



TOWNSEND FIRE-EMS DEPARTMENT

Proudly serving the citizens of Townsend since 1875

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Fire-EMS Quarterly Report

ACTIVITY

Over the past three months the department has been extremely busy with a number of project including taking delivery of the new Pumper/Tanker, training personnel on its operation and putting it in service. Managing the final phase of the West Fire Station construction, planning the move and dedication ceremony. Work continues integrating and resolving software and radio issues with NVRDD. Call volume and inspections increased over the last three months. Along with increased inspections comes increased complexity as the full-time staff work with owners and the State Fire Marshal's office to resolve code violations. Thankfully opioid overdoses dropped but cardiac related calls increased. As a result Townsend Fire-EMS personnel successfully resuscitated "Saved" two people at two separate calls over the past month. A 58 year old male in cardiac arrest from a heart attack was revived during transport to the hospital, treated and released from the hospital 6 days later in healthy condition. Three weeks later a 60 year old female in cardiac arrest was also revived during transport to the hospital, treated and released the following day. Both crews and Police personnel on scene did an amazing job to give these people a second chance. A Townsend engine, crew and I were also part of the response to Lawrence and North Andover gas incident as part of the District 8 task force.

POLICY CHANGES

A draft policy to mentor officer candidates is still up for consideration and comment. The intent of the policy is to succession plan and give personnel on the promotional list an opportunity to be mentored and learn the ropes before becoming an officer. Due to other priorities the Officers and I have not had time to finalize this policy. After reviewing membership participation records we realized more than half of the department is not meeting the minimum requirements for attendance at meetings, training and calls. We feel this is a sign of the time we live in. Members simply do not have the time with all the competing interest and family obligations. The Officers are currently considering a two prong approach of coaching and mentoring our members to keep members engaged while lowering the minimum requirements. This policy has also been tabled for further discussion with the membership.

PERSONNEL

Over the last three months we have hired one new per diem paramedic. We recently interviewed two people with no certification for paid-on-call Firefighters positions. One dropped out before completing the hiring process the second was hired. It typically takes a year for new on-call Firefighters to get signed up and complete certification training.

STAFFING

As mentioned in previous quarterly reports and in the 2019 budget request, it is time to look at the overall staffing strategy of the Fire-EMS Department. Our Officers are getting runed out. We are not their primary employer and source of income of our per diem paramedics and many are struggling to dedicate the time needed to assure the Fire-EMS Department has sufficient staffing and coverage. A draft strategic plan to increase staffing has been submitted to Town Administrator Kreidler and I hope to present the plan at a Board of Selectmen meeting soon.

2017-2018 Shift Shortages

	ALS Short (HRS)		No ALS (HRS)		NOBODY WORKING		Fire Short (HRS)		Total	
	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017
January	13	9	42	0	0	0	0	4	55	13
February	16	18	1	19	14	0	0	1	31	20
March	5	18	0	27	0	0	10	11	15	56
April	24	0	24	7	10	0	20	0	78	7
May	55	20	27	5	0	0	34	18	116	43
June	63	17	27	28	0	0	30	11	120	56
July	88	36	30	32	0	0	20	4	138	72
August	49	38	18	47	0	0	0	30	67	115
September	40	15	6	76	0	0	20	11	66	102
October		18		38		0		0		56
November		0		37		0		20		57
December		24		37		0		15		76
Total	34	161	43	251	14	0	10	189	686	673

As you can see in the chart above we continue to struggle filling per diem shifts. The total hours of shortages for the three quarters of this year exceed the number of hours for all of last year. To put this into perspective I started tracking these shortages in 2015 and discovered we were short 1,499 hours. We made an effort to address this issue in 2016 by hiring additional staff and increase paramedic wages and reduced the hours to 448. 2017 despite the continued efforts the short hours increased to 673 and we are on track to be short approximately 850 hours this year. The strategic plan I hope to present soon will address ways to eliminate shortages, increase reliability of our response and decrease response times.

BUDGET

We are only 3 months into the 2019 budget but things look good thus far. Since our wage cost very depending on the number of calls, severity of the calls and number of people responding predicting the final outcome can be tricky. We are off to a good start with a surplus. This will likely change during the winter months when fires and the severity of calls tends to increase.

GRANTS

I am pleased to announce we have been awarded FEMA Fire Act Grant in the sum of \$53,334 to send four people to paramedic training. This application was submitted in January. Once accepted by the Board of Selectmen we will be running a process to accept application from interested members. We will then conduct a fair and structured process to decide who will attend.

Last quarter report indicated we had received an additional Medicaid reimbursement of \$26,108 from the Mass Health Ambulance CPE Program. The deadline completing the process for fiscal year 2018 is the end of October. This is a very time consuming process consuming several days for me. However I am confident we will see similar results again this year.

WEST FIRE STATIONS STATUS

This project well behind schedule but on the home stretch. The building is 98% complete with some final adjustments and finishing that should be completed in the next couple of weeks. Completion of the site work has been delayed to accommodate three donations. Shepco (Gary Shepherd) has donated a granite wall along East side of the parking lot along New Fitchburg Rd wrapping around onto 119. The second donation is a flagpole from the High School project that will be incorporated into the monuments for the former girl school and the site of the original site of the West Townsend Fire Station. Lastly someone from West Townsend has donated a decorative septic vent to replace the six inch white pipe sticking out of the ground.

The Fire Station Committee has set a date of December 15th to dedicate the New Fire Station and celebrate the Fire Departments 143rd birthday.

COMMUNICATION CENTER

We continue to be dispatched by NVRDD. Former Townsend Dispatcher Jessica Fellows now dispatches for NVRDD was dispatching for both of the cardiac arrest calls that were resuscitated. Dispatcher Fellows did an outstanding job contributing to the successful outcome of these calls.

As you know Deputy Chief Sartell, Captain Mike Grimley and Myself have been appointed to a planning committee along with Ashby and Pepperell Officials. The committee is charged with exploring, planning and recommending the establishment of an Ashby, Pepperell Townsend Regional Dispatch Center. Thus far the committee has met three times and continues to meet every other week. The committee intends to provide the respective boards with information as soon as possible and would be happy to update the board at any time.

Respectfully

Chief
Boynton