

Moncure Fire Department

Strategic Plan - 2026

24 February 2026

Pushing Forward & Honoring History

We have reached quite a milestone. 2026 is our sixtieth year providing lifesaving services to our community. As Moncure Fire plans for the future, I want to take a moment to recognize the hard work and selfless dedication of the people who came before us, as Chiefs, Firefighters, Board Members and others who made community a top priority.

Moncure Volunteer Fire Department was incorporated on 4 May 1966 by local community members who saw a need and worked hard and without compensation to fill that need. The founders of this department operated on an extremely small budget funded by chicken dinners and other fundraising. The first purpose-built fire station wasn't built until 1974 and the first new fire truck was finally purchased in 1977.

These early Firefighters paved the way and each successive generation continued to move the bar a little higher. Moncure was the first volunteer fire department in the State of NC to offer first responder services and the department received the Governor's Volunteer Award from Jim Hunt in 1980. That tradition of pushing forward continues today, as Moncure Fire recently became the first fire department in Chatham County to provide the entire EMT scope of practice.

Even as we are never satisfied with our current capabilities and are always striving to be better equipped, better trained and to provide better service, we need to acknowledge that we have indeed come a long way. In 2003, when I joined the department, our organization was still fully volunteer and only had 4 who held certifications as both NC Firefighter and NC EMT – about 10% of the roster. Since then, we have made training and professionalism a top priority and now have 31 personnel who meet that criteria – 68% in all.

Since January 2014, when I was promoted to Fire Chief, I have made many to-do lists that incorporated short and long term goals for the department. We have worked hard and have achieved many of those goals. With this, our first official Strategic Plan, we endeavor to take our department to the next level, to create a

road map that can be measured for success and followed and improved upon by future department leaders.

This strategic plan includes:

- Our Mission Statement
- Our Vision Statement
- Our Core Values
- Fire Chief's Expectations for Firefighters
- A Current Situational Assessment
- Detailed Short-Term Goals (1-4 years)
- Outline of Mid-Term Goals (5-9 years)
- Outline of Long-Term Goals (10-15 years)
- Periodic Review and Update Schedule

As we move forward, we will assess our progress by measuring concrete performance metrics. Further, we will provide a progress report to the community each June, as part of the Annual Report.

I am humbled to have the trust of the Board of Directors, the department and the community. I take the responsibility seriously and pledge to do my best to advance Moncure Fire's mission and effectiveness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SHI IV", with a stylized flourish above it.

Robert Shi, Fire Chief

Mission Statement

To serve our community with pride, integrity, professionalism and empathy through prompt and efficient fire, rescue and medical emergency response and to prevent loss of life and property through fire and life safety education.

Vision Statement

Always improving service, advancing capabilities and prioritizing community – always.

Core Values

- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Enthusiasm
- Empathy
- Inclusion
- Humility
- Humanity
- Optimism

Fire Chief's Expectations for All Firefighters

- **Focus on community.** Every Firefighter should serve the community to the best of their ability with professionalism, enthusiasm and empathy.
- **Build a culture of family within the department.** Firefighters should treat their fellow Firefighters with caring and kindness. An inclusive atmosphere of encouragement and camaraderie will push the department and its Firefighters forward.
- **Be a mentor.** When a Firefighter is struggling with skills needed for the job, Firefighters should not mock them or look down upon them, rather they should step up and help them improve.
- **Lead by example.** Firefighters in all ranks should strive for excellence in their work and personal interactions. When Firefighters model positive character traits like respect, humility, integrity, responsibility, thoroughness, enthusiasm and optimism, other Firefighters will follow that example.

- **Strive for operational readiness.** Even the best firefighters will make mistakes or forget to accomplish a task. If a Firefighter sees a problem, the Firefighter should fix it. The goal is not to assign blame, the goal is to bring our full capability to every incident. Shift wars degenerate into a terrible work environment for everyone.
- **Operate with honesty and integrity.** Firefighters can recover from making mistakes and acting with poor judgement. Firefighters cannot recover from dishonesty. Once trust is lost, it is forever lost.
- **Dare to be Different.** Strive for innovation. The reason for a given process should never be – “because we have always done it that way”. If a Firefighter believes they have an idea for improvement, they should develop that idea and present it. If we are all invested, we will continue to improve – together!
- **Never say “That’s not my job.”** We are here in service to our community and to each other. Firefighters should be helpful, be kind, be willing to go the extra mile. It will certainly pay dividends, both personally and to the Department as a whole.

Situational Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

Strengths

- **Dedicated Staff & Volunteers**
 - We have a small, but strong group of dedicated firefighters. Our people are our strength. We will prioritize actions and goals that will support them and lead to greater staff and volunteer retention.
- **Community Trust**
 - We are very proud to have excelled in the area of community support. We will continue to expand our outreach.
- **Local Knowledge**
 - We have a large area to protect. It includes massive industrial facilities, rivers, lakes and diverse topography. Having staff and volunteers who are intimately familiar with the area is a huge asset.

