with a single ambulance donated by the County's newly formed Department of Emergency Management, and under the first EMS Director, Jack Vaughn, the department had 81 volunteers, who were also volunteers in neighboring communities. The first station was in the house used for maintenance at the original Dane County Home, which has since evolved into the Badger Prairie Health Care Center in the Town of Verona.

The district functioned as a 100% volunteer agency until the early 1980's when a part-time administrator was hired to help with the day-to-day operations of the district, as well as cover daytime hours. This is also the time when Fitch-Rona advanced to the next level of EMS, known as the EMT-Intermediate. It should be noted that Fitch-Rona was one of the first services in the State of Wisconsin to upgrade to this level. The volunteers continued to give their time to the service until the late 1980s when increasing call volumes, and an ever-growing need to maintain skill levels and continuing education required the hiring of additional full-time staff.

After a few additional station moves, in 1993, Fitch-Rona moved into the new Fitchburg Fire Station #2 at 5415 King James Way in Fitchburg. In 2001, Fitch-Rona became the second paramedic-level EMS agency in Dane County outside of the City of Madison, with the Town of Madison upgrading its service just a month prior. A staff of 7 full-time paramedics, an Assistant Chief, a Chief, and a Full-Time Office Manager, ran the day-to-day operations of Fitch-Rona. During this time, several volunteer EMTs continued to provide additional staffing on the ambulances.

In 2003, a continued rise in call volume necessitated an additional staffed ambulance during the daytime hours. Two years later, this ambulance would become a 24-hour response vehicle at the paramedic level.

In 2006, in conjunction with plans to build a new fire station in Verona, Fitch-Rona moved the second ambulance into rented quarters at 416 Venture Ct. This move provided reduced response times to the City and Town of Verona. Fitch-Rona occupied those "temporary" quarters until 2015 when the new Verona Fire Station was opened at 101 Lincoln St.

A few short years later, the paramedics moved along with the City of Fitchburg Fire department to the new Fitchburg Fire Station #2 at 2931 Marketplace Dr. This move followed the eastern direction of growth in the City of Fitchburg, and reduced overall response times throughout the City of Fitchburg.

2018 saw the next great leap for Fitch-Rona. To address the increasing call volume, and reduce the response time to the east side of the district, the district municipalities approved the addition of a third, full-time, paramedic ambulance. This approval brought seven new paramedics to the full-time staff at Fitch-Rona EMS in July of 2019. The third ambulance was operated out of Fitchburg Fire station #2 for a short duration while the final construction was being completed on the new fire station, and on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Fitch-Rona moved into Fitchburg Fire Station #3 at 2950 South Syene Road.

This additional staffing made Fitch-Rona the busiest and largest EMS service in Dane County outside of the City of Madison until the City of Sun Prairie combined with the Marshall EMS District in the fall of 2022.



## Operations

### Stations

Fitch-Rona operates three paramedic-level ambulances 24/7. These ambulances operate out of the Verona Fire Station located at 101 Lincoln Street in the City of Verona, the second out of Fitchburg Fire Station #2 at 2931 Marketplace Drive, and the third out of Fitchburg Fire Station #3 at 2950 South Syene Rd. Dispatching of ambulances is based on two factors: Municipal borders and the Global Positioning System (GPS) of the ambulance. Fitchburg does have Fire Station #1, located at 5791 Lacy Rd, which houses the administrative staff of the department and some reserve apparatus.



### Resources

The district owns five ambulances (2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021). They are all built on a Ford F450 or F550 4x4 chassis with the patient care compartment built by North Central Ambulance Vehicle on a Braun Chief XL model base. They are identified as Fitch-Rona Medic units 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47.

The district owns two response SUVs (a 2010 Ford Expedition and a 2020 Ford Explorer). Their call signs are FitchRona Car 15 and 17, respectively. They are stocked to an AEMT level, with a few additional medications like diphenhydramine and ondansetron. Their use is multipurpose. The chiefs use them as work vehicles for meetings and training, but also provide a first response unit when they are in the area of a call or may arrive sooner to an address when a "home" station unit is out.





In 2020, Fitch-Rona re-purposed a retired mass-casualty trailer donated by Dane County Emergency Management. The trailer was wrapped with a Fitch-Rona logo and the rehab supplies that were originally kept at each station, are now stored in one place. The trailer is primarily kept at the Verona Fire station and includes water, nutrition, a shelter, cooling chairs, a misting fan, and an 'M' oxygen tank and delivery manifold. The unit can be pulled by either SUV, and can be taken throughout the County when requested, and a driver is available.

Fitch-Rona has a bike medic program that was initially funded through a grant from Epic software. It purchased two mountain cycles and the attached panniers. These bikes are used at special events and around the Epic campus during their annual user's group meeting which brings in about 10,000 learners from around the world every fall. The program has expanded to include larger and smaller frame bicycles to allow for the safety and comfort for more riders.

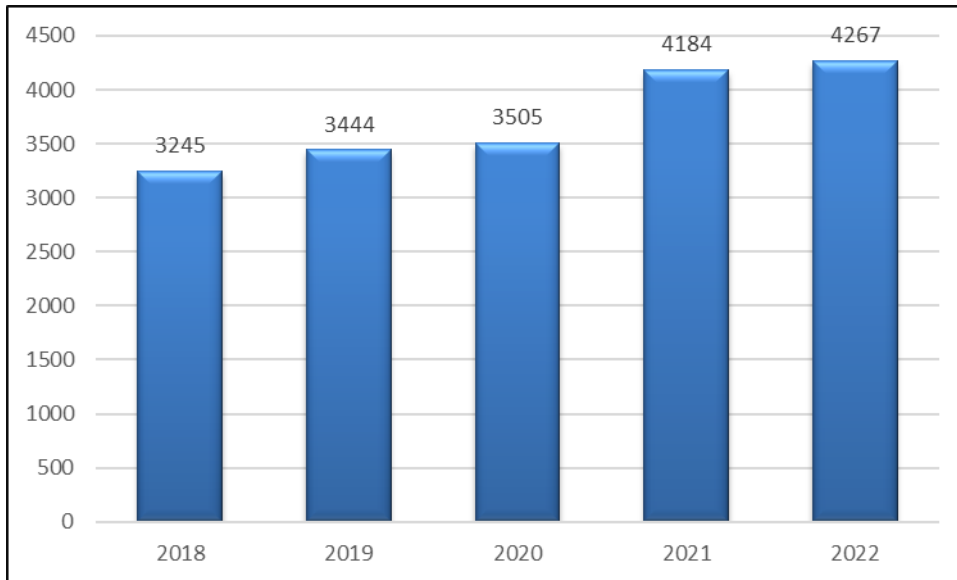


Lastly, in 2022, Fitch-Rona purchased an electric Polaris Utility Vehicle (UTV). The funding through the State Flex Grant program purchased an eco-friendly UTV along with an insert that allows for a Stokes basket and provider seat in the rear of the UTV that can be used for crowded, or limited access events such as the high school cross-county invitational or the Thanksgiving Day Berbee Derby, which brings in 5,000 runners into the district and continues to grow each year.



