



Presentation:
The Hazelwood & Robertson
Service Dispute
What we've learned & how we fix this?

Hazelwood City Council Meeting
February 2nd, 2022 at 7:30pm



Citizens to Save
Hazelwood & Fire Services



Citizens to Save Hazelwood & Fire Services

Nonprofit group consisting of mostly residents from the Robertson Fire Protection District. We are open to all residents of Hazelwood.

Formed June 1st, 2021, following the City of Hazelwood and Robertson FPD attempted tax increases in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

MISSION:

To pursue reasonable solutions to the city budget crisis while minimizing the tax burden on Hazelwood residents and businesses.

Why are we here today?

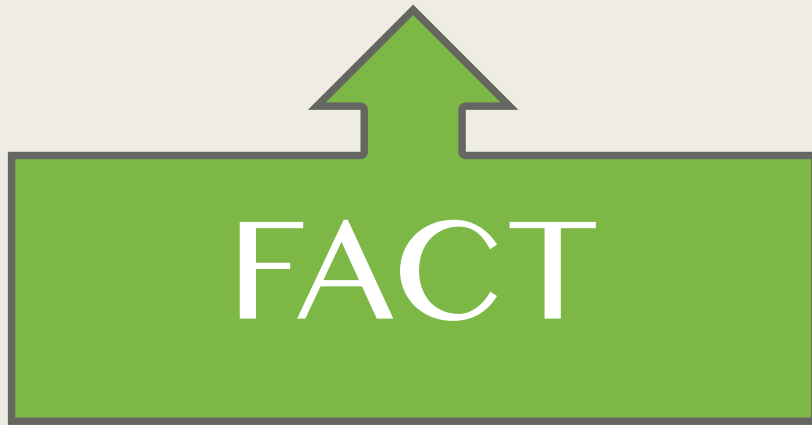
Share what we've learned over the past 6 months through:

- Talking to residents, business owners, and experts
- Speaking to Officials with Hazelwood and the Robertson FPD
- Researching TIFs, tax abatements, tax rates & the business of fire
- Data analysis & open records requests

What can we do? How do we fix this?



First, let's play...



OR



Fact OR Fiction...

The City of Hazelwood is currently not paying Robertson for their service?

FALSE

Is Hazelwood ACTUALLY going BANKRUPT?

TRUE

If Hazelwood goes bankrupt, I'll become part of Unincorporated St. Louis County?

FICTION

I'm not paying for Robertson's service, Hazelwood is.

FALSE
Robertson is paid with your tax dollars!



**WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED
TALKING TO THE RESIDENTS
& BUSINESS OWNERS?**

EVERYONE LOVES OUR FIREFIGHTERS!

Doesn't matter the
department or district

We respect and love all of
you for what you do!

THAT BEING SAID:

This dispute between
Hazelwood &
Robertson FPD has
NOTHING to do with
the firefighters!





WHAT ELSE DID
WE LEARN?

What is causing the City's budget crisis?

TWO MAIN ARGUMENTS:



1. HAZELWOOD GAVE TIFS RESULTING
IN BUDGET SHORTFALLS



2. ROBERTSON FPD SOLD TAX RATE
INCREASES TO TAXPAYERS AS "NO
COST"

BASICALLY, WHO IS TO BLAME?

ARGUMENT #1:
HAZELWOOD GIVING
TIFS RESULTING IN
BUDGET SHORTFALLS

LET'S DISCUSS THE
ELEPHANT IN THE
ROOM





HAZELWOOD:

**RESIDENTS ARE
NOT HAPPY ABOUT
THE TIFs!**

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIFs)

1. Maybe felt like a necessary evil
BUT did Hazelwood have to be #1 in
the County?
2. Difficult to see MILLIONS in tax
abatements....
then Hazelwood is not be able to
give employees raises and say “we
are going bankrupt”

FOR THOSE ANGRY ABOUT THE TIFS... GOOD NEWS:

TIFs are not a "thing anymore."

- No new TIFs since 2008
- Mill's Mall TIF ended December 2021
- SB870 means Robertson is not included in new tax abatements

Tax Abatements do still occur but...

- Many more contingencies & penalties
- Create jobs
- Generate revenue through permit & licensing



**BUT are TIFs to BLAME for
the Budget Crisis???**

ANSWER: NO

You'll understand as we go...

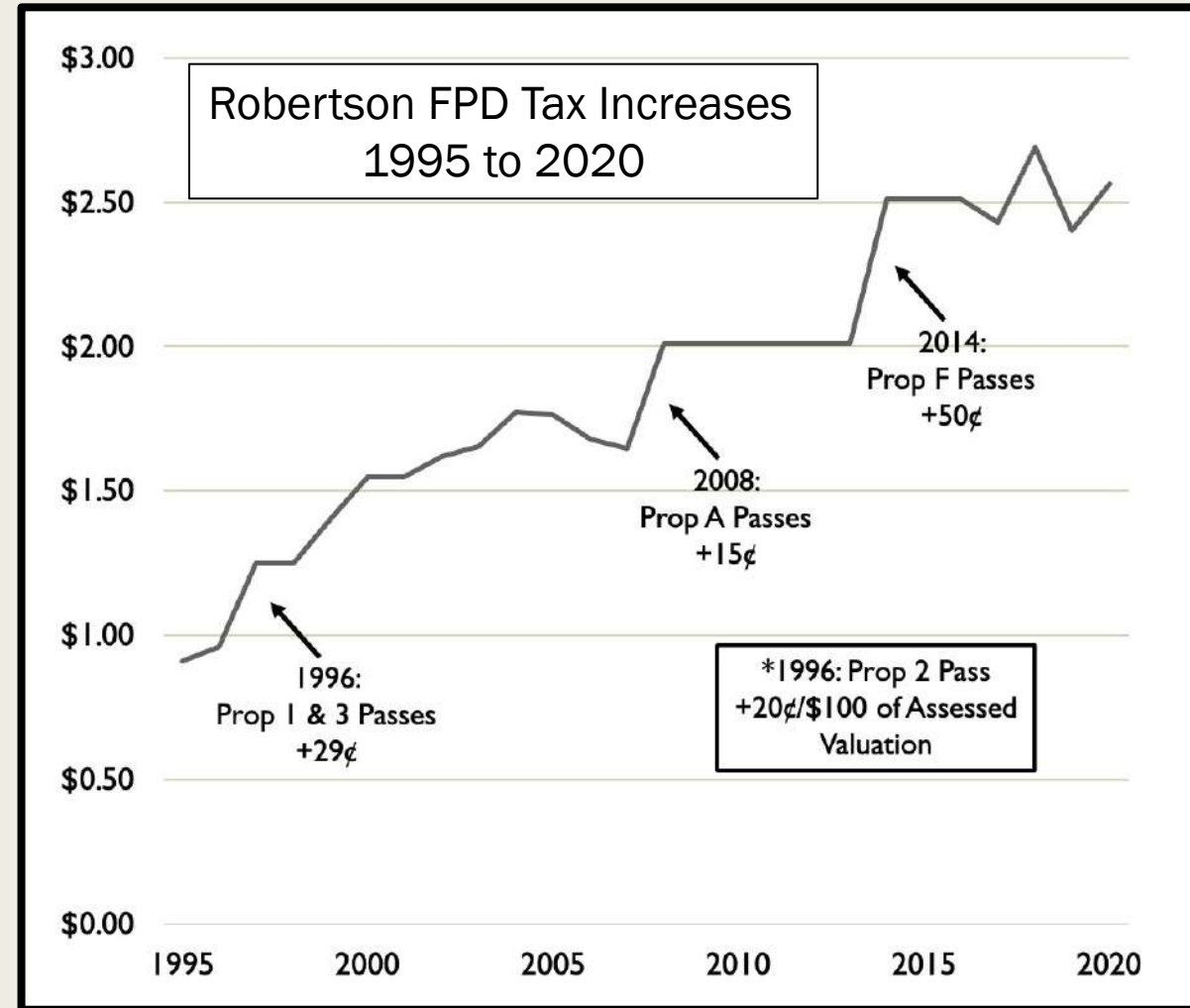


ARGUMENT #2

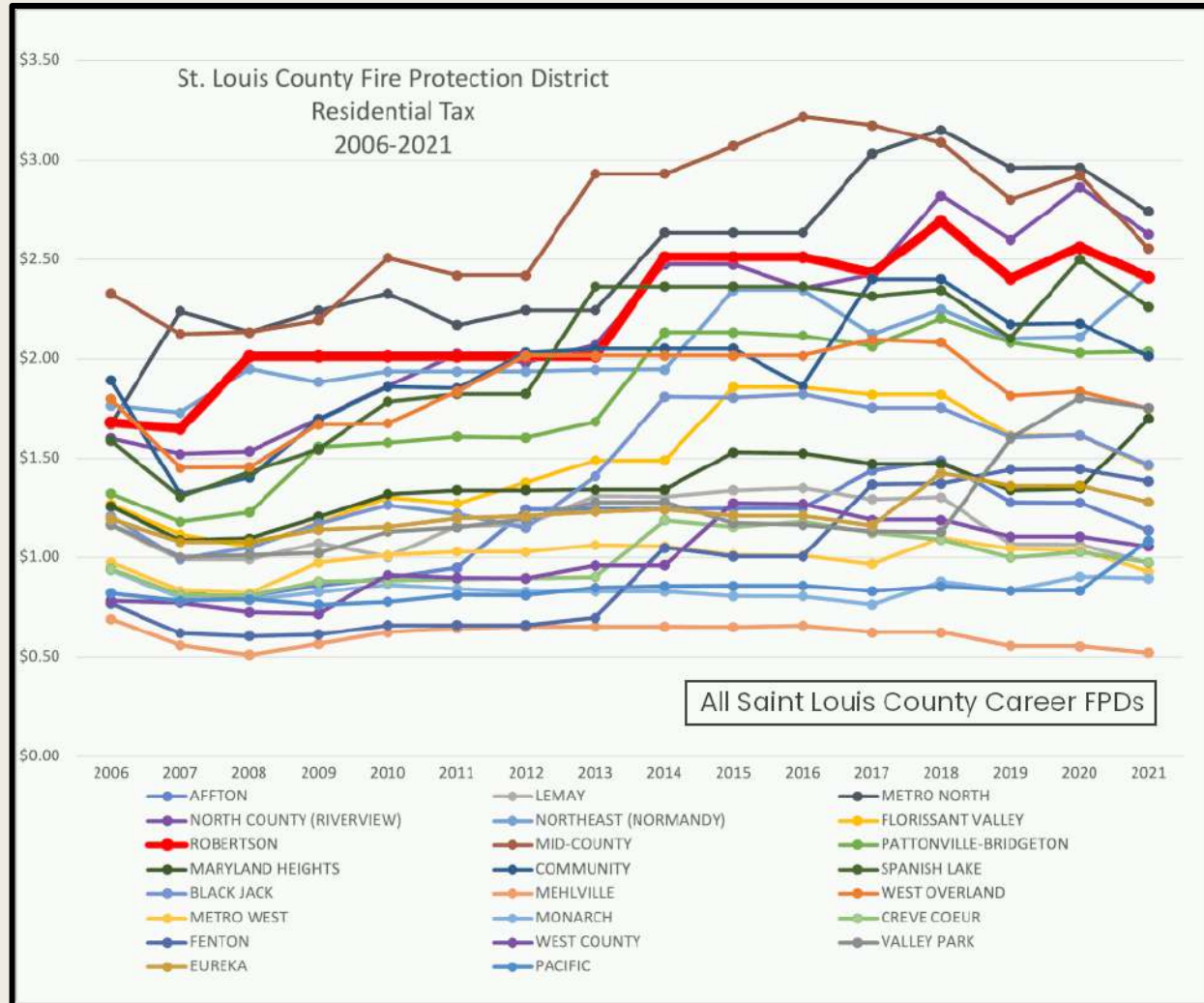
ROBERTSON FPD SOLD TAX RATE INCREASES TO TAXPAYERS AS
“NO COST”

What has happened since the 1995 signing of the contract between Hazelwood & Robertson FPD?