Weaknesses

- **Limited Budget**
 - Several goals in this plan are budget-dependent. We have limited control over the tax receipts in our district, so we will strive to make the most of the money we do have through thoughtful planning.

- **Recruitment Challenges**

- It is difficult to compete with municipal departments for staff without being in the local government retirement system. To limit that impact on our recruitment and retention, we will do our best to create an attractive work environment, where staff members have clear advancement potential and where they feel valued and supported.

- **Insufficient Number of Drivers**

- We will endeavor to train more qualified volunteers to drive, so they can supplement the on-duty staff on large incidents by responding with support vehicles, tankers and the ladder truck.

Opportunities

- **Grants & External Funding**

- We have been successful in obtaining funding for large purchases from outside sources and will continue to seek those funds.

- **Regional Partnerships**

- We have automatic-aid agreements with 6 surrounding departments. We have great working relationships with several of them, but will strive to increase our hands-on cross-training with all of our partners.

- **Community Engagement Programs**

- We have a very supportive relationship with our community. We will increase that bond through enhanced engagement.

Threats

- **Declining Volunteerism & Aging Volunteer Population**

- This is a problem nationwide, but we will endeavor to make our volunteers feel welcome and valued, while increasing our paid staff.

- **Increasing Call Volume & Incident Types**

- Fire departments are steadily being asked to respond to new threats, such as electric vehicle fires and increased calls for medical services. We will rise to the occasion by continuing to expand our training program.

- **Budget Volatility**

- Our tax base is unique in Chatham County, as much of our budget comes from a few very large businesses. This is challenging. The loss of one large business can produce a serious budget strain. This is largely out of our control, but we can limit the danger by limiting debt and saving for large capital purchases, rather than relying on loans, when possible. As the area

grows and more housing is built, the outsized budget impact of those large companies will decrease somewhat.

Short Term Strategic Priorities & Goals (1-4 years)

Equipment, Facilities & Financial Sustainability

- **Identify Grant Opportunities**
 - We have been exceptionally fortunate to have many large projects funded by outside sources. We will continue to seek such opportunities.
- **Upgrade UTV Capabilities & Decrease En-Route Times**
 - We will develop a plan and purchase equipment to make the UTV more capable and to decrease en-route times for this equipment.
- **Replace Tanker 14**
 - We hope to retire Tanker14 (T14) or move it to reserve status by 2030. T14 was placed in service in 2010 and carries 1500 gallons of water. Tanker 8 (T8) is a 2018 with 3000 gallons of water. Our current T8 would become T14 and a new, 3000 gallon T8 would be purchased. This will increase our available water by 1500 gallons for fires in areas without hydrants.
- **Identify Most Advantageous Location for Additional Stations**
 - In an ideal world, we would have 2 additional stations, one between Station 8 and Apex and one between Station 8 and Pittsboro. Identifying the best locations will depend on infrastructure growth in our district and may also be affected by potential new stations in Pittsboro and Apex.

Response, Personnel, Safety & Training

- **Decrease En-Route Times**
 - Getting to the scene of an emergency incident as quickly as possible is a must. We have a large response area and without adding new stations, travel time cannot be altered. Currently, the only room for improvement is via en-route times. A study was conducted of the time it takes to leave the station after we are paged. The current average is 1 minute and 56 seconds, with the longest en-route time being 4 minutes and 57 seconds (it was at night). We will work with the staff to stress readiness and station logistics for faster en-route times. We will strive for an average en-route time of 1 minute and 30 seconds. With a goal of never exceeding 1 minute and 20 seconds between 7am and 10pm and no more than 2 minutes and 20 seconds between 10pm and 7am.

- **Increase Percentage of Fully Certified Personnel to 75%**
 - Currently, 68% of our total roster is certified as both North Carolina Firefighter (NC FF) and North Carolina Emergency Medical Technician (NC EMT). We have come a long way in this metric, but we will continue to prioritize training and try to achieve 75% within 4 years.
- **Develop Clear Pathways for Volunteers to Become Drivers**
 - We need more volunteers to be able to drive the large trucks. We will start a program to enable any volunteer (over 21) to become qualified to drive the tankers within 2 years of joining the department.
- **Build a Deeper Bench of Future Officers**
 - We will train and delegate more operational and administrative tasks to the junior staff, so they will be better equipped to serve as the next generation of fire service leaders.
- **Prioritize Safety & Limit Cancer Risk**
 - We will install vehicle exhaust extraction systems at each station to reduce the risk of occupational cancer.
- **Expand Cross-Training with Neighboring Departments**
 - We are currently doing one, 3-hour training exercise quarterly with each of our automatic-aid departments. We will invite them to join us more often in order to increase our joint effectiveness on large incidents.
- **Expand Facility Training**
 - We will update our training requirements to ensure 100% of our firefighters get at least 18 hours of hands-on training at a facility each year.
- **Create Daytime Asst. Chief Position**
 - As soon as funding allows, we will move Assistant Chief Sykes to a daytime schedule, promote a Company Officer from within and hire a new Firefighter/Driver.
- **Expand Staffing of Station 14**
 - As soon as funding allows, we will add more staffing to Station 14.