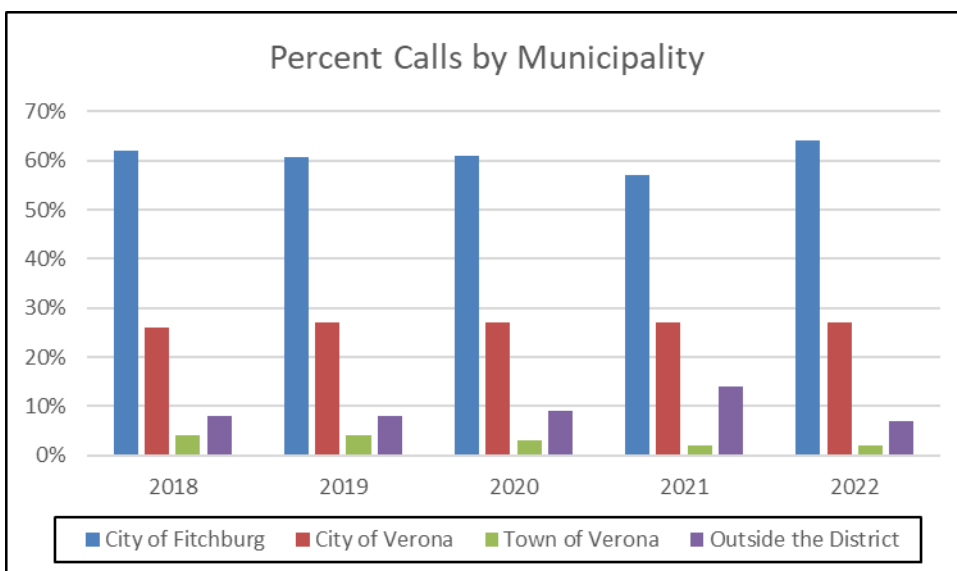
## Annual Call Volume

The very nature of emergencies means that estimating the number of calls for service is unpredictable. In 2022, Fitch-Rona was alerted to 4,267 calls for service. This is a 2.3% increase over 2021 and less than our 46-year average of a 5.7% increase annually.



## Distribution of Calls

2022 had an average distribution of Fitchburg 64%; Verona 27%; Town of Verona 2%; Outside of the district 7%.



## Calls Outside of Our District

As an Advanced Life Support (ALS) service, Fitch-Rona is offering patients the highest level of pre-hospital care available. Smaller communities often do not have the call volume to support paramedic-level care and must ask for assistance when ALS service is indicated. This response is called an Intercept. We also respond as Automatic Aid (automatically sent to support services on high acuity calls based on questions asked by the 911 center) to nearby areas that take us out of the district. Finally, Fitch-Rona participates in a borderless ALS system with a group of other ALS providers in Dane County (the Cities of Madison, Middleton, Monona, and Sun Prairie). This means that in a high acuity call, the closest Advanced Life Support ambulance will be sent, regardless of the community the resident lives in.

Out-of-district call volume represents 7-10% of total calls each month.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Belleville</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Madison</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Mount Horeb</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Town of Madison</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>167</b>

## Top Fifteen Dispatch Codes 2022

Incident Complaint Reported By Dispatch	Number of Runs	Percent of Total Runs
Falls	702	16.45%
Sick Person	670	15.70%
Unconscious/Fainting/Near-Fainting	480	11.25%
Breathing Problem	389	9.11%
Chest Pain (Non-Traumatic)	271	6.35%
Traffic/Transportation Incident	171	4.01%
Convulsions/Seizure	151	3.54%
Hemorrhage/Laceration	147	3.44%
Fire	125	2.93%
Traumatic Injury	114	2.67%
Heart Problems/AICD	109	2.55%
Cardiac Arrest/Death	102	2.39%
Abdominal Pain/Problems	98	2.30%
Stroke/CVA	92	2.16%
Unknown Problem/Person Down	88	2.06%