- Five tax rate increases have passed
- Consistently heard these were sold as “no cost;” Residents told they wouldn’t have to pay
- The Board of Directors can lower the tax rate if they want to.



Does RFPD's Tax Rate Make Sense?



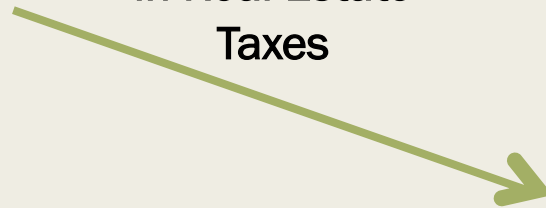
- TODAY:
 - Current tax rate:
 - Residential \$2.41—5th highest
 - Commercial \$2.47—4th highest
- Highest in Surrounding area
- Tax rates are based on the economic status of the area (i.e. property values)
- SO...Robertson is taxing as if the District is in the 4th or 5th poorest area in the County
- Recently roll back residential & commercial tax rate ~15¢, but legally had to (Hancock).
 - NOT ROLLED BACK VOLUNTARILY—only freely rolled back agricultural tax rate

How the Residents & Businesses of Bridgeton pay Robertson FPD

Home
Valued at \$100,000



Pays \$458
in Real Estate
Taxes



Taxpayers pay



Robertson FPD
Directly

Pays \$458
in contract fees



Pays \$7,918
in contract fees



Robertson
Fire Protection
District



Business
Valued at \$1 Million

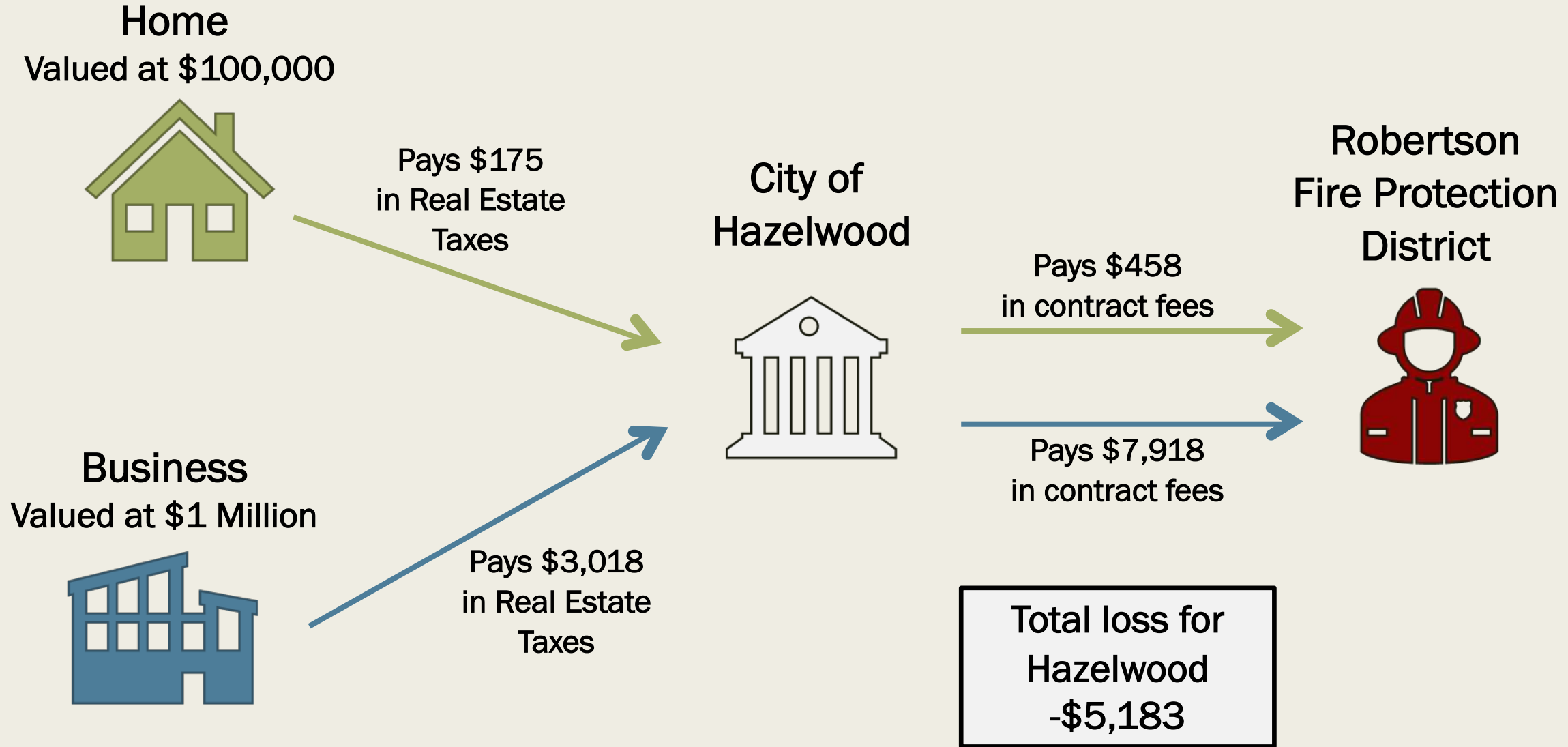


Pays \$7,918
in Real Estate
Taxes



City of Bridgeton
loses no money

How is Hazelwood going BANKRUPT?



This is just ONE home and ONE business!

This adds up fast!

For Example:

Will receive
extra \$314K in
taxes in 2022

The Mill's Mall



TIF ended in
December 2021

City of Hazelwood



Hazelwood will pay
out an extra
--\$823K
in
"Contract Fees"

**Total loss for
Hazelwood
-\$509,000**

Robertson FPD



Where is Hazelwood getting the money to pay Robertson FPD?

Money is diverted from Hazelwood to Robertson from your:

- Police & Fire Departments, Parks & Rec, Public Works, etc.—ALL UNDERPAID, MANY LEAVING!
- Your sales taxes—this is why we have one of the highest sales tax in St. Louis County
- Your services:
 - Leaf pick-up
 - The Rec Center
 - Limited park maintenance and rentals
 - Events like Fireworks
 - SNOWPLOWING

Hazelwood needs all this extra money to pay Robertson...

BUT is
Hazelwood
REALLY
going
Bankrupt?

YES!

**This payment
structure
with
Robertson FPD
is the
MAIN
&
POSSIBLY ONLY
factor
causing the budget
crisis!**

A red fire truck is parked in a fire station garage. The truck is the central focus, with its front and side visible. The background shows the interior of the station with various pipes, equipment, and other vehicles. The lighting is somewhat dim, typical of an indoor garage.

**There are those who say,
“So what...
Hazelwood signed a contract!”**

HOWEVER, is the amount Robertson FPD charging reasonable?

Is the price for THEIR fire service justified?

QUESTIONS WE ARE ASKING...

- How does Robertson's spending compare to other fire districts?
- Maybe they need the extra money—Do they?
- Where exactly is the money going?



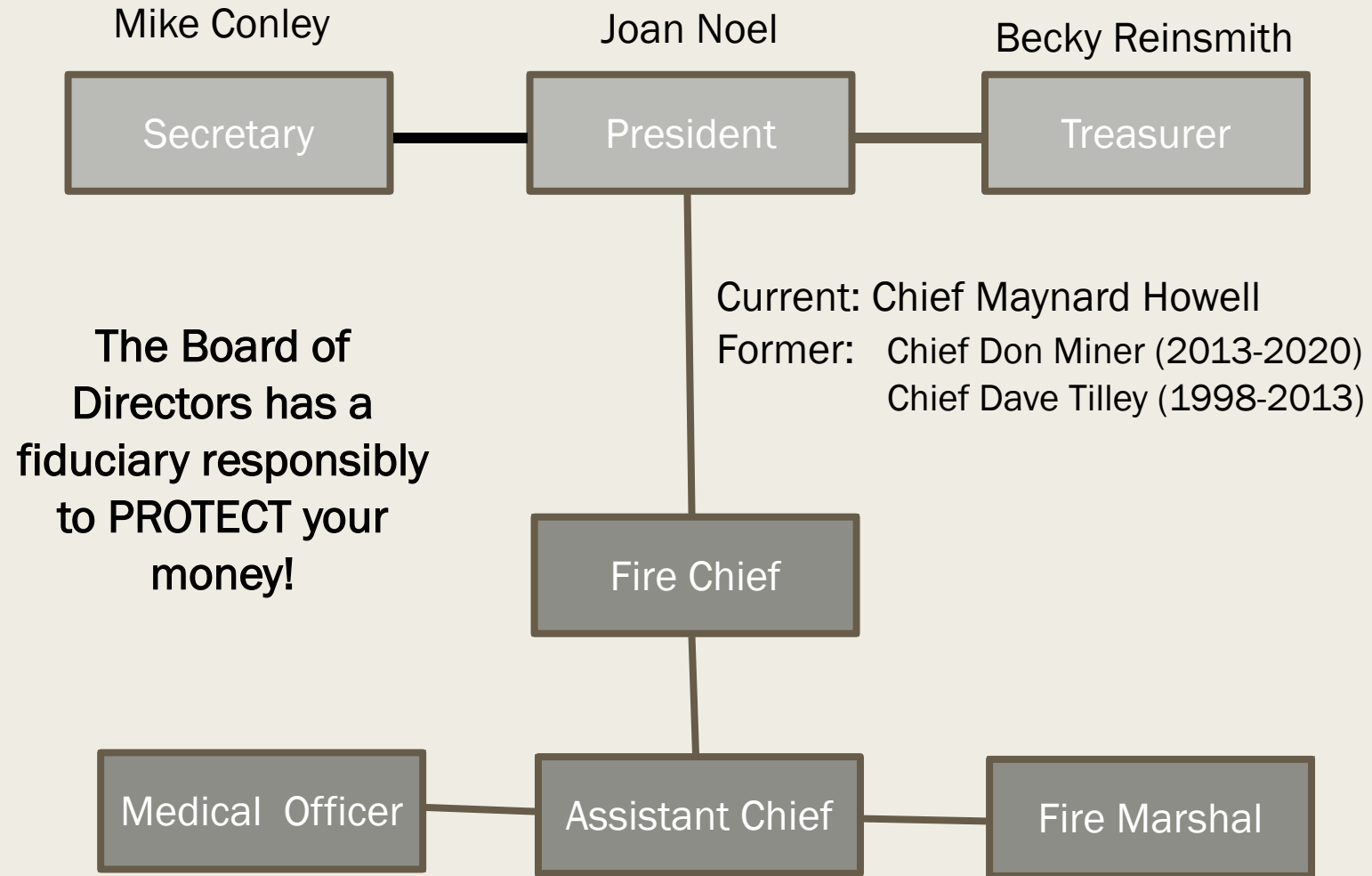
Fire Protection District Structure

Board of Directors

1. Residents voted in by residents.
2. Meant to watch over & protect taxpayers' money.
3. Have control over the budget, approves purchases & sales of district assets, sets tax rates, etc.

Administrative Staff

1. Provides personnel coordination, payroll, budgeting, record keeping, etc.
2. Do inspections & investigations into causes of fire (fire marshal).
3. Advises of health issues & disease control (medical officer).



