

Schedule changes help firefighters streamline response

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be emergency medical technicians. "Many of our paid-callbacks are EMTs who elect to go because they want to," Marinucci said. The 12 full-time staffers have at least 240 hours of training, while some of the volunteers have a few hours. "We are trying to get all our department members up to that level," Marinucci said. The full-time firefighters also tend to have more training in fire prevention. Volunteer fire departments in some

communities have come in for their share of criticism from paid firefighters and from the public. "I think you can have a professional department that is volunteer," Marinucci said. "The criticism is, I think, in some cases not warranted." The only difficulty Marinucci sees is a slight lapse in response time "because they (volunteers) have to come from home." The department encourages volunteers to spend some of their free time at the stations, so they are available when calls come in. "VOLUNTEERS ARE a threat to

full-time people, or it's a perceived threat," he said. "It takes a while to work it out. It takes a lot of work for the two to mesh together." "It (the shift change) kind of forces them to get along, or at least to understand each other's problems. When you're working with somebody, you have to get along, and that's what it's done." The increase in fire department runs during the 3 to 6 p.m. period results from heavier traffic and more activity during that time. "It's just an active portion of the

day," Marinucci said. Heavier traffic during those hours makes accidents more likely. In addition, residents cooking dinner in the late afternoon may cause kitchen fires. The 4.3-minute response time for December and January is a good one, the fire chief said. "Response time can be deceptive. It's very difficult to just throw a number out and say 'This is our response time.'" In order to gauge efficiency, it's also important to look at a run's location and its nature — emergency or non-emergency.

Of the 38 peak-hour incidents reported during December and January, 31 were medical and 27 were classified as "fire or other." Generally, 60 to 65 percent of the department's runs are medical, Marinucci said. Medical runs include injuries resulting from traffic accidents. The "other" category includes false

alarms, possible gas leaks and reports of wires being down. The 532 incidents handled during December and January included 47 resulting from the New Year's Eve/New Year's Day ice storm. None contributed to the peak-hour figures. "That did boost our runs up a little bit," Marinucci said.

Plans outlined for block grant funds

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River Avenue (estimated cost, \$11,200). Council members added the Old Road/Eight Mile Road project to capital improvements, resulting in the \$152,700 total. Money from the reduced housing portion will be used for the project, City Manager William Costick said Tuesday.

If the Meadowbrook Heights project doesn't proceed, the Grand River

project will be added, the city manager said. The difference between the two sums would revert to the housing rehabilitation fund.

Several community residents, including some living on Sunnydale Street, spoke during the public hearing Monday.

"I GUESS, considering what we have to work with, what is proposed is about

the best use we could make," veteran council-watcher Aldo Vagnozzi said. "It's a program that has benefited our community."

"This is a program that has no large lobby," Vagnozzi said. "These are people who are far removed from the seat of power."

"I'm glad to see Sunnydale on the list," he said. "As long as I've lived in

this community, there's been a water problem there."

"I'm glad to see this (the Sunnydale project) on the agenda," said Diane Baxister, 2033 Sunnydale Street. "We do have a water problem. We do desperately need the drainage," she said. "As a resident of Sunnydale, I would like Sunnydale to be first on your list."

Plan stirs debate

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figure be reduced to \$120,000.

"I DON'T THINK we should touch the rehabilitation dollars at all," Marks said. The money rolls back into the community and benefits residents, he said.

"This is the oldest part of our city," Dudley said. "When one part of it starts to diminish, then the other parts will. They're only asking for a little consideration."

Williams said he was concerned about well-to-do individuals who may use housing rehabilitation money for property purchased for tax advantages.

"This sort of bothers me that someone could do this and beat the system," Williams told council members he knew a man who had bought a home in Redford Township and who received similar grant money to fix it up.

"There are a lot of people out there who are beating the system one way or another," he said.

"With the amount of funding we have, we can use it up on owner-occupied units, and that's what we've chosen to do," Richard Lampi, community development manager, told the council. Applicants for housing rehabilitation funds are required to submit tax returns, he said.

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