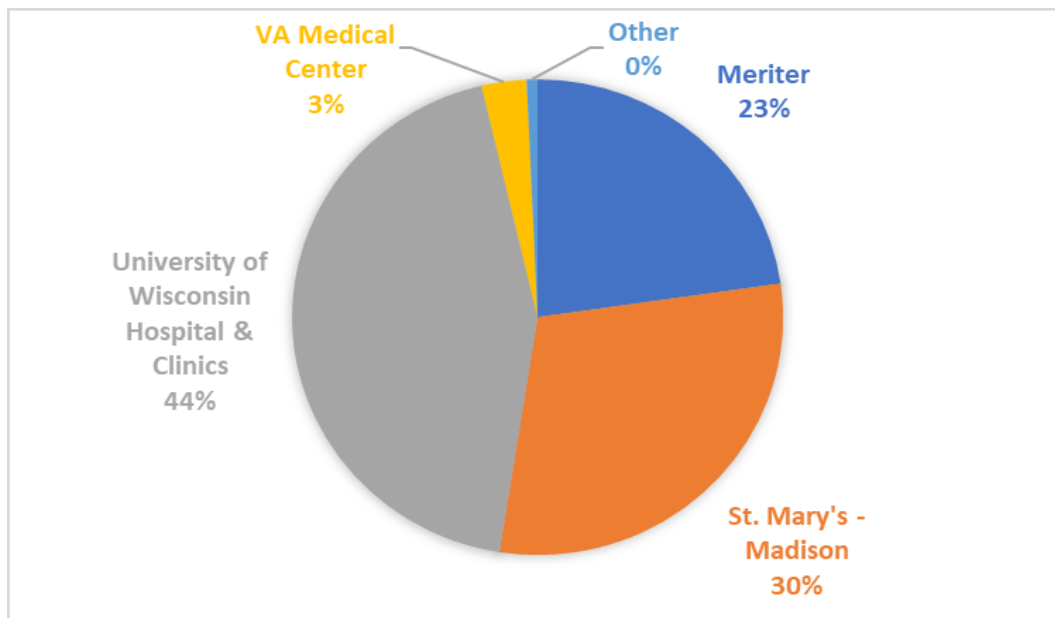


## Patient Disposition 2022

Patient Disposition	Number of Runs	Percent of Total Runs
Treated, Transported by EMS Unit	2,800	65.60%
Treated, Released	464	10.87%
Assist, Public	291	6.82%
Canceled (Prior to Arrival At Scene)	219	5.13%
Canceled on Scene	207	4.85%
Standby Only	85	1.99%
Treated, Released (AMA)	69	1.62%
Dead at Scene - Resuscitation Attempted (Without Transport)	37	0.87%
Refused Evaluation/Care (Without Transport)	37	0.87%
Dead at Scene - No Resuscitation Attempted	33	0.77%
Treated, Transported by Law Enforcement	19	0.45%
Treated, Transferred Care to Another EMS Unit	6	0.14%

## Receiving Hospitals

The selection of hospital destination is determined by several factors including acuity, type of call, patient choice (insurance-based), and specific emergency room situation.



## Response Time

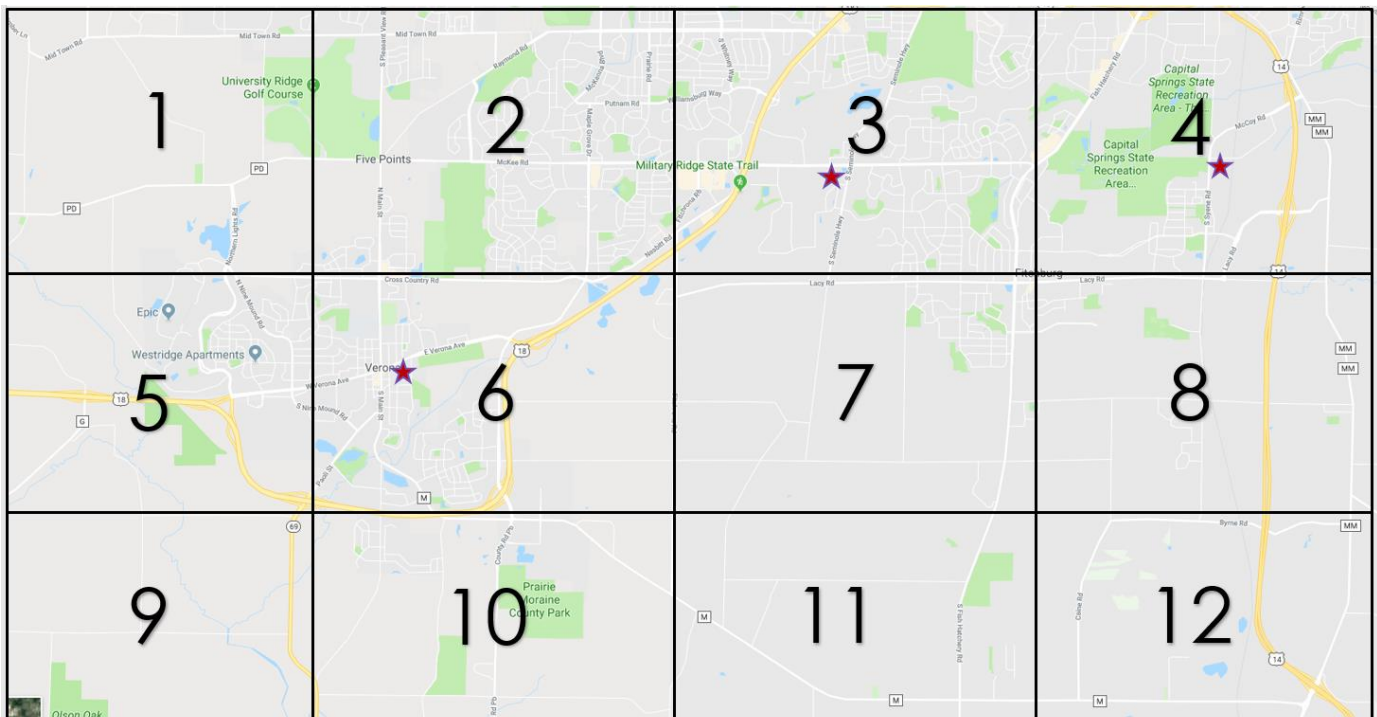
The time elapsed from dispatch to arrival on a scene is referred to as response time.

Actual response time is a result of many factors such as call type, station location, traffic, road construction, weather conditions, and the occasional train.

The charts below represent the 12 zones of the Fitch-Rona District. The percentage of calls in that zone is listed as is the average response time for all emergent and non-emergent calls. A non-emergent response (without the use of lights and siren) is proven to be much safer than the higher-speed emergent response and is warranted for less serious calls.

In 2023, we start tracking response times in a new zone 13, which is the area of the former Town of Madison that was added to the City of Fitchburg to the Northeast on November 1<sup>st</sup> of 2022.