To understand Robertson's spending, we looked at:



COST PER CALL

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RESPOND TO AN EMERGENCY CALL



SPENDING ON UTILITIES

INTERNET, CABLE, LANDLINE, CELL SERVICE & FUEL



EQUIPMENT TURNOVER

FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE AND SALE EQUIPMENT & VEHICLES



FINANCES & BENEFITS

FINANCIAL DOCS, OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS & CERTAIN BENEFITS

NOTE: Hazelwood, Florissant Valley FPD, and 23 other fire districts received many of the same requests.

Fire Districts are in the Business of Calls

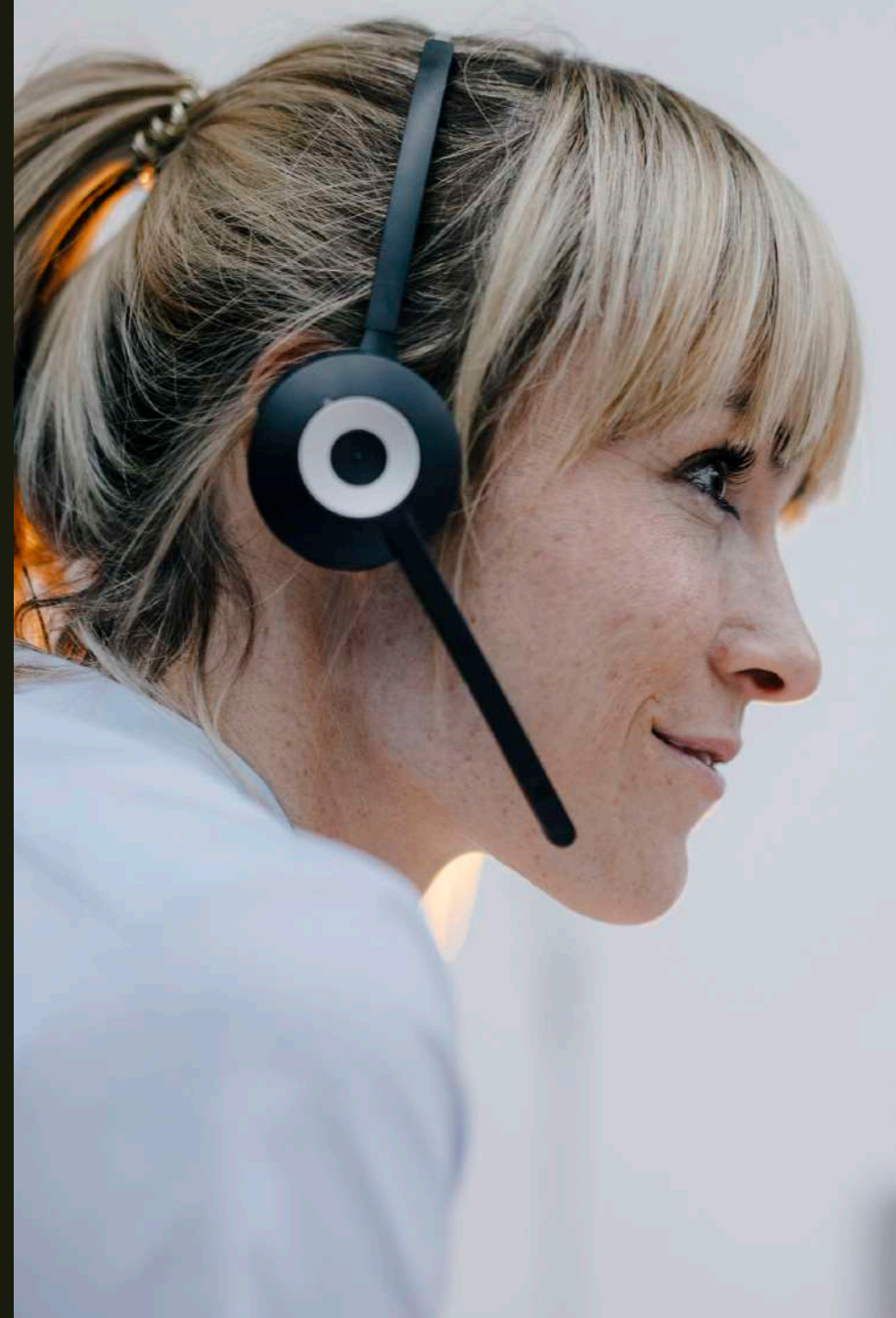
More Calls = More spending on supplies, labor & equipment

Great metric for spending behavior of a District

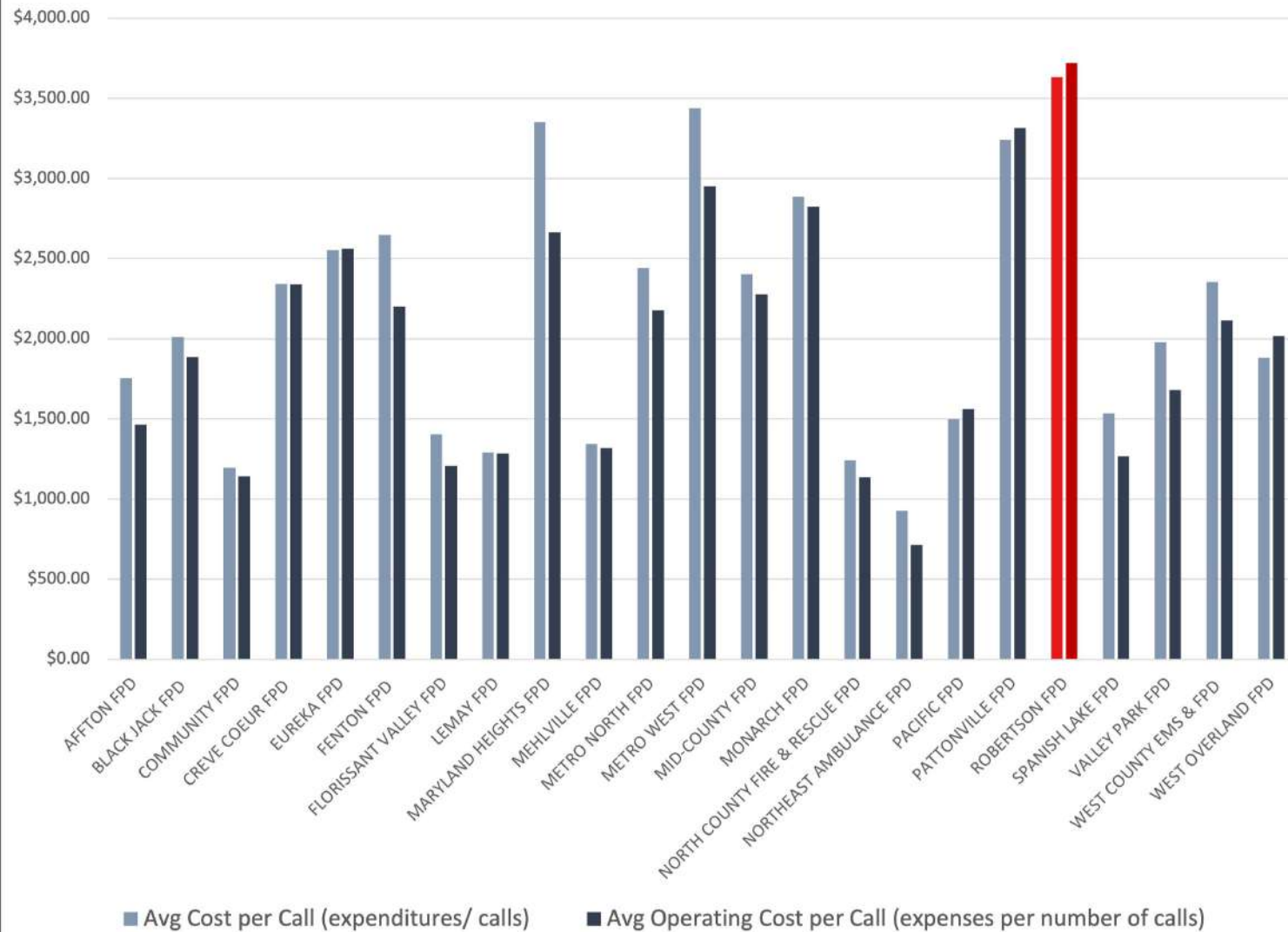
Operating Cost per Call=Total Expenses/Total Calls

Cost per Call=Total Expenditures/Total Calls

Analyzed 5 years of Audits and Call Data (2016-2020)



Average Operating Cost per Call & Cost per Call
Career Fire Protection Districts in
St. Louis County (2016-2020)



FOR FIRE DISTRICTS IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Highest Operating Cost per Call

Average Operating Cost of a Call = \$1992.47

ROBERTSON'S COST = \$3721.97

On average, It costs **\$1729.50 MORE** for Robertson to respond to an emergency in STL County.

Highest Cost per Call

Average Cost of a Call = \$2,145.57

ROBERTSON'S COST = \$3,633.02

That is **\$1487.45 MORE** for Robertson to respond an emergency..

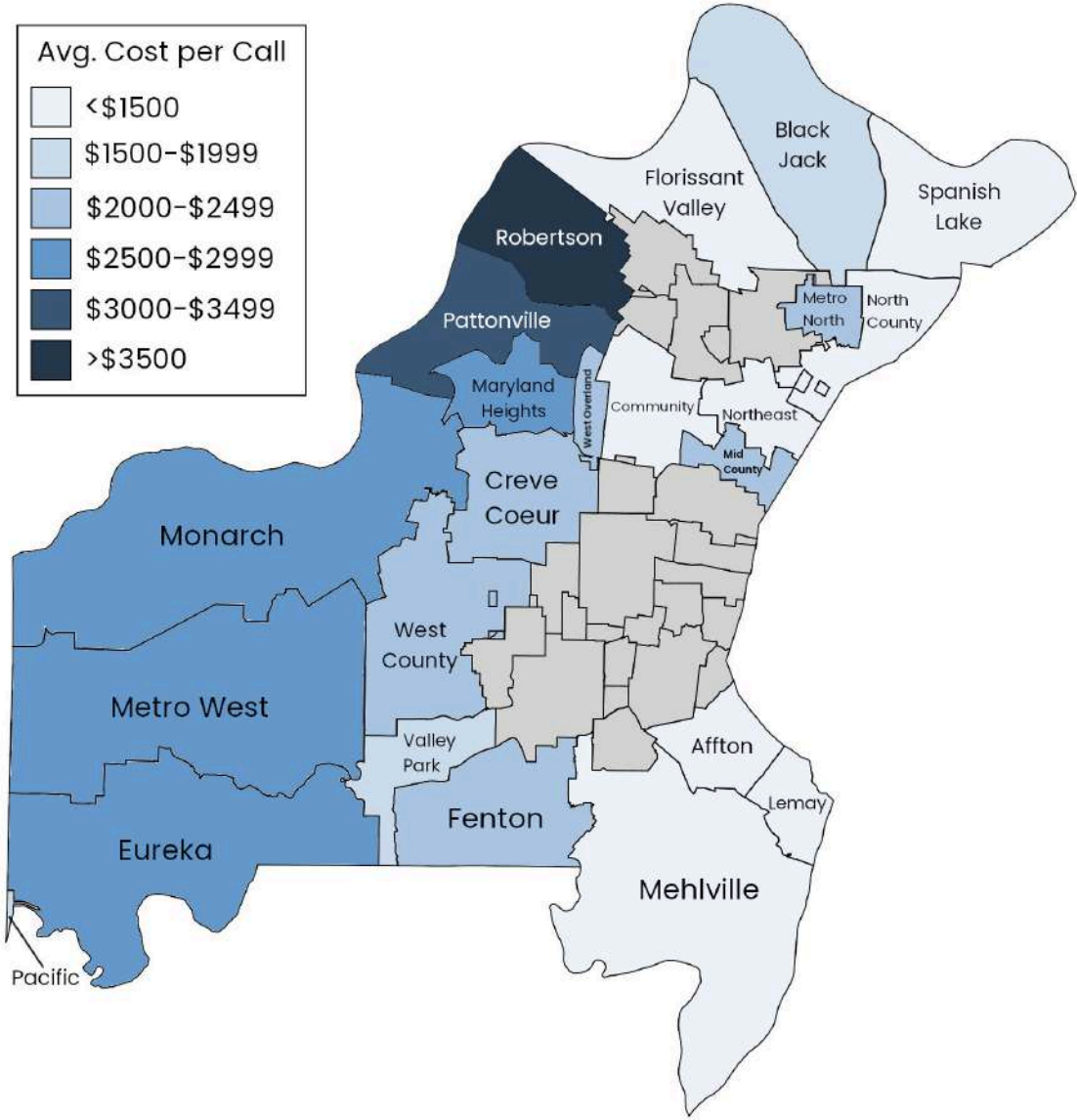
Data source: total expenses data values were collected from the Missouri Auditor's website (<https://auditor.mo.gov/LocalGov/SearchPolysubFinancialReports>); call data was obtained either from Central County 911 or directly from the fire protection district.

