

UNION FIRE DISTRICT
OF SOUTH
KINGSTOWN

STRATEGIC PLAN

NOVEMBER 2024

PEACE DALE • WAKEFIELD • SNUG HARBOR • FORESTRY



TOWER HILL • TUCKERTOWN • MATUNUCK • WEST KINGSTON

A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF

The Union Fire District is an all-volunteer fire department dedicated to serving and protecting the residents of South Kingstown. The district operates eight fire stations: Peace Dale, Wakefield, Forest Fire, Snug Harbor, Tower Hill, Matunuck, Tuckertown, and West Kingston. Our current membership includes 80 volunteer firefighters. We have been focusing on recruitment and retention through our website and social media presence. Recently, we completed our fourth year of a FEMA grant aimed at supporting these efforts, which successfully increased our volunteer numbers. Additionally, we have established a new Career and Technical Education program with South Kingstown High School to teach firefighting skills to juniors and seniors, potentially creating a pipeline for new members each year.

As Fire Chief, I recognize that we are at a defining moment that necessitates a thorough review of our current status and a strategic plan to meet our future goals and community service demands. The core question guiding this plan is: "How can we improve the Union Fire District, and what direction should we take?" A comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the department and our services has been conducted, resulting in a strategic plan that outlines short, medium, and long-term organizational goals, as well as the objectives needed to achieve them. The successful implementation of this plan relies on our personnel's commitment to embracing the department's vision. I am optimistic that our members will rise to this challenge and support the outlined goals.

If you or someone you know is interested in firefighting, please visit www.unionfiredistrict.com for more information. Residency in South Kingstown is preferred but not required. We are always seeking new members.

It takes significant dedication and time to be a volunteer firefighter. The District Chiefs and I extend our gratitude to all the dedicated firefighters, office staff, and auxiliary members for their commitment and service.

Steven M. Pinch,
Chief

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Union Fire District is to provide a comprehensive range of fire-related services to protect the lives and property of South Kingstown residents from fires, emergencies, and other hazardous conditions.

OUR VISION

We are committed to enhancing the quality of life for all South Kingstown citizens by ensuring community safety through the highest level of service and emergency response. Our goals include:

- Fostering a partnership with the community in a responsive, efficient, and proactive manner.
- Creating a positive work environment through training, public education, code enforcement, and effective internal relationships.
- Establishing attainable goals through shared responsibility and accountability, nurturing relationships with respect, integrity, dedication, and commitment.
- Prioritizing responder safety with a "Safety Always" attitude at the forefront of all activities.
- Embracing shared leadership, volunteerism, organizational empowerment, and community responsiveness.

SPECIALTY EQUIPMENT



- **Inflatable Boat w/ Motor:** Access in shallow areas
- **Kayaks:** Limited water access
- **Drone:** Underwater searches
- **Jaws of Life**
- **Specialized Rope Equipment**
- **Ladder Truck**
- **Hazards 1**

PROACTIVE APPROACH

The Union Fire District takes a proactive stance towards the future, focusing on:

- **Staying updated** on changes in fire service and technology
- **Maintaining high-quality** technical rescue and equipment standards
- **Committing to fire suppression and technical rescue services**
- **Strategic and financial planning**
- **Evaluating equipment and resource availability**
- **Adhering to NFPA 1901** service life for fire apparatus

PERSONNEL AND STRUCTURE

THE UNION FIRE DISTRICT EMPLOYS SEVEN FULL-TIME AND FOURTEEN PART-TIME STAFF, INCLUDING:

Full-Time Employees:

- Administrator
- Tax Collector
- Fire Marshal
- Assistant Fire Marshal
- Mechanic
- Building Maintenance
- Office Clerk

Part-Time Employees:

- Treasurer
- Fire Chief
- Assistant Fire Chief
- Three Deputy Fire Chiefs
- Medical Compliance Officer
- Two Office Clerks
- Smoke/CO Inspector
- Two IT Support Specialists
- Two Grant Coordinators
- Recruitment and Retention Coordinator

New Positions Hired:

- Additional Deputy Fire Chief
- New Assistant Fire Marshal
- New Career and Technical Education Instructor
- New Tax Collector
- New Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Inspector
- Two Grant Coordinators
- Two IT Support Specialists
- Recruitment and Retention Coordinator

The primary goal of the UFD is to provide superior fire protection services while remaining a volunteer fire district. This involves significant efforts in recruiting and retaining volunteers to ensure adequate staffing and timely responses.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

The UFD prioritizes responsible fiscal management for taxpayers. Currently, the UFD has no debt and funds capital improvements through its Capital Project Funds (CPF). For Fiscal Year 2024-2025, the budget totals \$3,727,705.00 a 3% decrease from the previous year.

Recent accomplishments include:

- Secured a FEMA grant for \$648,270 for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, effective November 10, 2024, to November 9, 2028.
- Construction of a new Matunuck Fire Station at a cost of \$2,674,000, funded through capital project funds with no debt incurred.
- Purchase of three new engines/pumpers totaling less than \$2,500,000, also without debt.





FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

The UFD Office of the Fire Marshal oversees fire prevention, code enforcement, and fire investigations. With a full-time Fire Marshal and Assistant Fire Marshal, the office conducts over 1,000 site visits annually, including inspections for businesses and schools. Fire prevention education is expanding beyond schools to local housing communities and civic groups, with plans to seek grants to enhance these programs.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

In December 2020, a bond was approved for a new town-wide radio system, which was implemented in spring 2024. This system enhances communication among all town departments, ensuring outstanding coverage. The UFD continues to upgrade its radio equipment to improve mutual aid capabilities.





TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training is crucial for our volunteers. The UFD operates the state's only Class A burn building, providing realistic training scenarios. We offer drills twice weekly and have developed online training programs to accommodate volunteers' schedules. Starting in fall 2024, a high school program will allow students to gain Firefighter Level I certification before graduation.

FACILITIES AND REAL ESTATE

The Union Fire District's facilities consist of eight fire stations, an administration and training compound, and two vacant lots for future expansion. Ongoing upgrades will modernize these facilities to support volunteer needs.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

The UFD is committed to enhancing recruitment and retention efforts, recognizing the challenges of volunteer firefighting. Key strategies include:

- Identifying potential volunteer pools
- Conducting public awareness campaign
- Building partnerships with local schools
- Offering stipends and benefits
- Creating a positive volunteer experience through recognition and community involvement

Regular reviews and adaptations of this strategy will ensure its effectiveness in meeting community and district needs.



PROPOSED GOALS (2025-2030)

- Maintain a robust volunteer fire department of highly trained members
- Complete the Matunuck fire station #7 construction project
- Complete addition to Forestry station #3 to include bunk rooms
- Design and construct a new West Kingston station #9 from the ground up
- Explore and budget for potential live in resident program for our volunteer firefighters
- Expand firefighter online training programs for greater flexibility.
- Continue to successfully implement the high school firefighting career and tech program.
- Continue to fund and support our duty shift program for day and night coverage
- Explore additional collaboration with the Town of South Kingstown on future programs