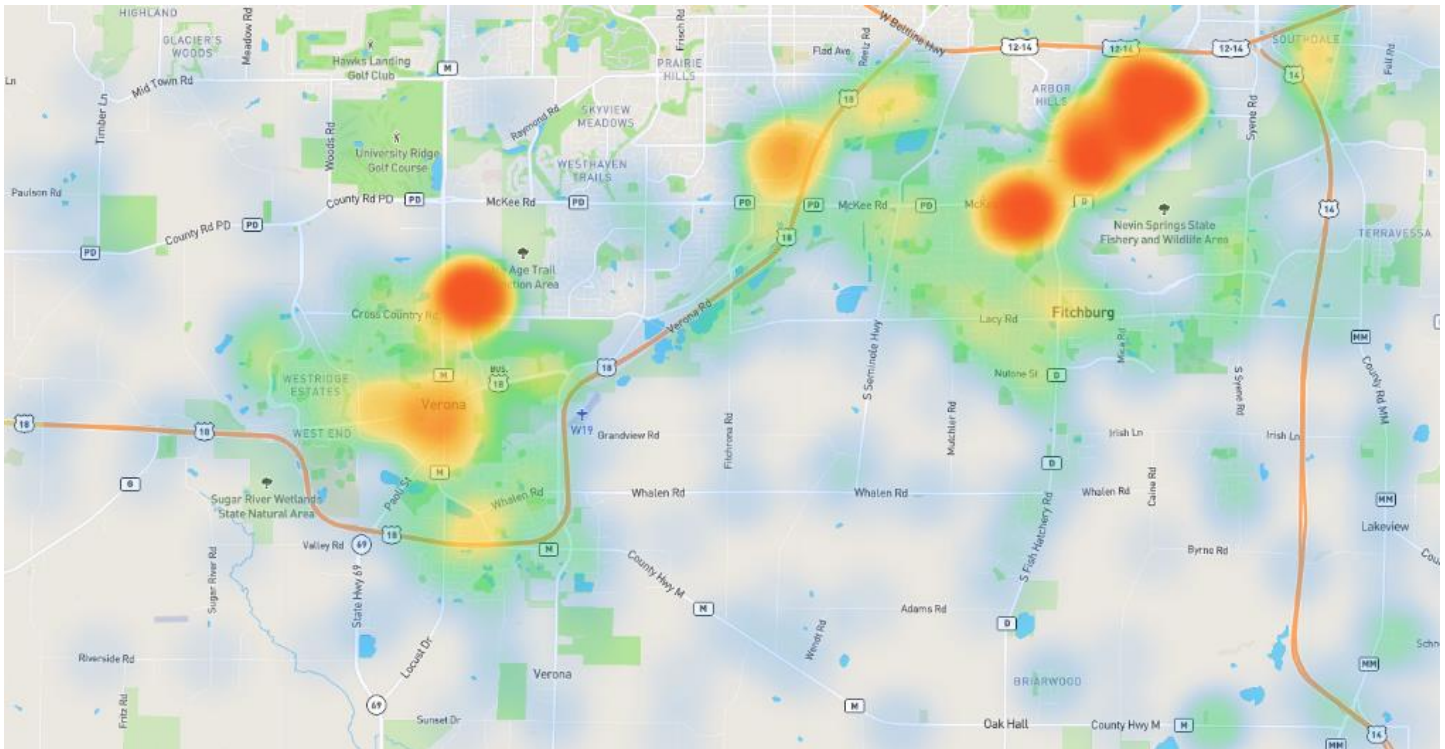
Station location is a primary factor in determining response time. This is expressed in the average response times noted below. Our current stations are located in zones 3, 4, and 6. Times listed represent time en route to time on-scene.



## Call Percentage and En route to On-Scene Response Times by Zone

<b>Zone 1- Medic 45</b>  <b>0.66%</b> <b>Fitchburg 9.41min</b> <b>Verona 4.57 min</b>	<b>Zone 2 -Medic 44</b>  <b>5.30%</b> <b>Fitchburg 5.18 min</b> <b>Verona 3.56 min</b>	<b>Zone 3 - Medic 44</b>  <b>32.64%</b> <b>Fitchburg 4.58 min</b> <b>Verona 4.39 min</b>	<b>Zone 4 - Medic 43/44</b>  <b>21.92%</b> <b>Fitchburg 5.15 min</b> <b>Verona 8.39 min</b>
<b>Zone 5 - Medic 45</b>  <b>8.02 %</b> <b>Fitchburg 7.33 min</b> <b>Verona 3.04 min</b>	<b>Zone 6 - Medic 45</b>  <b>15.53%</b> <b>Fitchburg 8.20 min</b> <b>Verona 3.29 min</b>	<b>Zone 7 - Medic 44</b>  <b>1.68%</b> <b>Fitchburg 5.38 min</b> <b>Verona 5.33 min</b>	<b>Zone 8 – Medic 43/44</b>  <b>1.47%</b> <b>Fitchburg 6.40 min</b> <b>Verona 4.56 min</b>
<b>Zone 9 - Medic 45</b>  <b>0.28%</b> <b>Fitchburg 8.21 min</b> <b>Verona 6.02 min</b>	<b>Zone 10 - Medic 45</b>  <b>0.31%</b> <b>Fitchburg 11.38 min</b> <b>Verona 09.34 min</b>	<b>Zone 11 - Medic 45</b>  <b>.57%</b> <b>Fitchburg 7.53 min</b> <b>Verona 7.11 min</b>	<b>Zone 12 - Medic 43/45</b>  <b>1.82%</b> <b>Fitchburg 11.34 min</b> <b>Verona 10.21 min</b>