BASED on Cost to respond to an emergency call...

Robertson FPD is the ***MOST EXPENSIVE*** Fire District in St. Louis County

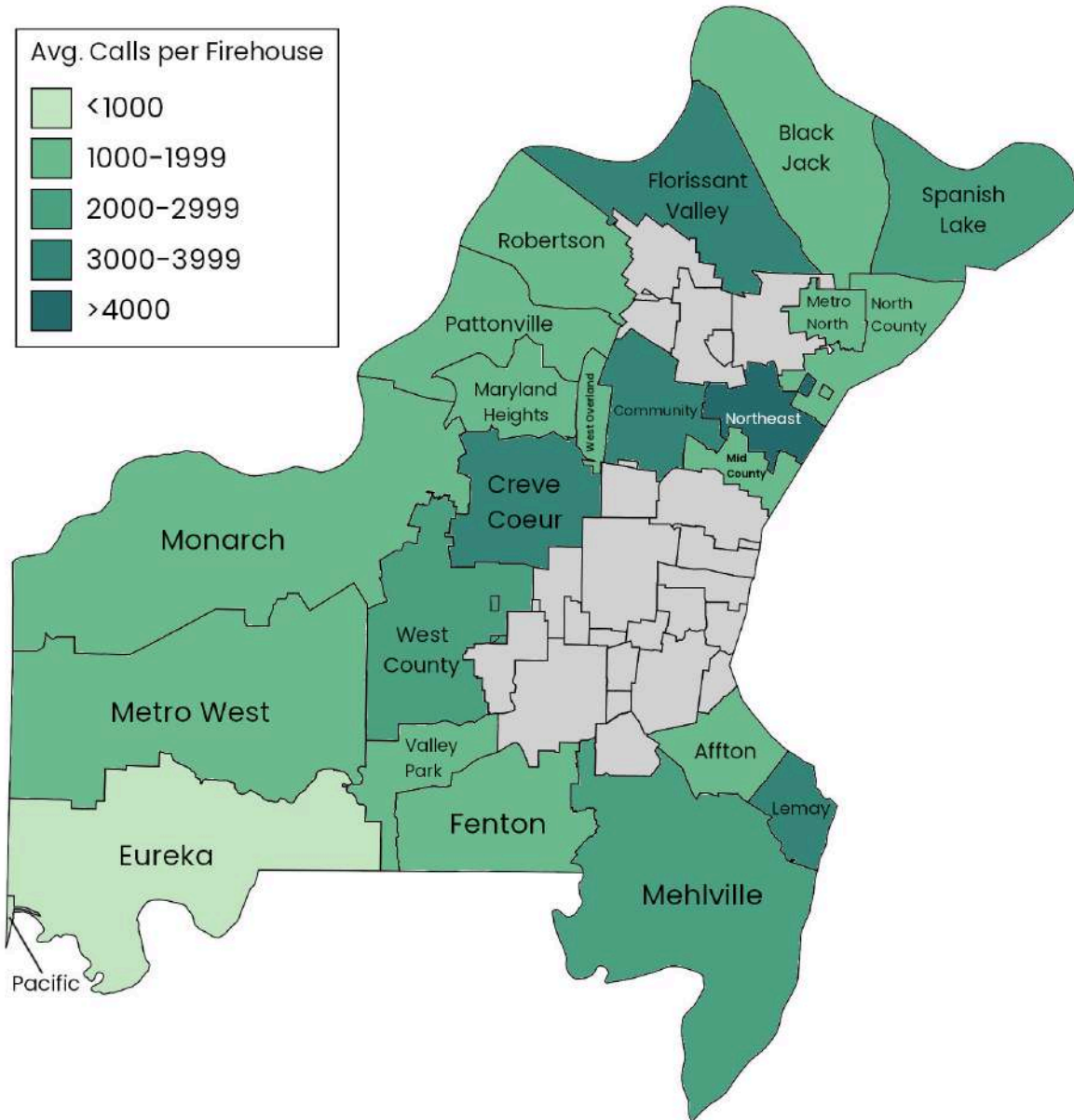
Spending so obvious, you can see it on a map!

Average Operating Cost per Call - Career Fire Protection Districts St. Louis County (2016-2020)



Data source: total expenses data values were collected from the Missouri Auditor's website (<https://auditor.mo.gov/LocalGov/SearchPolysubFinancialReports>); call data was obtained either from Central County 911 or directly from the fire protection district.

Average Calls per Firehouse - Career Fire Protection Districts St. Louis County (2016-2020)



Data source: Call data was obtained either from Central County 911 or directly from the fire protection district.

Maybe they receive higher than average calls?

Maybe the data is skewed somehow?

$\text{Avg Calls per Firehouse} = \frac{\text{Total Calls}}{\text{No. of Firehouses}}$

The busiest FPDs:

#1. Northeast ambulance

#2. Florissant Valley

#3. Creve Coeur FPD

⋮

#18. Robertson FPD—OR 6th slowest fire district

Disclaimer:

These statistics are not meant to diminish the hard work of any firefighter within any district.

Public safety is a difficult job, and all first responders should be fully compensated for their hard work.

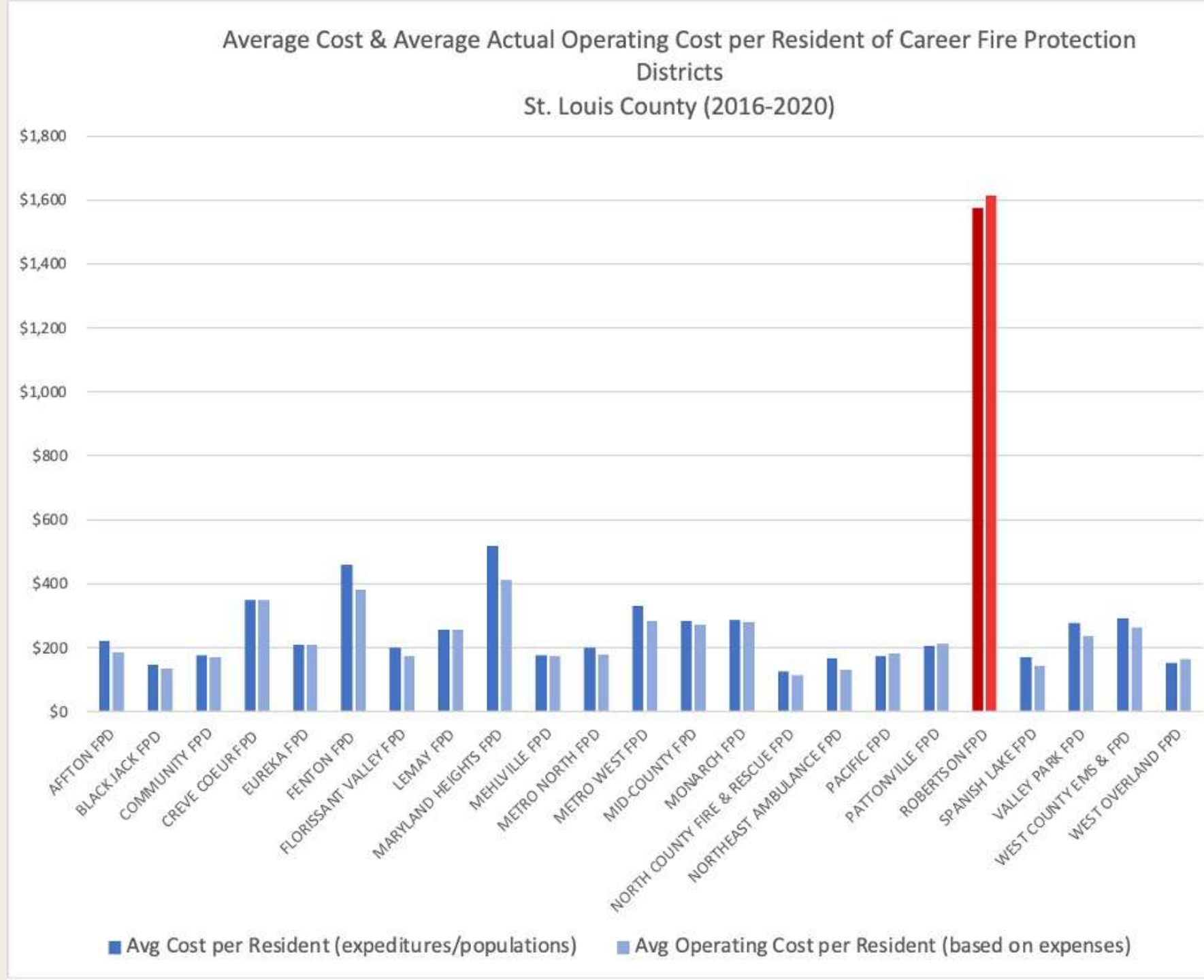
This is only to point out the disconnect between Robertson FPD's spending and the actual resources being consumed for the purposes of public safety.

