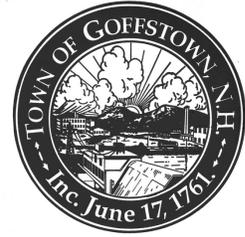




Goffstown Fire Department

18 Church Street
Goffstown, New Hampshire 03045
Emergency ~ 9-1-1
Business ~ 603-497-3619
www.goffstown.com



January 20th, 2026

To: Select Board
From: Ben Selleck, Fire Chief

Re: Request direction related to the Town’s Master Box System

Objective

To reduce costs, liability, and reliance on a failing fire alarm notification infrastructure.

Overview

When a building’s internal fire alarm system is activated it sends a signal to the master box on their building. The master box then sends a unique telegraph code signal through town owned and maintained utility lines to Goffstown dispatch. Those codes are then interpreted by a machine that displays the location of the alarm. Dispatchers then send the fire department to investigate. We have three circuits in town:

1 – Village (10.4miles)	2 – Pinardville (5.6miles)	3 – Grasmere (3.2miles)
42 Mountain Road (Odd Fellows Hall)	329 Mast Rd (Hillsborough County complex)	41 Lauren Lane (MVMS)
208 South Mast (RDF Corp. / Villa bldg.)	480 Mast Rd (Timberwood Condos)	404 Elm St (Public Works compactor)
89 South Mast (Glen Lake Medical ctr.)	538 Mast Rd (Goffstown Square)	Center St. (Grasmere Town Hall)
18 Church (Station 1)	553 Mast Rd (Goffstown Plaza)	
2 High Street (Public Library)	553 Mast Rd (Trampoline Park)	
12 Pleasant St. (mixed-use bldg.)	15 Springfield Ln	
16 Main St. (Town Hall)	27 Springfield Ln (PTI Corp)	
10 Main St. (Congregational Church)	605 Mast Rd. (Hannaford’s)	
55 Mast Road (Greg Falls Hydroelectric)	656 Mast Rd. (Station 2)	
12 Reed St. (Meetinghouse)	679 Mast Rd. (Center Pinard Plaza)	
231 Mast Road (Creative Kids Academy)	689 Mast Rd. (Bartlett Elementary)	
16 Maple Ave (Maple Ave Elementary)	27 College Rd (Roy-Madden Apts.)	
27 Maple Ave (Apartment building)	558 Mast Rd (Clear Choice MD/ CMC)	
27 Wallace Road (High School)	28 Daniel Plummer (Webster Place)	
251 Elm St. (Glen Lake School)	Lamy Drive (Cote Bldgs.)#1	
	Lamy Drive (Cote Bldgs.)#2	



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Problem

Goffstown Fire Department installed its original master box system in 1908. Records indicate most system components have not been replaced since the 1940s and our department supplied preventative maintenance stopped around 2011. The master box infrastructure is aging, available funding has prohibited preventative maintenance and strategic replacement. Outage data is not available before 2025. In 2025, one (1) or more circuits were out of service for a total of 36 days. Most outages in 2025 were due to rain events and the second most cause was due to commercial vehicles catching low hanging wires. These wires hang low due to degradation of outer layers and rusting of tacks used to secure them to utility poles.

Goffstown Fire Department does not have the ability to repair or maintain this system and relies on a utility company to do all our repairs and maintenance. Most fire departments removed master box systems from service in the 1980s and 90s. As less departments use the system, less companies work on the systems. Our system components require refurbished parts or us to change to style. Our repair company comes out of Massachusetts and cannot provide same day or weekend response. We also must pay for two (2) hours of driving time every day they come.

Call out and repair costs are increasing as is the frequency in which we need them. The alarm repair and maintenance line has been overspent for multiple years in a row.

2026 Budget

Goffstown Fire Department has two lines that cover fire alarms:

22010000-53465-Alarm Monitoring - \$360 a year to monitor Station 3.

22010000-25435-Alarm Repair & Maintenance - \$15,100 in 2026 due to increased service call out costs (\$12,100 Default Budget).

Replace/Remove Estimates

Circuit	1	2	3	Total
Replace*	\$49,564	\$30,307	\$20,678	\$100,549
Remove	\$23,520	\$15,680	\$7,840	\$47,040

**Does not include component cost*

Options

- 1) Continue current practice
 - a. Repair the system as problems arise based on available budget
 - b. Notify covered entities that their system is down when we know about it
 - c. Recommend they switch to a third-party monitoring system
- 2) Institute a user fee to:
 - a. Cover annual costs
 - b. Fund a replacement plan
- 3) Replace the system
- 4) Decommission the system



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Recommendation

We have carefully considered the four (4) options detailed above; the cost of repair and replacement is significant; it is becoming common for third party monitoring services in place of these master fire box systems; and the master box system only benefits those properties connected to the system, but is paid for by all taxpayers. We are recommending the Select Board decommission the system over the next two (2) years.

In 2025, the connection to Station 3 was disconnected because utility poles on the Tirrell Hill were being replaced and we couldn't afford to move the line over to the new poles. The last two (2) private buildings serviced by Circuit 3 transitioned to a third-party monitoring company due to the number of system failures. We would like to decommission Circuit 3 as soon as possible due to its current condition.

Decommissioning Circuit 1 and Circuit 2 will have larger impacts on our community. We need time to communicate the plan to those served by the town's master box system and dedicate funds to cover the proposed removal.

Once all three (3) circuits have been removed, budget line 22010000-25435-Alarm Repair & Maintenance would be zeroed out for all future years.

Respectfully,

Benjamin Selleck

Benjamin Selleck, Deputy Fire Chief
Goffstown Fire Department