## Heat Map for Calls for Service in 2022



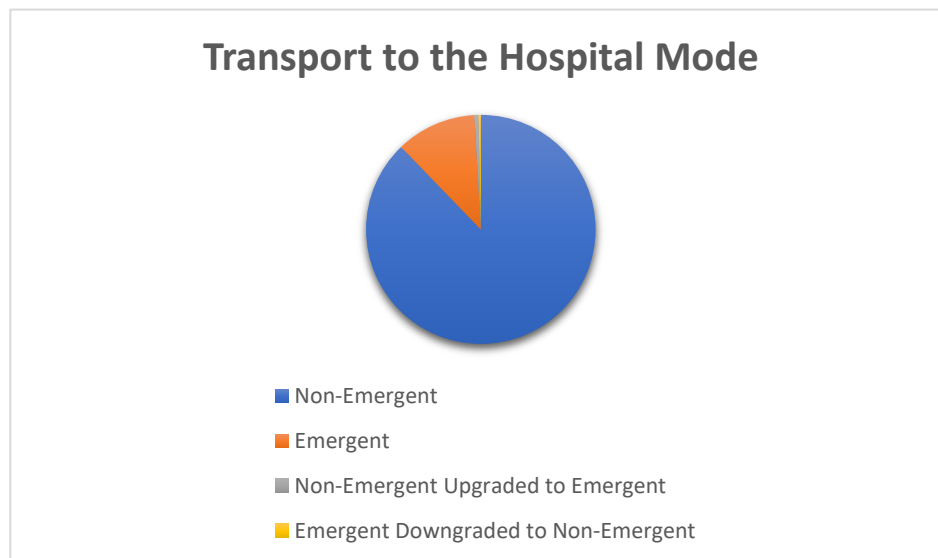
### Call Time Median

Total call time medians are dictated by many factors. Many of those are outside of our immediate control such as station location, traffic, weather, vehicle extrication, and level of call dispatched. Scene time is considered one of the most important factors in patient care. Our median scene time of 14 minutes 16 seconds (27/60) is just under our benchmark goal of 15 minutes. Of special note is the median time it takes us to get back into service for another call which is less than an hour. We pay particular attention to the total “in service” time for each of our ambulances. This is one of the methods we use to determine capacity issues in the district.

2022 Median Run Times (in minutes)	
Enroute	00:01:36
To Scene	00:04:39
At Scene	00:14:37
To Destination	00:15:16
Back in Service	00:12:36
Total	00:48:39

### Transport Mode from the Scene

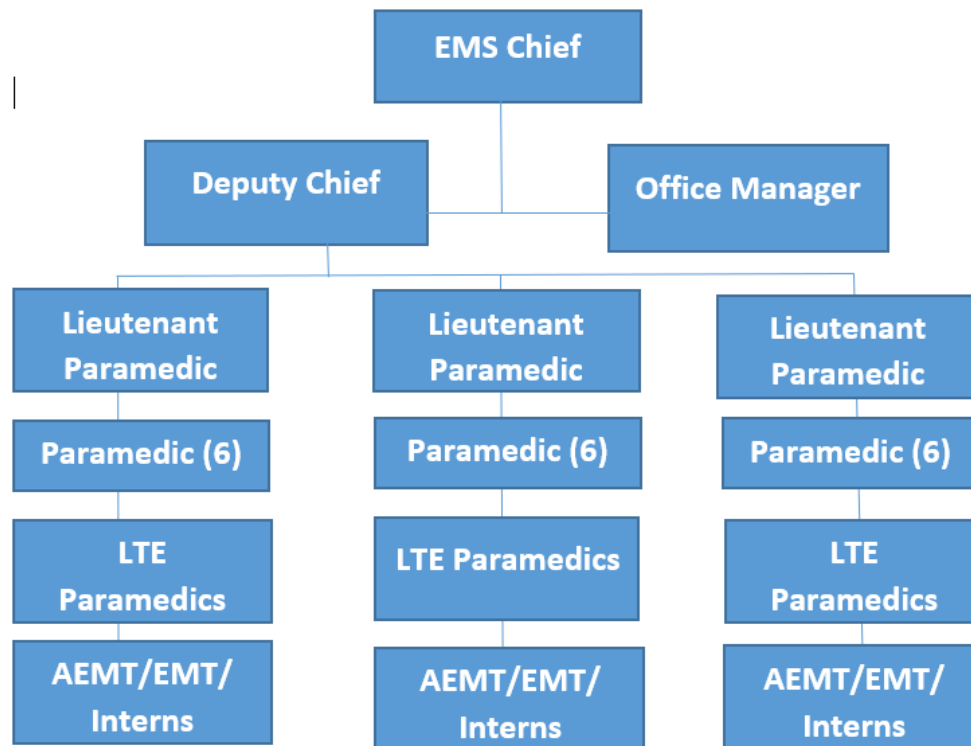
Included with our response time analysis is a discussion of transport modes from the scene to the hospital. If our crew determines that a patient can be transported non-emergently – proven to be the safest mode of transportation - they opt to do so.



A 2019 study in the Annals of Emergency Medicine concluded that the risk an ambulance crash is 2 ½ times greater when transporting a patient using lights and sirens<sup>1</sup>. Ongoing studies continue to look at patient outcomes with the increased risk of the of lights and sirens, and largely suggest that transport times have minimal effect on outcomes<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Watanabe BL, Patterson GS, Kempema JM, Magallanes O, Brown LH. Is Use of Warning Lights and Sirens Associated With Increased Risk of Ambulance Crashes? A Contemporary Analysis Using National EMS Information System (NEMSIS) Data. Ann Emerg Med. 2019 Jul;74(1):101-109. doi: 10.1016/j.annemergmed.2018.09.032. Epub 2019 Jan 12. PMID: 30648537.

## ADMINISTRATION



### EMS Commission

Our EMS Commission is made up of members of our District municipal Councils and Board, as well as citizen representatives. There are 3-representatives from each community we serve. As of December 2022, these representatives are:  
 City of Fitchburg: Shannon Strassman (Council Member), Connie Hilla, and James Roberts  
 City of Verona: Kate Cronin (Council Member), Derek Johnson, and Brent Kyzer-McHenry  
 Town of Verona: Dr. David Lonsdorf (Town Board Member), Terry Schnapp, and Sue Luginbuhl

The duties of the Commission include approving policies, fee schedules, and expenditures for the operational management of the EMS District. They are responsible for hiring the Chief of EMS and ensuring that he, or she, conducts day-to-day operations in the best interest of the municipalities.

<sup>2</sup> Murray B, Kue R. The Use of Emergency Lights and Sirens by Ambulances and Their Effect on Patient Outcomes and Public Safety: A Comprehensive Review of the Literature. *Prehosp Disaster Med.* 2017 Apr;32(2):209-216. doi: 10.1017/S1049023X16001503. Epub 2017 Jan 30. Erratum in: *Prehosp Disaster Med.* 2019 Jun;34(3):345. PMID: 28134063.

## Chief and Deputy Chief

The EMS Chief and Deputy Chief are the two full-time administrators of the district. They are licensed paramedics and must maintain their medical skills, in addition to education, training, and practice, in advanced operational management. Their positions are primarily weekday hours, however, to manage overall operational capability twenty-four hours a day, each Chief is tasked with the on-call position of Officer-in-Charge (OIC) on a rotating basis. It is an on-call position, and no additional compensation is paid for this duty.