Robertson FPD
is on
the slower side
due to
its small
population

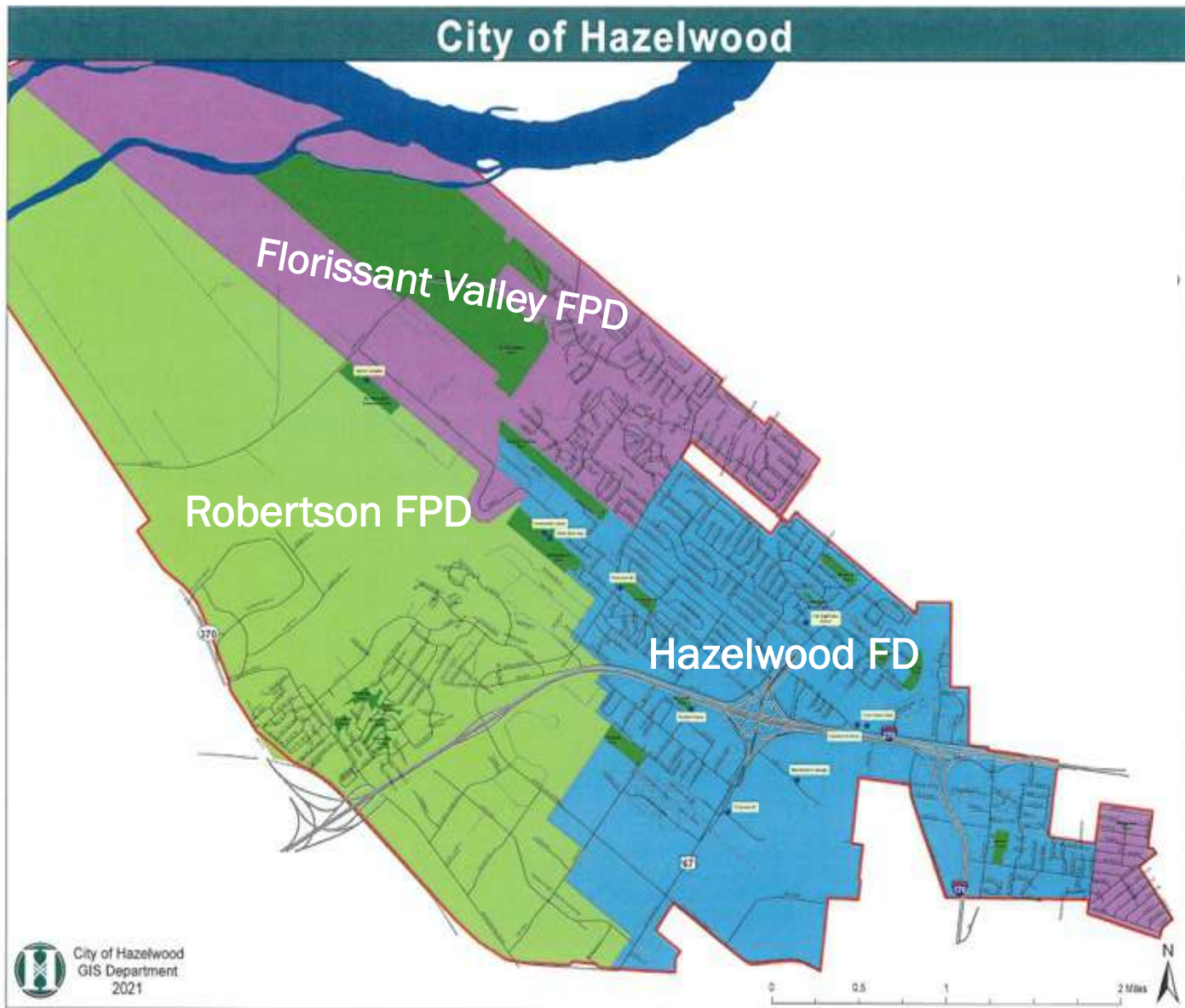
Being the Most
Expensive FPD,
means...

Highest Cost per
Resident too!

This includes both the
Bridgeton &
Hazelwood population



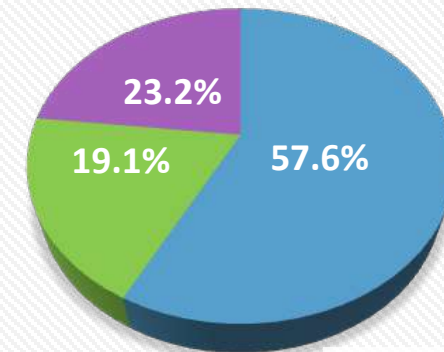
Wait...let's zoom in to just Hazelwood for a second...



Looking at just Hazelwood's population:

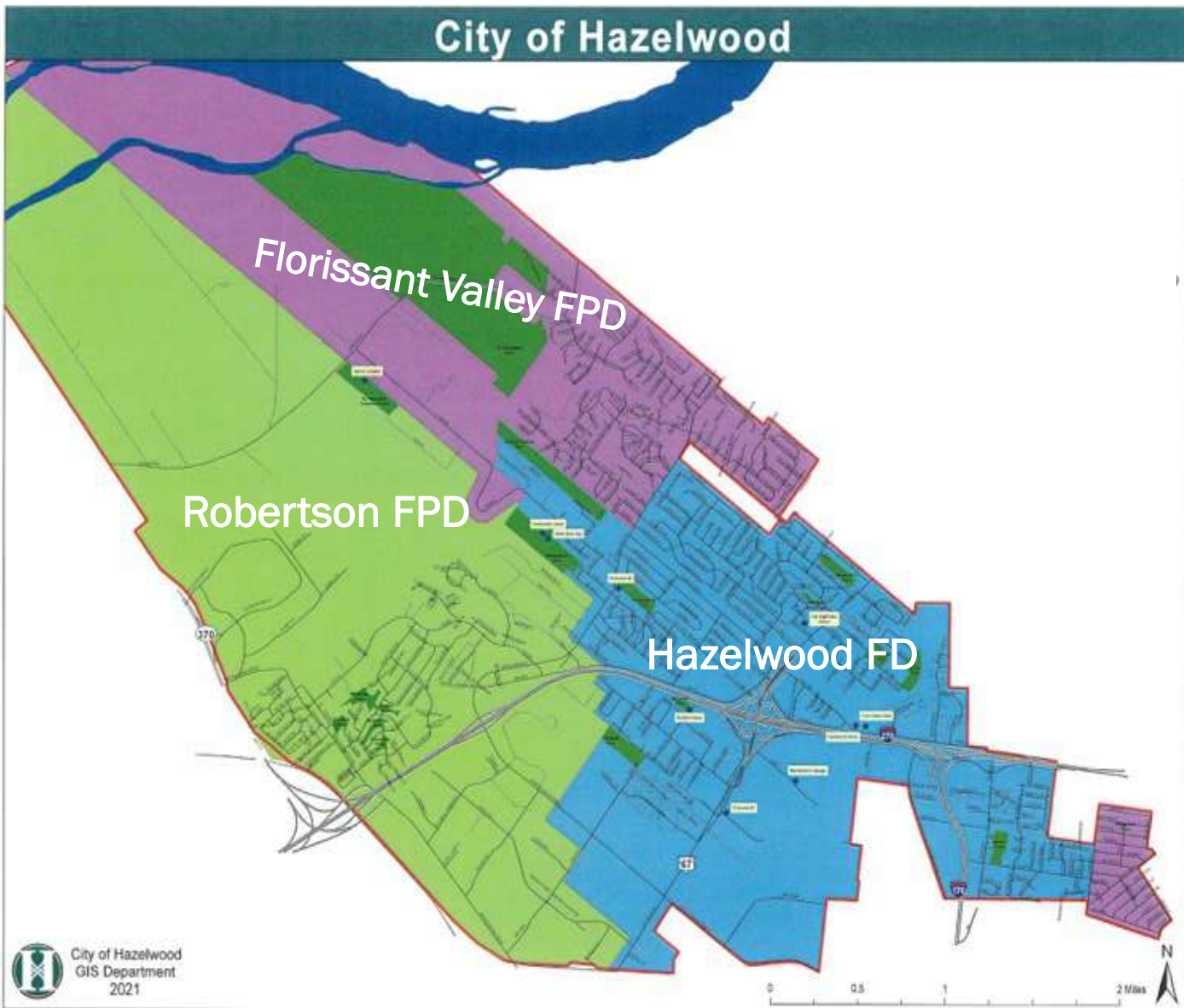
- The majority of Hazelwood is served by Hazelwood Fire Department
- Robertson ONLY services 19% of the population

Percent of Hazelwood Population by Dept./District (2020)



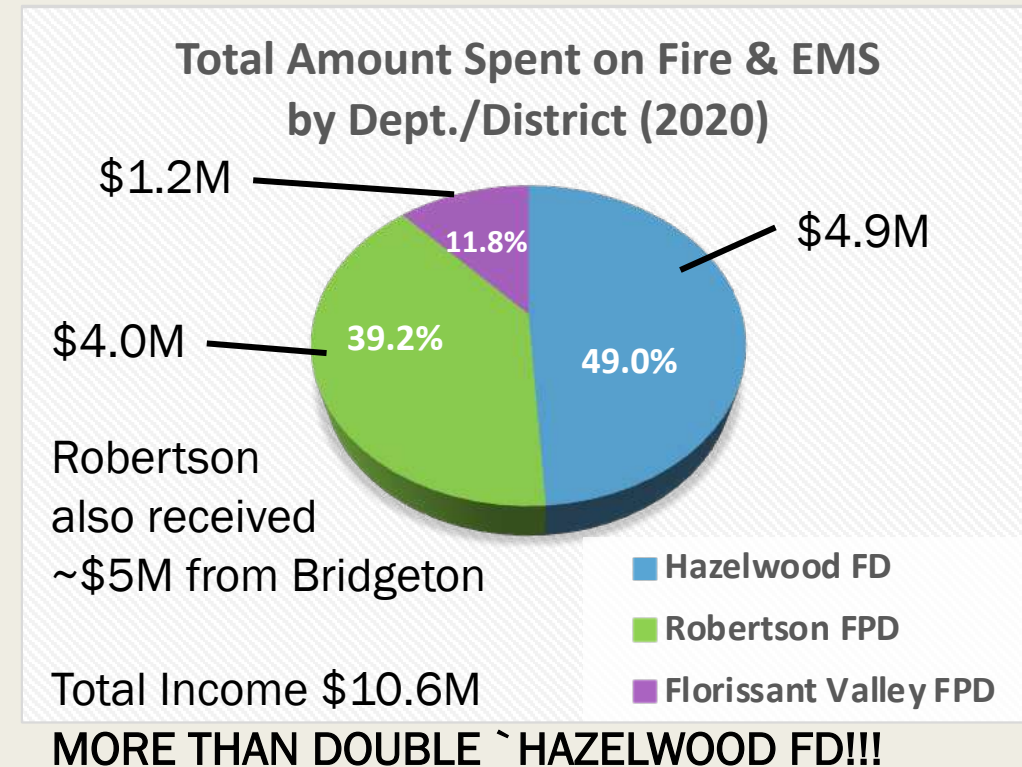
- Hazelwood FD
- Robertson FPD
- Florissant Valley FPD

Wait...let's zoom in to just Hazelwood for a second...

