

## Selectmen's Meeting January 11, 2021

### CALL VOLUME – Calendar Year 2020

EMS – basic life support	447
EMS – advanced life support	65
Fire – total	245
Motor vehicle accidents	47
Mutual aid given	50
Mutual aid received	38
Mutual aid EMS transports	8
<b>Total Fire Department responses</b>	<b>901</b>
Burning permits issued	273
Open burning inspections	724

### 2020 In Review

The fire department responded to a total of 901 calls for service in calendar year 2020, ranging from EMS calls, fire alarms, CO alarms, building fires, vehicle fires, brush fires, hazardous materials incidents, and weather-related emergencies. The fire department also responded to several calls for service in neighboring communities in 2020, including Berlin, Clinton, Northborough, Shrewsbury, Sterling, West Boylston, and Worcester. The department worked closely with MEMA and MA DPH to provide adequate personal protective equipment for all first responders as well as town hall employees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department was able to increase its full-time staff in July of 2020 with the hiring of Niccole Chaisson and William Weir. Niccole and Bill were a welcome addition to the full-time staff and allowed the department to increase its full-time coverage so that there are now at least two people on staff from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm every weekday. The department continues to rely heavily on its on-call and per diem staff members to cover additional weeknight shifts, weekends, and to respond to many calls for service over the year. In spite the difficulties imposed by COVID-19, the staff continues to remain healthy and dedicated to providing a professional level of service to the town. We have not had any reported on-duty unprotected exposure to COVID-19 patients; we have developed policies and procedures to protect our employees as best as possible.

## **COVID-19 RELATED ACTIONS**

Today, January 11, 2021 marks the first day when COVID-19 vaccines are being made available to all first responders in MA. The fire department has partnered with Marlborough Hospital to set up vaccines for all fire department employees. Many of our employees have already set up vaccine appointments and hopefully within the next two weeks all employees who are interested in obtaining vaccines will have received their first round. Marlborough Hospital will be administering the Moderna vaccine; this is a series of two shots administered 28 days apart. Marlborough Hospital will set up tracking of patients who receive the vaccine with the Department of Public Health; Chief Flanagan will also keep a record of all department members who have received the vaccine. The Boylston Police Department was also made aware of the vaccine distribution point at Marlborough Hospital; a second distribution site has also been set up at UMass Medical Center in Worcester, and many of the police officers and dispatchers are taking advantage of that site.

The fire department filed reimbursement paperwork with FEMA for COVID-19 related expenses incurred by the town in the initial response to the pandemic. Chief Flanagan worked with the Town Administrator to compile expenses related to preparation and response and final approval of funding was received last week. The town will be reimbursed \$5169.41 for costs associated with COVID-19 expenses.

The fire department submitted and was approved for a supplemental COVID-19 grant through FEMA for the purchase of personal protective equipment in the amount of \$3520.53. This money is being used for surgical masks, N95 masks, isolation gowns, and gloves for fire department employees while responding to suspected COVID-19 calls.

## **FY 2021/FY 2022 GRANTS**

Chief Flanagan has submitted two grants to FEMA as part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. One grant, in the amount of \$190,112.00 is to replace out of compliance self-contained breathing apparatus, and a second grant, in the amount of \$650,000 is to replace a 1989 engine and a 1981 rescue truck with a combination rescue/pumper. These grants require a small matching portion from the town, if awarded. The SCBA grant will require a \$9052.95 match, the engine grant will require a \$30,952.38 match. The typical lead time to purchase a fire engine is one year, so if the grant were to be awarded, the money would not have to be allocated until next year.

The department has applied for a \$10,000 equipment grant through the MA Department of Fire Services. This is a competitive grant that does not require any match from the

community. Equipment requested through this grant includes updated forceable entry equipment, battery-powered saws, and lighting equipment.

The department obtained two MEMA Emergency Management Planning Grants in 2020 totaling approximately \$5400 for the purchase of EMS supplies and equipment to upgrade equipment currently in use, along with some additional computer monitors for the station.

### **FY 2022 Budget**

As requested by the Town Administrator, the FY 22 budget was submitted with no changes from FY21. On a capital improvement wish list for FY 2022, if we are unsuccessful with our federal grants, we will need to look at replacing an engine and self-contained breathing apparatus very soon. Our current SCBA are fourteen years old, and as of next year our air cylinders will be out of compliance as they only have a 15-year lifespan. We would also like to look at some increase salary for the on-call firefighter/EMTs to make per diem shifts a bit more attractive to the on-call staff members. We are currently on the low-end of the pay scale as compared to area departments.