## Paramedic-Lieutenants

In 2017, Fitch-Rona created the position of a paramedic Lieutenant. These staff members still work a regular rotation on the ambulance but are assigned additional duties. They are assigned as the point person for each station during their rotation and assist the administrative staff in ordering medical supplies, basic vehicle maintenance, and overall staff communication. In addition to station-specific duties, they also assist in the Quality Assurance process, intern coordination, billing review, new hire orientation, and training.

## Paramedics

In order to staff three ambulances 24/7, a staff of 21 full-time paramedics is required. The average number of years of service for our current staff is just over ten years. These dedicated staff are supported by a pool of 15-18 Limited Term Employees (LTE) who cover the shifts that are opened due to vacation and paid time off requests.

Fitch-Rona paramedics work a 24-hour shift, followed by 48 hours off duty. This schedule results in a dedicated Kelly shift crew that works every Sunday and Wednesday.

## Medical Direction and Education

Fitch-Rona contracts with the University of Wisconsin Hospital ALS Consortium that provides medical direction and continuing education to participating Dane County EMS agencies (City of Madison Fire Department, City of Middleton EMS, City of Sun Prairie Fire and EMS, and the Villages of Waunakee, Belleville, and Brooklyn). Dr. Mike Mancera is assigned to Fitch-Rona for specific operational issues, but the benefit the consortium gives Fitch-Rona is access to a myriad of other emergency physicians as challenging cases arise.

The UW Emergency Education Center (UWEEC) provides much of the continuing education for our paramedics. These sessions cover the required emergency care topic areas required by the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and are presented by Emergency Physicians, Fellows, and Residents. The Consortium utilizes web conferencing so monthly trainings are viewable regardless of where the speaker is presenting. This training is uploaded into a Learning Management System (9<sup>th</sup> Brain) allowing the Medics to view the training while on duty, reducing training costs of off-duty training.

In addition, Dr. Mancera works with our QA workgroup to tailor service-specific training and run reviews on the third Tuesday of each month. This review/training is also streamed to allow for each station to participate, and for staff that may have challenges physically attending the training to benefit from the education.

## Firefighter /Paramedic Intern

Fitch-Rona EMS sponsors a Paramedic Intern Program in conjunction with the Fitchburg and Verona Fire Departments. We have jointly developed a program that supports interns in their third year of training. The process is competitive, and interns accepted into the program are assigned to a paramedic mentor. The intern is assigned to work the same shift hours that the paramedics keep (24 hours on/48 hours off) for the few months preceding, and while attending paramedic school. The success of the program is evident as many of our recent interns have accepted full-time paramedic jobs in departments throughout the United States.



### Madison College EMS Diversity Project

In 2021, Fitch-Rona EMS, Sun Prairie EMS, and Madison College began discussions to increase diversity in the field of EMS. According to a journal article published in 2019, the field of EMS remains largely undiversified concerning gender and race<sup>3</sup>. The College has conducted an entry-level firefighting course for students of color and discussions have started to identify students from that course with an interest in EMS and show potential for achievement.

Students would be provided an internship with an EMS service while attending EMS courses and receiving academic and social support from both the College and the service. Sun Prairie EMS accepted the first candidate in the fall of 2021 and Fitch-Rona interviewed and accepted Mollie Olson as our first paid intern. She works 72 to 96 hours per month supplementing the EMS crew, as well as supporting special events. She started with Fitch-Rona as a licensed EMT and will enroll in the paramedic program in the fall of 2023.

### Community Outreach Programs

The staff at Fitch-Rona actively teach Community CPR programs at the City of Fitchburg Library, City of Verona Library, Verona Town Hall, and various other locations. Counting these courses, as well as numerous contract CPR courses with businesses and organizations, there are over 80 new citizen lifesavers in the public now trained in compression only-CPR in the last three years. Our paramedics started teaching Stop-the-Bleed programs in these venues in 2019, as well as a partnership with the Verona School District. Stop-the-Bleed teaches bystanders the basic skills of bleeding control in environments where EMS may be delayed due to location, or scenes of active violence.

## FINANCES

### Funding Sources

EMS services are unique in the public service sector with our ability to offset a portion of our operational funding requirements by billing for services provided. We anticipate for 2023 that EMS revenue will cover 47% of our operating expenses. The remaining operational budget needs are divided between the municipalities based on Equalized Valuation. These numbers demonstrate the extreme financial value of the district model in cost and resource sharing.

Funding Source	2023 Estimated Annual Cost	Percentage
Fitch-Rona Run Income	\$1,699,600	46%
Fitchburg	\$1,031,222	28%
City of Verona	\$801,833	21%
Town of Verona	\$92,380	4%
Other Income	\$42,200	1%
Total Budget	\$3,667,236	100%

### Capital Improvement Projects

As part of the fleet management of Fitch-Rona, the 2022 CIP included funding toward the fleet replacement fund of the ambulance and response car fleet. As explained later in the report, we purchase an ambulance every two years in the district. This new ambulance replaces an ambulance, and much of the equipment in it when it is ten years old.

<sup>3</sup> Remle P. Crowe, William Krebs, Rebecca E. Cash, Madison K. Rivard, Erin W. Lincoln & Ashish R. Panchal (2020) Females and Minority Racial/Ethnic Groups Remain Underrepresented in Emergency Medical Services: A Ten-Year Assessment, 2008–2017, Prehospital Emergency Care, 24:2, 180-187, DOI: [10.1080/10903127.2019.1634167](https://doi.org/10.1080/10903127.2019.1634167)

# Fitch-Rona EMS District Annual Report

2022

## Service Fees

The fee structure used for EMS service is divided into three parts: Base Rate, Supply Charge, and Mileage Fee. In 2019, our Base Rates were increased to \$1,300 and \$1,400 (for Residents and Non-Residents respectively). Supply charges are specific to each call. Rates were increased for 2022 after three years of no increase.