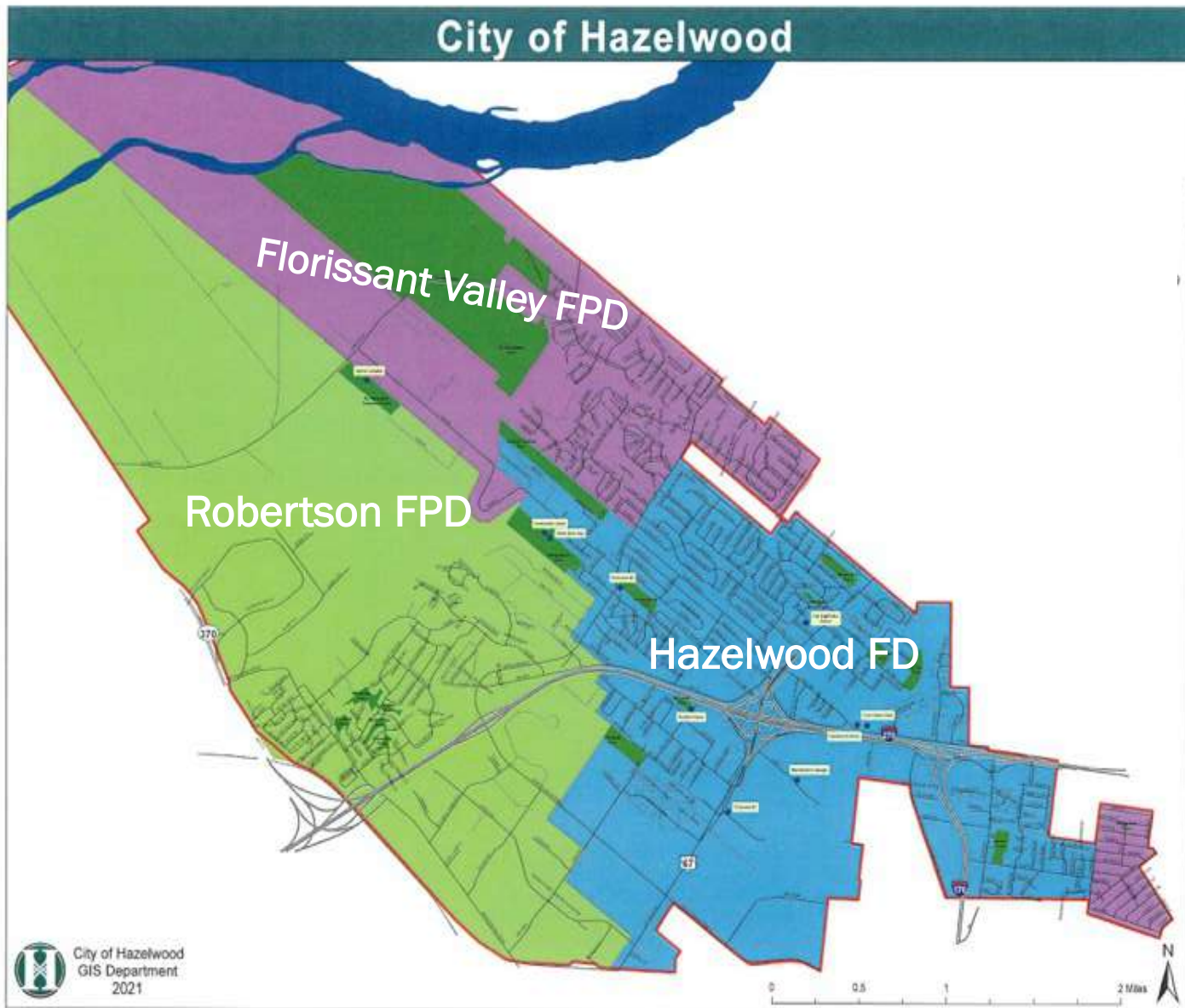


Looking at just Hazelwood's population:

- Robertson ONLY services 19% of the population
- Yet is receiving 39% of the City's total funding for Fire & EMS service

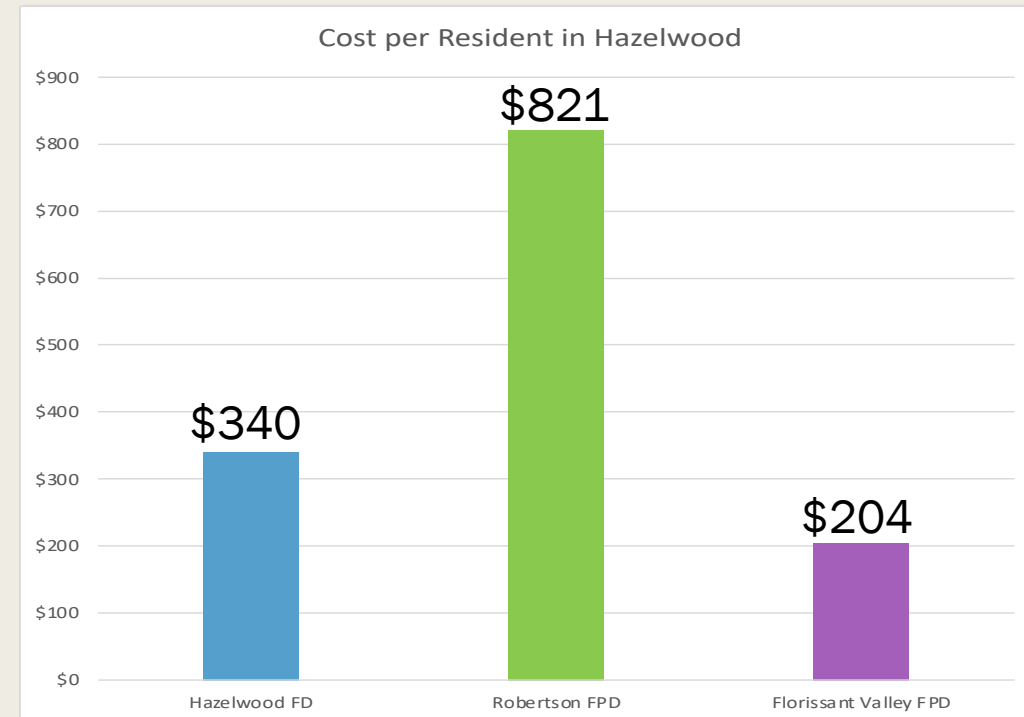


Wait...let's zoom in to just Hazelwood for a second...



Looking at just Hazelwood's population:

- Robertson ONLY services 19% of the population
- Which is why they have HIGHEST cost per resident way beyond Hazelwood & Florissant Valley



A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a document with a silver pen. The background is softly blurred, showing a white coffee cup and a window with natural light. A dark grey text box is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**WHY DIDN'T HAZELWOOD CANCEL
FLORISSANT VALLEY'S CONTRCT?**

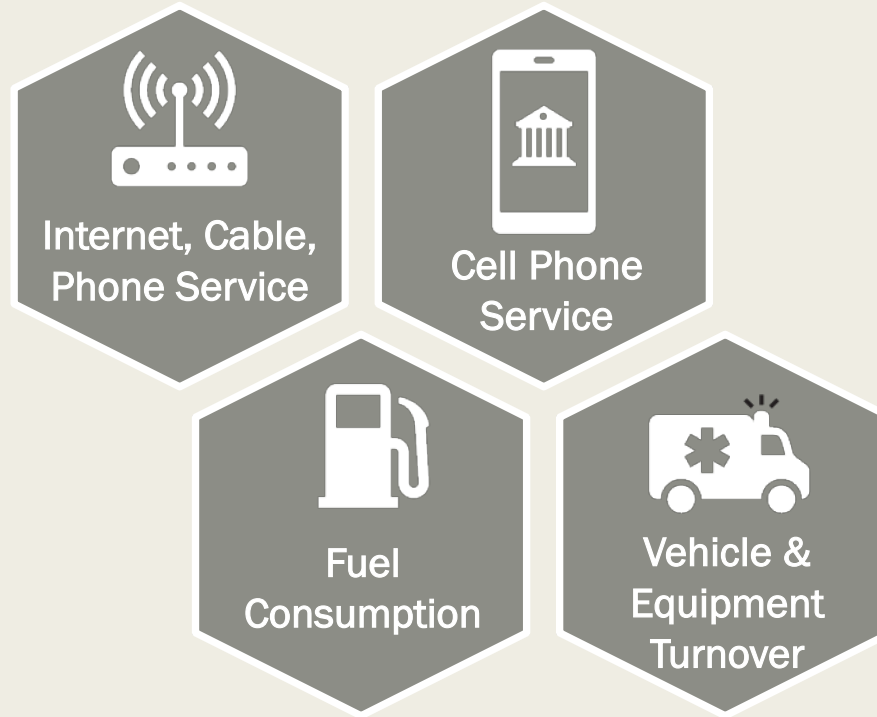
**IT'S THE SAME EXACT SAME
CONTRACT?**

**BECAUSE
FLORISSANT VALLEY IS NOT SINKING
THE CITY WITH ITS TAX RATE!**

SO, WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING?

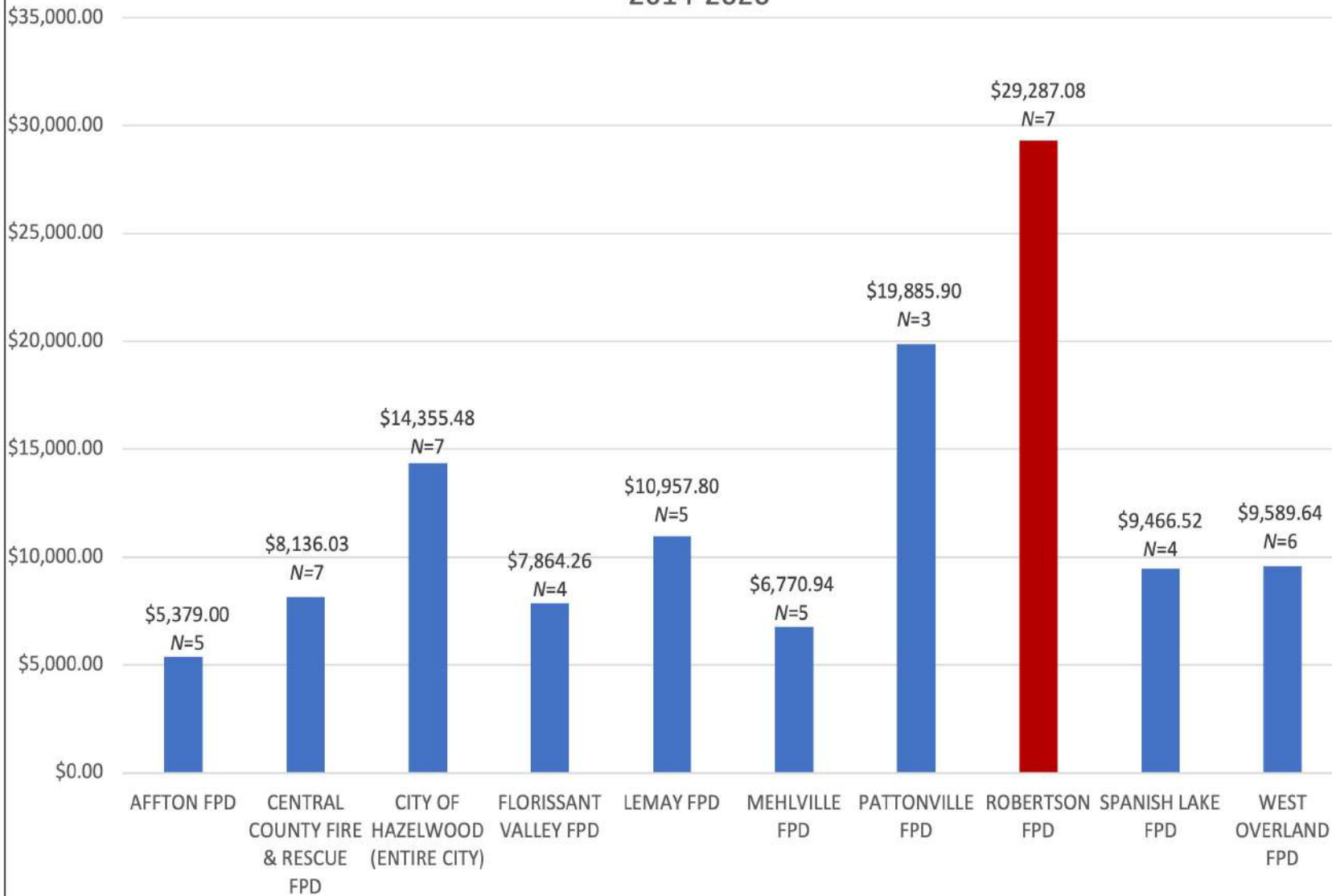


WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING?



Comparison of services and utilities necessary for all fire districts, fire departments and cities

St. Louis & St. Charles County Fire Protection Districts & City of Hazelwood
Average Communications Costs per Building per Year
2014-2020



Cost of Communications

Internet/Cable/Landline & Cell Service

- Compared multiple year's worth of data (N=3-7 years)
- 9 fire districts and 1 City
- cost divided by buildings with internet
- Internet is usually priced per location
- More Buildings also means more employees needing cell phones

Average cost per building per year was \$10,267.29

FOUND ROBERTSON SPENT \$29,287.08 PER BUILDING PER YEAR

Data Sources: yearly audits available on the Missouri Auditor website (<https://auditor.mo.gov/LocalGov/-SearchPolysubFinancialReports>), yearly financial statements or sunshine requests. Includes only buildings with internet service.