Engaging Community & Honoring Our History

- **Increase Community Engagement/Awareness**
 - We will task a staff member to be the Community Safety Lead – a point person for community engagement, as it relates to fire and life safety efforts and the development of a new child passenger seat program.

- **Create a List of All former Firefighters & Board Members**
 - We will honor our history by gathering information from the vast FD files to create a comprehensive list of all past Firefighters (FFs), and Board Members, as well as their ranks and years of service.
- **Create a FD History Photo Gallery**
 - We will solicit photos from Firefighters, past and present and scan the many old photos that are currently at Station 8. This photo gallery will be maintained at the station, as well as shared on social media.

Mid Term Strategic Priorities & Goals (5-9 years)

Equipment, Facilities & Financial Sustainability

- **Continue to Identify Outside Funding Opportunities**
- **Upgrade Water Rescue Capabilities & Decrease En-Route Times**
- **Replace Ladder 8**
 - This new apparatus will be equipped as both an aerial and rescue.
- **Replace Engine 14**
- **Secure Land for 2 Additional Stations**
- **Begin Replacing Mobile & Portable Radios**

Response, Personnel & Training

- **Increase Percentage of NC FF and NC EMT Certified Personnel to 90%**
- **Expand Facility Training to Include Car Fire Prop**
- **Expand Staffing to Include FFs Assigned to Ladder 8**

Engaging Community & Honoring Our History

- **Expand Child Passenger Seat Program & Public Safety Education**
- **Increase Community Awareness & Social Media Presence**
- **Create a Display at Station 8**
 - We will create a display/plaque, listing all past FFs and Board Members who have served the community for at least 5 years.
- **Continue to Update Photo Gallery**
 - This is a continuing effort to solicit photos from our firefighters as time passes, so all who serve are represented.

Long Term Strategic Priorities & Goals (10-15 years)

Equipment, Facilities & Financial Sustainability

- **Continue to Identify Outside Funding Opportunities**
- **Replace Engine 8**
- **Build 2 additional Stations & Purchase 2 Additional Engines**
- **Change Station IDs to Moncure Stations 1-4**
- **Change Apparatus IDs to Engine 1, Engine 2, Engine 3, etc.**

Response, Personnel & Training

- **Decrease On-Scene Times**
 - This will be possible with the addition of new stations.
- **Increase Percentage of NC FF and NC EMT Certified Personnel to 96%**
- **Expand Hiring to Staff New Stations**

Engaging Community & Honoring Our History

- **Expand Child Passenger Seat Program and Public Safety Education**
- **Continue to Increase Community Engagement**
- **Continue to Update Photo Gallery & Station Displays**
- **Display Photos of Current & Past Firefighters at New Stations**

Periodic Review & Update Schedule

Periodic Strategic Plan Review

- **Strategic Plan Review For the Community**
 - Each year in June, at our Annual Board Meeting, we will update the community regarding our progress in achieving the goals in our Strategic Plan. This will be done as part of our Annual Report.
 - We will cite specific and measurable progress related to our short-term goals, as well as the outlook for longer-term goals.
- **Strategic Plan Review For the Board of Directors**
 - Each year in February, we will update the Board of Directors regarding our progress in achieving the goals in our Strategic Plan.

- We will cite specific, measurable progress related to our short-term goals, as well as the outlook for longer-term goals.
- This meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss any possible modifications to longer-term goals as affected by funding and other realities that may have changed since the adoption of current Strategic Plan. Detailed notes will be taken in order to guide the crafting of the next Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Update Schedule

- **New Strategic Plan Every 3 Years**
 - After the third occurrence of the February Board of Directors review, the Fire Chief will begin work on a new, updated version of the Strategic Plan.
 - Using the information gained from the last 3 yearly reviews, along with changes to funding and other potential factors, the Fire Chief will present and updated Strategic Plan to the Board of Directors at the April Board of Directors meeting.
 - If the Board approves, the Strategic Plan will be adopted at this meeting. If edits are required, the Chief will re-submit the Strategic Plan to the Board of Directors for adoption at the May Board of Directors meeting.
 - A new, updated Strategic Plan will be presented to the community at the Annual Board Meeting in June of every third year. The next occurrence will be June 2029.