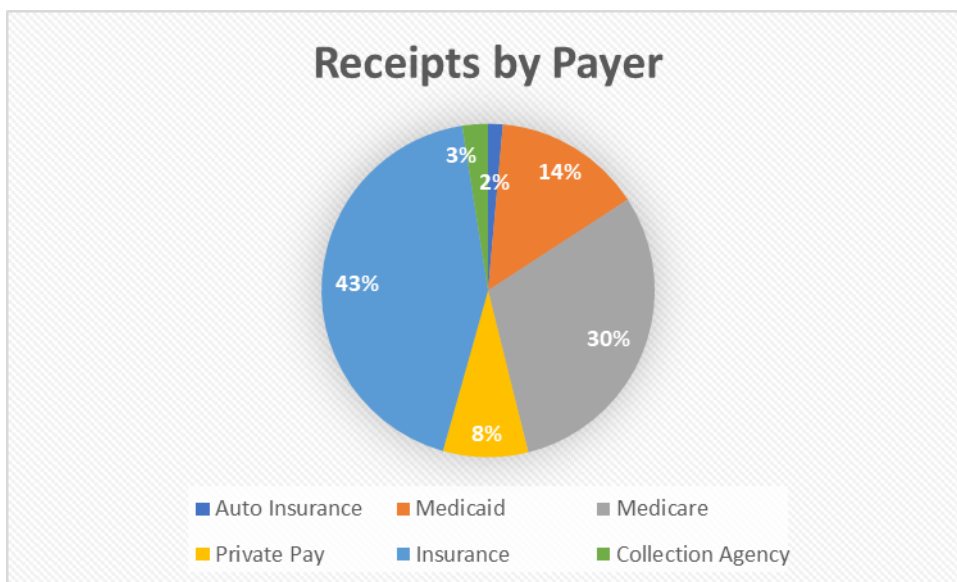
	2020	2021	2022
ALS Resident Base Rate	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,300
ALS Non-Resident Base Rate	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,400
No-Transport	\$150-\$400*	\$150-\$400*	\$150-\$400*
Mileage	\$22/mile	\$22/mile	\$22/mile
Stand-By	\$135/hr	\$135/hr	\$135/hr

\* Fitch-Rona uses a tiered billing scheme for no-transports.

## Resident/Non-Resident Transports

Fitch-Rona tracks and bills residents differently than non-residents using our service understanding that resident tax dollars are already used to some extent to support EMS. Below is a breakdown of this demographic:

	% of CALLS
RESIDENT	82%
NON-RESIDENT	18%



# Fitch-Rona EMS District Annual Report

2022

## Service Fee vs. Actual Payment

Service fees charged do not accurately represent potential income. Both Medicaid and Medicare limit payments to a fraction of the fee charged and do not cover our actual cost of service. Additionally, some of our calls result in a no-charge such as canceled calls, false alarms, and calls where no assessment is necessary.

## 2022 Medicaid Reimbursement Rates

Service	We Charge	They Pay	Write-off per call
BLS	\$1,300.00	\$151.84	\$1,148.16
ALS1	\$1,300.00	\$180.31	\$1,119.69
ALS2	\$1,300.00	\$260.97	\$1,039.03
Mileage	\$22.00	\$5.56	\$16.44
Supplies	\$50.00	\$14.73	\$35.27
O2	\$80.00	\$14.73	\$65.27
IV	\$75.00	\$25.25	\$49.75

## 2022 Medicare Reimbursement Rates

Service	We Charge	They Allow*	Write-off per call
BLS	\$1,300.00	\$286.87	\$1,013.13
ALS1	\$1,300.00	\$454.21	\$845.79
ALS2	\$1,300.00	\$657.41	\$642.59
Mileage	\$22.00	\$8.02	\$13.98

\*Medicare withholds 2% of their payment due to sequestration

## Annual Charges vs. Receivables

This chart represents charges sent out vs. revenue received. As noted earlier, there are significant adjustments that are made due to Medicare and Medicaid. Additionally, we receive requests for payment forgiveness due to financial hardship. These invoices are reviewed and reduced, or written off, per a standing policy. When dealing with insurance companies, there is a delay in payment due to submittal time and review processes which is reflected in our monthly aging reports.

2022 BILLED	2022 REVENUE	Collection Rate
\$4,581,213.10	\$1,860,530.02	40.61%

## Accounting Policies

The district undergoes an external audit on an annual basis. The Certified Public Accounting firm of Johnson Block will again be retained to complete an informal audit of the 2022 records. Each member of the Fitch-Rona EMS Commission and each municipality will be presented with a copy of the independent accountant's review report once it is completed in early 2023.

## Accounts Receivable

The patient care accounts receivable function within the district is outsourced to 3 Rivers Billing, Inc. The billing process involved with the various government programs which are responsible for a large number of the district's invoices require capabilities of the third-party billing service to attain maximum efficiency. Receivables are in-line with EMS standards and are reviewed monthly by the EMS Commission. From January 2022 through December 2022 Fitch-Rona EMS received \$0.40 for every dollar billed. This is due to the necessary write-offs that occur with government insurance coverage. This is down from \$0.41 in 2021. In the spring of 2022, the State legislature approved a budget to increase reimbursement rates for EMS charges for those patients who qualify for Medical Assistance. As noted earlier, about 23% of our patients utilize this assistance.

## Cash Flow

The district has a positive working relationship with Oak Bank in Fitchburg to use a combination of bank accounts to manage available cash to maximize potential interest earnings. An internal cash flow report is completed and reviewed by the Commission monthly to provide oversight and assist in the management of this process.

## Designated Funds

We have reserved funds set aside for future financial obligations. Except for the Post-Retirement Health Insurance Fund, all interest accrued from these accounts becomes part of the general Operating budget. In 2019, Fitch-Rona joined the Wisconsin Investment Series Cooperative (WISC). The funds for the Post-Retirement Healthcare and Labor Contract negotiations were moved into an investment account to allow for greater FDIC protection of funds, and a larger return on the investment of funds that are infrequently utilized.

Designated Fund	12/31/2022 Balance
Post-Retirement Health Insurance	\$ 221,570.80
Labor Contract Legal Fees	\$ 24,000.00
Funding Assistance Program (State Assistance)	\$ 12,901.90
EPIC Grant	\$30,000.00
ARPA Funds	\$11,164.72

## Healthcare Retirement Account (HRA)

As part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, employees are eligible for a payout of unused sick time funds into a Health Retirement Account upon retirement, to a maximum of 1296 hours. We annually perform an analysis of funding needs to estimate the amount needed to ensure sufficient dollars are set aside to provide health insurance to our current and future retirees.