Internet, Cable,
Phone Service



Cell Phone
Service

HIGHEST INTERENT, CABLE, PHONE SERVICE EXPENSE

Avg Cost = \$7,211.55 per building per year

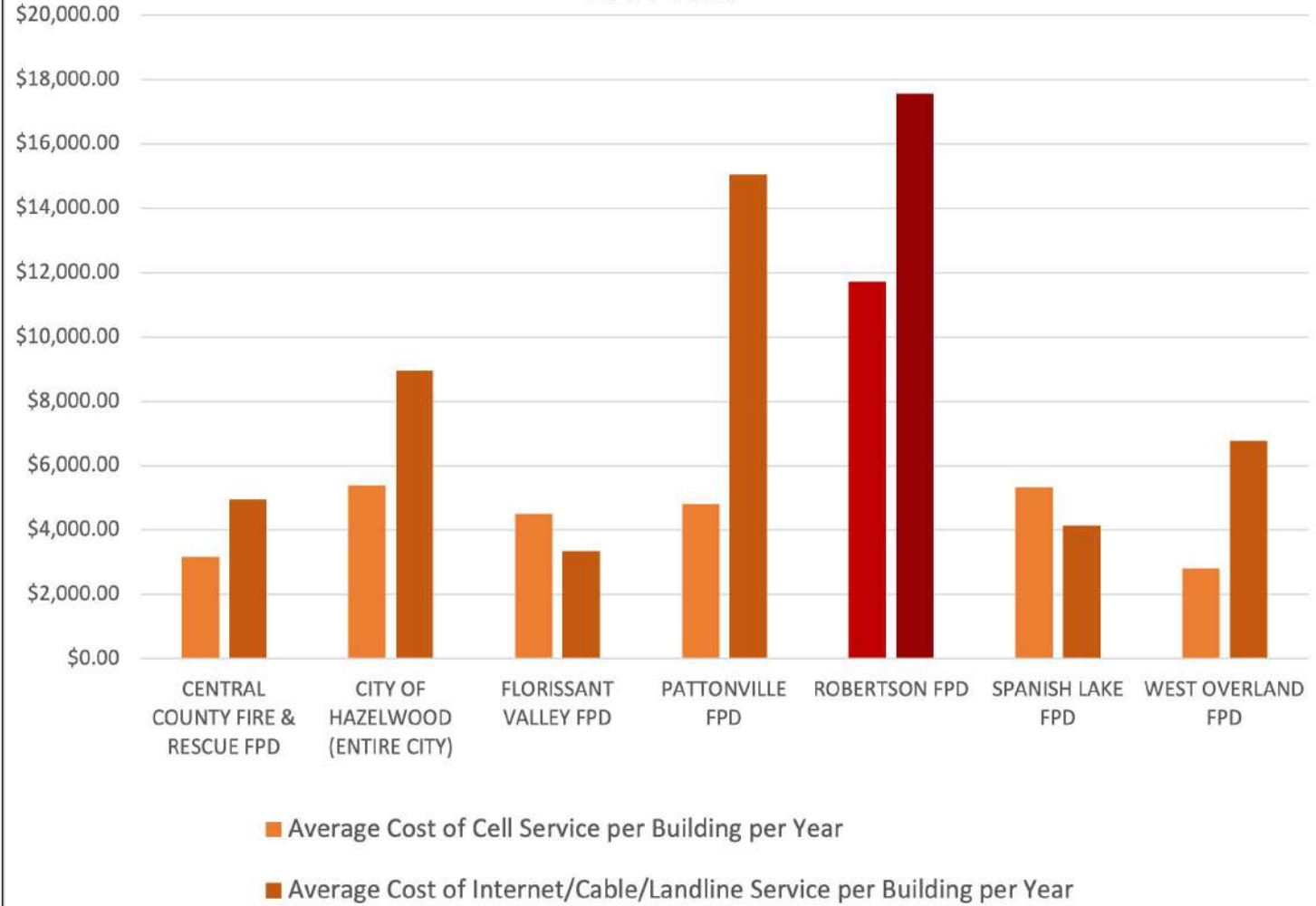
**ROBERTSON SPENT \$17,570.31 PER
FIREHOUSE**

HIGHEST CELL PHONE SERVICE EXPENSE

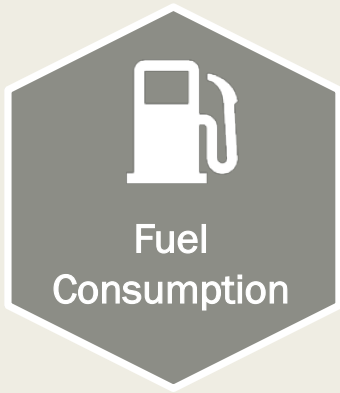
Avg Cost = \$3,718.36 per building per year

**ROBERTSON SPENT \$11,716.77 PER
FIREHOUSE**

St. Louis & St. Charles County Fire Protection Districts
& City of Hazelwood
Average Internet/Cable/Landline
& Cell Service Costs per Building per Year
2014-2020



Data Sources: yearly audits available on the Missouri Auditor website (<https://auditor.mo.gov/-/LocalGov/SearchPolysubFinancialReports>), yearly financial statements or sunshine requests. Includes only buildings with internet service.



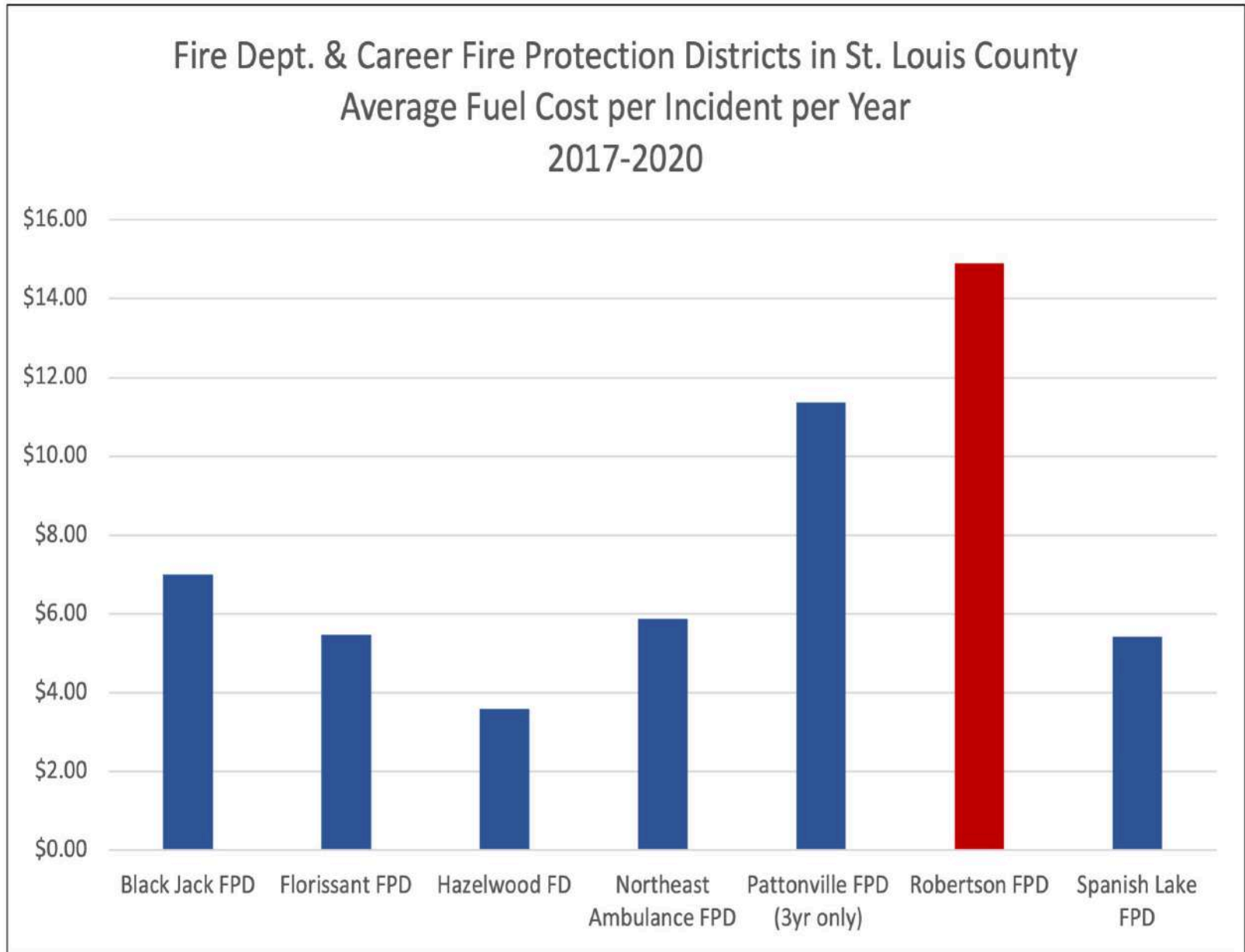
HIGHEST FUEL CONSUMPTION PER INCIDENT PER YEAR

- Total Fuel Expense/Total Calls
- 4 years of data (Pattonville 3yrs)
- 7 Fire Districts & 1 Fire Dept.

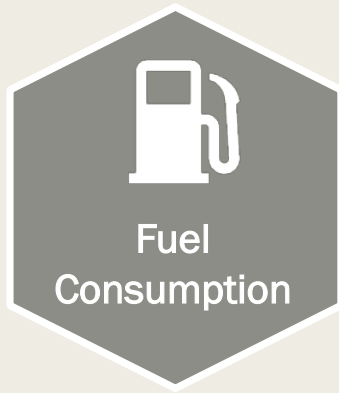
Avg fuel cost per incident = \$6.45

ROBERTSON'S FUEL COST PER INCIDENT WAS \$14.90

Could this be due to sending both an ambulance & fire truck to each emergency call?



Data Source: Call data from Central County Emergency 911; fuel data from fire department/district financial statements or Missouri Auditors website.

