UNITED FIRE FIGHTERS OF WINNIPEG
LOCAL 867 - INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS
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Please address all correspondence to the Secretary

**Presentation to the Executive Policy Committee**
**Presented by Alex Forrest, President, United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg**
**January 21, 2004**

I would like to thank the Executive Policy Committee for giving me this time to speak here today.

We are asking this committee to consider the following motion: we need 8 Fire Fighters to be hired so as to raise the on-duty Fire Fighter compliment from 158 to 160 per shift.

We are asking for this because we are being asked to do more every year. There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of medical calls that we attend to and we have voluntarily increased our medical training.

Statistics:

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|---|---|
| 1997 | 7,500 Medical Calls |
| 2000 | 13,500 Medical Calls |
| 2002 | 27,500 Medical Calls |

You will note that between 1997 and 2000 the number of medical calls almost doubled. Between 2000 and 2002, in just two years, our medical calls more than doubled once again. This is an increase of 20,000 Emergency Medical Calls that Fire Fighters have attended to. During this time there has been no increase in the number of on-duty Fire Fighters. In fact, our numbers have actually decreased. Decreased because of budget cuts. Further to this, demographic trends suggest that we will again have increased medical interventions to attend to in the future.

Because of the increased number of medical calls Fire Fighters attend to we are now creating "fast attack" machines. These are new machines that will enhance our ability to serve the public for emergency responses.

However, we are limited by our minimum staffing level of 158 Fire Fighters per shift. To put the new fast attack vehicle into service for South Winnipeg the Administration proposes that we delete a fire pump or a rescue from another area of the City.

We cannot have any machines deleted. We cannot steal from Peter to pay Paul, and we cannot delete a machine from Downtown, St. James or Elmwood to staff a new machine for South Winnipeg.

Since the initial passing of this motion by the Protection and Community Services Committee we are pleased that this proposal is currently being reassessed. In fact we now have a Fast Attack Vehicle being placed in the down town area at #1 Station. This is because of the incredible increase in emergency responses from this station.

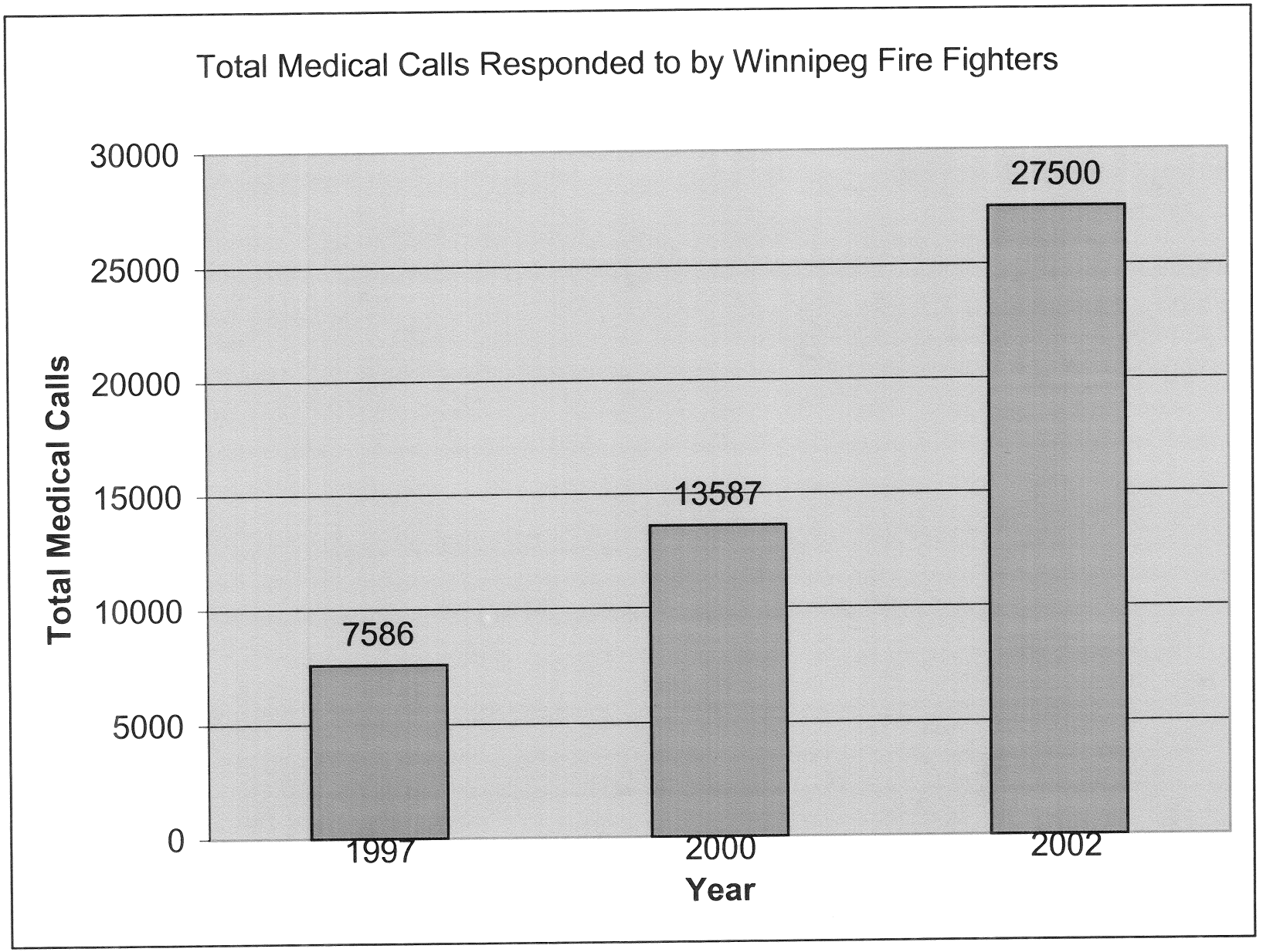
However, we still have the issue of South Winnipeg. They cannot be forgotten. Chief Shoemaker has acknowledged the need for more Fire Fighters in South Winnipeg and as such this motion needs to be given serious consideration.

We are not only attending to increased medical calls, we are also fighting fires, responding to Hazardous Material incidents, Water Rescue, motor vehicle accidents and every other emergency situation imaginable.

We have done our part to assist the city in providing appropriate emergency medical response. We have voluntarily upgraded our medical skills to that of Paramedic Medicine and we are asking you today to support our motion today by referring this request to the appropriate budgetary committee.

You have been continually asking Fire Fighters to do more with less. Well, if you keep asking us to do more with less we will begin to do less with less, and less in my profession can have life or death consequences.

The Chief has said that he will need to delete a Fire Truck, but he has not told us what specific truck he will delete. If he has told you we would like to know. We would also like to inform the citizens of that area that the emergency response capability available to them is being reduced. In fact that is why we are here today; to ensure that the budget process is open and accountable. If you kill this motion today you will kill every aspect of democracy that is involved in the budget process.


Total Medical Calls Responded to by Winnipeg Fire Fighters
Total Medical Calls
30000
25000
20000
15000
10000
5000
0
7586
13587
27500
1997
2000
2002
Year