## Legal Fees for Labor Contracts

This fund is set up to manage attorney costs incurred during the negotiation process. This fund is used to cover the legal fees directly related to negotiations of our Labor Contract. 2022 saw the negotiation of a new Collective Bargaining Agreement starting in 2023 through 2025. The 2023 operational budget includes funds to start to replenish that account at a smaller amount each year, to avoid the spikes generated during contract years.

## Ambulance Replacement

As explained earlier, Fitch-Rona has a fleet of five ambulances. Three of those ambulances are used as primary response vehicles. The other two are utilized for additional staffing during special events and to rotate into service during scheduled maintenance and unexpected repairs. We purchase an ambulance every two years. On this rotation, an ambulance spends six years as a front-line ambulance and four years as a reserve ambulance. At the end of ten years, the ambulance is sold, and the funds are placed in a designated fund to offset the purchase price of the next ambulance.

2023 should have seen the purchase of the next replacement ambulance. Supply chain issues still persist from the pandemic and ordering times for ambulances across major manufacturers are 18-24 months. We were able to work with our current manufacturer and had orders entered into the queue, but still have estimated delivery dates in July 2024. The 2023 CIP will request purchasing two ambulances in 2024 (the one that should have been purchased in 2023, and the one that would have been purchased in 2025). The overall savings in the ambulances and capital equipment that goes into the ambulance will be significant, but the district will work with the municipalities to come up with the most cost-effective plan that continues to provide reliable vehicles to the district.

## Un-Assigned Contingency Funds

Our goal is to have a Contingency Fund balance of 20% of our total operating budget by year's end. The purpose of the fund is to ensure short-term financial stability for the department in the unlikely event of an interruption or downturn in our revenue stream. In years where revenue exceeds expenses, we add to the contingency funds. Our goal is to contribute to this account balance during years with increased run volumes rather than budget for these funds. Our fund balance at the beginning of 2022 was \$423,765, or 11.5%. A formula error that overestimated projected run income in the 2019 budget, was perpetuated over the following years, causing the district to utilize contingency funds in the next two budget cycles. The error was corrected for the 2022 budget but did result in a sizeable budget increase for the municipalities from 2021 to 2022 to correct for the overestimation in the last two years. Modifications to the budget process were made to try and prevent these errors in the future.

In a collaborative effort to restore contingency funds, and take advantage of a state law that allowed tax levy exemptions for EMS Districts under certain conditions, the 2023 budget included a \$58,000 line item to dedicate operational funds toward the district reserve. The short-term levy limit relief will be continued in the long-term as the fund is replenished and the funds can be utilized to offset future funding of staff with a lower budget increase.

## VISION

Fitch-Rona presented its first formal 5-year plan in 2001. Since then, the plan has been reviewed and presented at the Annual District meeting of the City Councils and Town Board in October. The plan looks at attainable near-term issues, as well as the far-reaching long-term needs of the district.

### Near Term

Prior to the addition of the third full-time ambulance staffed at Fitchburg Fire Station #3, the district was reliant on our neighbors to respond to our municipalities for our residents when both of our ambulances were assigned to other calls about 8-10 times per month. In 2022, that assistance was only required 14 times over the course of the year. However, that number has gone up three-fold in the last three years. In order to keep up with the growing senior housing market in our communities, this number will continue to rise, and Fitch-Rona will need to respond likewise.



To pave the way for anticipated growth, and to work collaboratively with our municipal partners with staffing needs in all departments, Fitch-Rona is planning on adding a second full-time Deputy Chief in 2024. As reflected in the organization chart above, there are currently only two Chief level officers managing 48 full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff. They are assisted by an outstanding part-time office manager and 3-shift lieutenants, but in order to continue to provide the highest level of care and operations, an additional supervisor position is required to manage training requirements, community involvement, and strengthen the continuity of operations base for the future of the district.

Shortly after the hiring of another supervisor position, the district will need to add an additional ambulance to manage the growing volume of calls. Based on a 3-5% historical growth, the calls for EMS will approach 4,500 calls in 2025. An additional fourth ambulance staffed during “peak hours” would require the hiring of four full-time employees or a combination of full and part-time equivalents. Over the following three to five years, this may need to transition to a 24-hour ambulance, with additional full-time paramedics added to the staff, but remains fluid, based on district needs.



Additional near-term goals include increasing our public outreach. The American Heart Association reports that 40% of cardiac arrests occur in public settings. Survival rates from those cardiac arrests increase to nearly 45% when bystander CPR is administered. When public safety allows, providing more training for simple compression-only CPR at area stores and events is a priority for Fitch-Rona. In addition, we have been working with the Verona School District and the libraries in our District to train bystanders in Stop-the-Bleed programs. These simple skills can assist in saving the lives of people who are victims of active violence events where EMS resources are unable to be accessed due to unsafe scenes.



## Long Term

A review of forty-five years of ambulance runs has shown an average annual increase in calls for service of 5.5%. Though the pandemic has altered that growth, continued building projects and growth projections in the municipalities estimate around 6,000 calls for service in 2030. As the service progresses to four, and five, full-time ambulances over the next ten years, this will result in an on-duty crew of 10 people, and a full-time staff of 35 paramedics. Most likely, a greater administrative presence will be needed in the district to manage the 24/7 operations that will occur and a significant pool of part-time employees will be needed to cover earned time off for career staff.

As we look into the future population growth in the district, we also continue to look at response times. It would be difficult to predict with any certainty where the population of the two cities will be residing in 10-15 years, but as a long-term plan, we continue to watch the areas our services are being utilized and need to keep in our vision the potential for new station placements.

Outside of our own district, the state of volunteer EMS services is in crisis. Across the state, and including our own County, service mergers and regionalization is occurring. We continue to work and cooperate with other services in the County to find the best systems for the greatest patient outcomes at a reasonable cost to the taxpayers.

Finally, increasing the size of the service also comes with a cost. Though the weight of the budget will always come from user fees and municipal support, options for expanded service to neighboring municipalities, and providing inter-facility transportation are potential revenue options that will continue to be investigated.