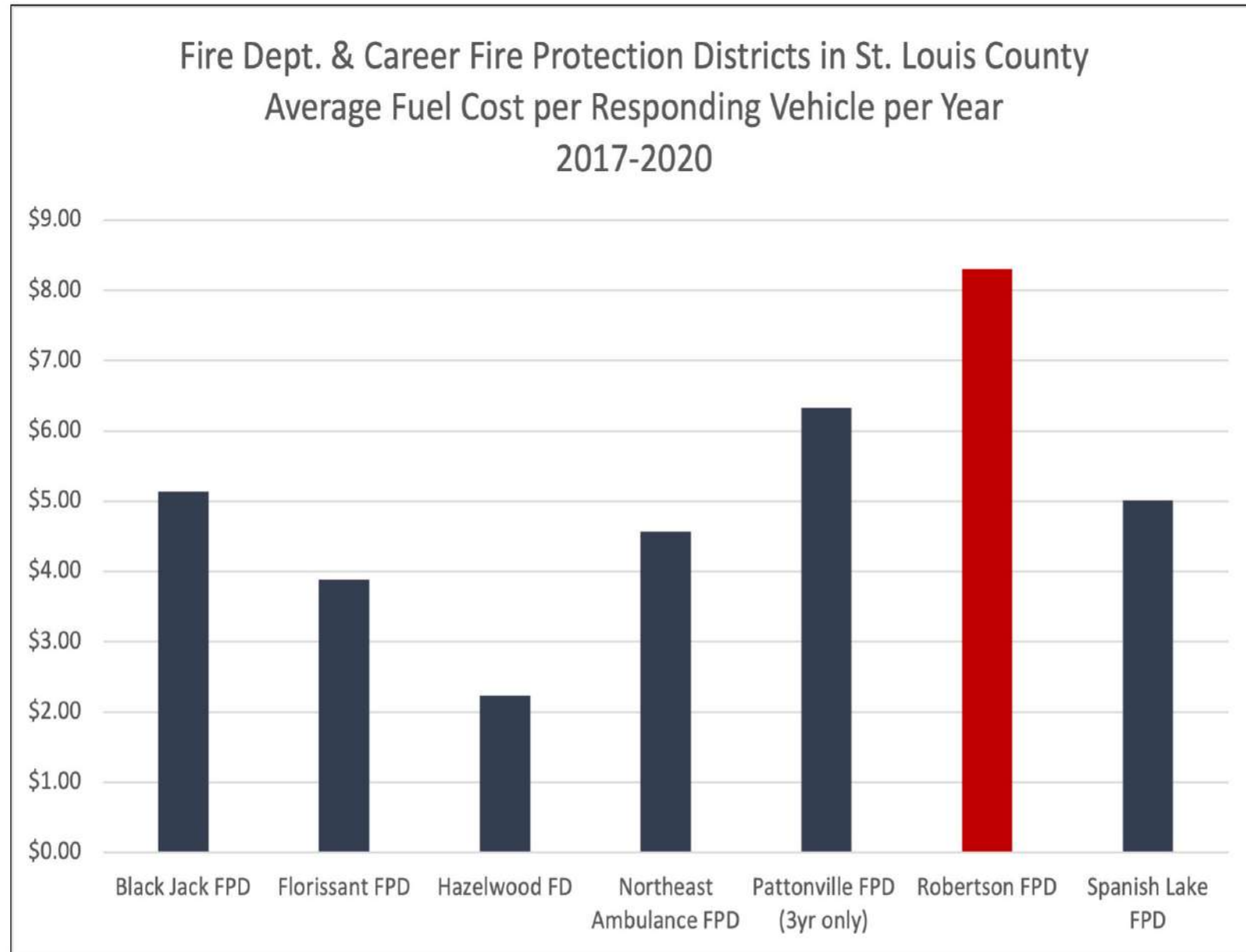


**HIGHEST FUEL CONSUMPTION
PER RESPONDING VEHICLE
PER YEAR**

- Total Fuel Expense/Total Vehicles
- 4 years of data (Pattonville 3yrs)
- 7 Fire Districts & 1 Fire Dept.

Avg fuel cost per vehicle
per call = \$4.53

**ROBERTSON'S FUEL COST
PER VEHICLE PER CALL
WAS \$8.30!**



Data Source: Call data from Central County Emergency 911; fuel data from fire department/district financial statements or Missouri Auditors website.



Vehicle &
Equipment
Turnover

HIGH VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT TURNOVER

Turnover determined by district/dept:

- How busy dept/district is (i.e. number of calls)
- Amount Spent on Items (floor models or customized)
- How often a City Council or Board WANTS to turnover equipment

There are standards:

Buildings & Improvements	15-40 years
Office & Fire Equipment	5-10 years
Vehicles	5-15 years





Vehicle &
Equipment
Turnover

HIGH VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT TURNOVER

Requested list of ALL Equipment & Vehicles with milage, VINs, etc. for years of 2013 – 2021:

Hazelwood FD

- received in 3 business days

Florissant Valley FPD

- received in 7 business days
- Sometimes responds within hours!

Robertson FPD—requested Nov. 26th

- Still waiting for complete list
- Received ONLY list of current vehicles
- Told don't keep records of equipment or past vehicles.
- Most of our info. is from other open records





CAPITAL ASSETS: VEHICLES ONLY



What did we learn...

Hazelwood FD--Keeps all vehicles as long as possible

- SUVs (10-11 years)
- Ambulances (10-15 years with 160-180K+ miles)
- trade in old vehicles
- public auction with employee not receiving priority

Florissant Valley FPD--Keeps vehicles longer

- SUVs (8-13 years)
- Ambulances (10 years with 160-180K+ miles)
- public auction with employees NOT receiving priority

Robertson FPD

- SUVs (3-6 years)
- Ambulances (10 years with +/- 100K miles)
- **Internal Bidding Process**—Sell to employees of District ONLY
- RFPD claims to not keep records for ANY vehicles sold

ROBERTSON FPD'S INTERNAL BIDDING SYSTEM

Who participates?

- Mostly the Chief, Assistant Chief, Medical Officer, Fire Marshal
- ALSO Robertson FPD friends, family, former Chiefs and former Board members

What being sold?

Example from Meeting Minutes:

- iPad for \$20
- Laptop for \$79
- 3-year-old Acer Ultrabook for \$100
- Industrial Generator for \$2500
- Plymovent System for \$1500
- Tahoes & Expeditions (3-6 years old)
- EVEN Ambulances

Who approves these sales?

The Board of Directors

THIS IS ONLY WHAT WE HAVE RECORDS OF...full extent is unknown



2011 Ford Expedition

Purchased in 2016 by
Medical Officer

Est. Value in 2016 = \$22,827*



Estimated
Loss to taxpayer

OR

Financial gain to Medical Officer

\$16,827

2013 Chevrolet Tahoe

Purchased in 2016 by
Former Chief Miner

Est. Value in 2016 = \$35,301*



Estimated
Loss to taxpayer

\$25,301

2016 Chevrolet Tahoe

Purchased in 2020 by
Former Chief Miner

Est. Value in 2016 = \$34,076*



Estimated
Loss to taxpayer

\$26,576

Total financial gain to Chief Miner

\$51,877

Hazelwood FD

2008 Ford Expedition

XLT Sport Utility

Sold after 13 years
with Engine Problems



Auctioned publicly to
highest bidder in 2021

For \$2860

Est. Value in 2021 = \$5,785*

Florissant Valley FPD

2008 Ford Expedition

XLT Sport Utility

Sold in after 11 years



Auctioned publicly to
highest bidder in 2019

For \$5503

Est. Value in 2019 = \$9,524*

Robertson FPD

2008 Ford Expedition

Limited Sport Utility

Sold after 5 years



Sold to Former
Chief Tilley in 2013

For \$10,000

Est. Value in 2013 = \$20,977*

Vehicles Sold from 2013-2020

SIX vehicles sold to the Robertson Administrative Staff...FIVE vehicles in just 4 years!

Vehicles (Year/Make/Model)	Vehicle Sold To	Date Sold	Vehicle Sold For	Est. Value When Sold (CarGurus Price Trends)	Est. Tax Dollars Lost	Kelly Blue Book 2022 Trade-in Est. Value	Kelly Blue Book 2022 Private Party Est. Value
2008 Ford Expedition	Former Chief Tilley	4/9/2013	\$10,000	\$20,977	\$10,977	\$7,493	\$10,471
2010 Ford Expedition	Medical Officer	6/14/2016	\$4,000	\$19,900	\$15,900	\$8,602	\$11,665
2011 Ford Expedition	Assistant Chief Howell	6/14/2016	\$6,000	\$22,827	\$16,827	\$11,575	\$14,364
2013 Chevrolet Tahoe	Former Chief Miner	6/14/2016	\$10,000	\$35,301	\$25,301	\$17,140	\$19,155
2010 Ford Expedition	Fire Marshall	12/13/2016	\$4,000	\$18,140	\$14,140	\$8,602	\$11,665
2016 Chevrolet Tahoe	Former Chief Miner	7/17/2020	\$7,500	\$34,076	\$26,576	\$27,763	\$29,895
Total			\$41,500	\$151,221	\$109,721	\$81,175	\$97,215

Sources: All information and data was obtained from Robertson Meeting Minutes, the Department of Revenue, CarGurus (www.cargurus.com, Jan. 2022) and Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com, Jan. 2022, Note: values are based on 100,000 miles).



REMEMBER:
THIS IS JUST WHAT
WE KNOW ABOUT!

THE AMBULANCE

2009 International 4300 LP


Purchased in 2008 for unknown price

Similar state-of-the-art vehicles cost approx. \$200K-\$250K

IN 2018

- Robertson FPD Board:
 - declared it surplus & approved its sale
- Sold to Assistant Chief Howell for ≤\$9,601
(According “Sale of Fixed Assets” in RFPD
2018 Financial Statement)

According to the Carfax:

- The Ambulance had **NO KNOWN** problems
- Had **44,402** total miles
- 3 months after Assistant Chief Howell’s purchase:
The ambulance was exported to Mexico 



REMEMBER:

**THE
ROBERTSON
BOARD
IS
APPROVING
ALL OF
THESE
PURCHASES!**



WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Section 72.418—Requires Hazelwood be stuck in this contract.

Hazelwood Contract—May lead residents to feel like contact payments to Robertson are NOT their tax dollars.

Hazelwood pays Robertson FPD with your tax money!
This is your money! Do not forget that!

WHY IS THE BOARD DOING THIS?

We don't know why...but what we do know:

Robertson FPD Board is getting HUGE perks!

- Free cell phones with cell service
- Free iPads
- ~\$800 per month salaries
- **100% FREE** healthcare for themselves & family
 - No premiums, No copay, No deductible, etc.

Board perks alone costing taxpayers about **\$93,000** per year!

THIS IS JUST WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT!!!



WHAT HAS THE BOARD DONE TO FIX THIS?

- REFUSED to lower their residential, commercial or personal property tax rates
- REFUSED negotiate the contract
- REFUSED to change their spending behavior
- Blamed Hazelwood—City doesn't control ROBERTSON's spending.
- Tried a merger but refused to drop the contract—which fixes nothing
- Tried to push the tax burden onto YOU—Prop R

Their job is to look out for the TAXPAYERS.
Are they looking out for us or Robertson FPD?



HOW DO WE FIX THIS?

Hazelwood cannot fix this...it is on US!
We need to come together as a community!

Need to get Robertson's spending under control!

Options:

1. Recall the Board of Directors—NO NEW TAXES/LOWER TAX RATE
2. Discuss merger (Robertson takes over Hazelwood)—YOU WILL PAY AT LEAST 10-20% MORE IN TAXES
3. Intergovernmental Deal (Hazelwood takes over Robertson)—NO NEW TAXES
4. Dissolve the District—NO NEW TAXES
5. Call State Lawmakers and demand they fix Section 72.418!
This law is legally keeping Hazelwood from being able to negotiate this contract.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

JOIN US!

- Volunteer through our website-SaveHazelwood.org
- Come to our Community Meeting

Next Tuesday, Feb. 8th at 7pm

North County Community Church
7410 Howdershell Road
Hazelwood, MO 63042

- Donate through website or send a check to:

Citizens to Save
4827 Orange Blossom Lane
Hazelwood, MO 63042

All donation go to Sunshine Requests, future election campaigns
and legal expenses.

Any & All money leftover at the end will be donated to
The BackStoppers, Inc.



**THIS IS NOT ABOUT
HAZELWOOD VS ROBERTSON
ANYMORE**

THIS IS ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

HAVING A SAFE COMMUNITY

MAKING SURE ALL PEOPLE WORKING WITHIN HAZELWOOD RECEIVE FAIR PAY

PROTECTING YOUR BIGGEST ASSET—YOUR HOME

NOT PAYING MORE IN TAXES



**Thank you to the Hazelwood
Police, Firefighters, Parks & Rec, Public Works, etc.**

We know you have had been working hard with less pay than
you deserve due to this situation.

Thank you for hanging there for us...the Citizens!

Thank you for listening!

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or at SaveHazelwood.ORG