



# Raleigh Professional Fire Fighters Association

IAFF Local 548

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## PRESS RELEASE

March 18, 2026

### **Raleigh Local 548 Firefighters Question New \$40,000 Study as Staffing Levels Fall Below Fire Master Plan Benchmarks**

Raleigh, NC — The Raleigh Professional Fire Fighters Association (Local 548) is raising concerns about the City’s decision to commission another study, examining a potential 12-hour shift schedule for the Raleigh Fire Department, while recommendations from the City’s completed Fire Master Plan remain without a clear implementation plan.

This additional study was initiated at the request of a single council member. It was incorporated into the City’s consulting contract, already underway with Matrix, without a formal City Council vote and limited discussion among council members regarding the scope of the analysis.

There is a clear disconnect between what was discussed at the council table “a reduction in hours worked” and “look at appropriate staffing and work force models”—and what is now being studied. The current [analysis](#) focuses specifically on a 12-hour shift model while maintaining a 56-hour work week and without adding a fourth shift of personnel.

In contrast, other public safety departments within the city that operate on 12-hour schedules do so with four shifts of personnel, allowing for reduced working hours and sustained staffing levels.

Following the [City Council meeting](#) where shift modification was discussed, Local 548 conducted an internal poll of its membership regarding a potential move to a 12-hour shift schedule. Not a single vote was cast in favor of a 12-hour shift model. Furthermore, Local 548 has not identified any comparable fire departments operating on a 12-hour shift schedule. Even progressive departments that have moved to a reduced 42-hour work week have maintained the traditional 24-hour shift model rather than transitioning to 12-hour shifts.

## **Fire Master Plan and Allocation Analysis**

In 2020, the City of Raleigh commissioned an [Allocation Analysis](#) conducted by Matrix Consulting Group Ltd. This analysis clearly identified the need for additional staffing and resources to meet service demands and maintain effective response coverage across the city. **SIX** budget cycles have passed since that study, and the recommended staffing increases have yet to be implemented.

In April 2024, the [Raleigh City Council](#) authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with Dark Horse Emergency Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$340,000 to complete a comprehensive [Fire Master Plan](#). That plan was delivered to the [Raleigh City Council in July of 2025](#).

The plan was intended to analyze:

- Fire service delivery requirements
- Population and growth projections
- Financial modeling
- Infrastructure needs
- Strategies for achieving national fire service benchmarks such as NFPA 1710 staffing and response standards

Both the 2020 Allocation Analysis and the 2025 Fire Master Plan identified the need for additional frontline staffing, including recommendations that would have added approximately 15–18 firefighters by 2025 to begin addressing system demands.

Those positions were not implemented, and the department continues to operate with approximately 553 operational firefighter positions today.

Local 548 says the demand for additional staffing is clear:

Multiple studies over several years have identified the need for additional staffing.

Local 548 asks a simple question:

### **Is there an implementation plan?**

Instead of implementing recommendations from both the 2020 Allocation Analysis and the 2025 Fire Master Plan, the City recently approved a contract amendment adding \$39,980 for a separate analysis focused on a potential 12-hour shift schedule.

At the same time, daily staffing levels have been reduced from the Fire Master Plan benchmark of 152 firefighters to approximately 145 firefighters on duty each day.

The Fire Master Plan-noted that even at the 152-staffing level, the Raleigh Fire Department met its response performance goal only 54% of the time.

The plan states:

“The practical impact manifests in a daily shortfall where the department aims for 152 personnel on duty per shift but often operates with fewer firefighters available from the total pool of 184 per shift.”

How does a single request to study shift modifications result in a nearly \$40,000 contract amendment, while more than half a million dollars in prior studies recommending increased staffing remain unimplemented? Additionally, how does a request for reducing working hours result in a study focused solely on a 12-hour schedule that maintains a 56-hour work week? Not a single firefighter, the largest stakeholder, has expressed support for that model.

Local 548 believes this approach moves the City further away from addressing the real issue. The priority should be implementing the staffing and resource recommendations already identified, not shifting focus to additional studies that do not increase the number of firefighters on the trucks.

### **Staffing Remains the Key Issue**

Firefighters note that national fire service standards, such as NFPA 1710, emphasize adequate staffing levels to safely conduct essential fireground operations.

Local 548 says Raleigh must focus on closing the staffing gap between its current daily staffing level of approximately 145 firefighters and the 184 firefighters needed to fully staff the department’s needs.

“Changing the length of a shift does not put more firefighters on the trucks,” the association said.

“If Raleigh wants to improve response capability, firefighter safety, and long-term retention, the solution is implementing the staffing and resource recommendations already identified.”

### **Looking Ahead**

Local 548 says it remains committed to working with city leadership and council members to ensure Raleigh firefighters have the personnel and resources necessary to protect one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States.

### **Closing Statement**

After spending more than half a million dollars on consulting studies, the Local 548 says the City already has the information it needs — what remains is implementation.

More information about the studies and staffing analysis referenced in this release can be found at:

[Local 548](#)