



TOWNSEND FIRE-EMS DEPARTMENT

Proudly serving the citizens of Townsend since 1875

PO Box 530 – 13 Elm St.
Townsend, MA 01469

Mark R. Boynton
Chief of Department

Headquarters: 978-597-8150

Fax: 978-300-5786

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Fire-EMS Report 1st Quarter 2019

ACTIVITY

As usual the first quarter of the year was very busy. In January we had a three alarm fire in the middle of the night at 95 Turner Road. This was a brutally cold morning following a snow storm with a temperature of -11 degrees. Crews did an outstanding job containing the fire to one end of a very large home. This was a very expensive fire on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday compounded by equipment breakdowns. During the fire Engine 1 generator failed and had to be replaced. The day after the fire Engine 3 pump was found leaking and had to be rebuilt. Money was requested from the reserve fund and approved by the Finance Committee. Engine 3 pump has been rebuilt, Engine 1 generator has been ordered and should be replaced soon.

This was followed by a four alarm fire in February at Pine Ridge Estates. Thankfully this fire was detected in the early evening hours while several residents were not home and all were awake. The alarm system activated and everyone was able to escape the fire. Townsend Firefighters assisted by seven surrounding towns battled the fire through the night before it was brought under control. The building is a total loss and forty eight people were left homeless. That night and several days following the fire several town and state agencies came together to provide food, clothing, shelter and relocate these individuals. It was very impressive community effort.

March is the month when approximately half of our personnel's EMT licenses are up for renewal. The first quarter of every year is always busy with recertification classes and paperwork for personnel to renew for two more years.

POLICY CHANGES

Since according to legal counsel the Townsend Fire Chief position is not a strong Chief under Mass General Laws all current Fire-EMS policies will be sent to the board of selectmen for approval sometime in the next several weeks.

The department is currently working with legal counsel on updating our drug and alcohol policy. We are also working on a policy for performing medical evaluations of firefighters during fires, fire scene evacuation and mayday policies. Once completed these will also go to the board for approval.

PERSONNEL

Over the past three months we have hired three new paid-on-call Firefighters. We currently have four probationary Firefighters voluntarily attending the 240 hour Mass Call/Vol Firefighter certification academy that will graduate in June.

Performance evaluations were completed on the call officers of the department over the past three months.

STAFFING

Nothing new to report, the total hours short staffed for the first quarter are very similar to the first quarter of 2018. We have been tracking staffing shortages since 2015 and the trend continues. We are hopeful a request to increase full-time staffing this year will be funded and the numbers below will start to be reduced.

2017-2018 Shift Shortages

	ALS Short (HRS)		No ALS (HRS)		NOBODY WORKING		Fire Short (HRS)		Total	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
January	13	41	42	3	0	2	0	11	55	57
February	16	14	1	15	14	0	0	0	31	29
March	5	24	0	2	0	0	10	0	15	26
April	24		24		10		20		78	
May	55		27		0		34		116	
June	63		27		0		30		120	
July	88		30		0		20		138	
August	49		18		0		0		67	
September	40		6		0		20		66	
October	63		13		0		30		106	
November	39		12		0		4		55	
December	69		30		0		15		114	
Total	524	79	230	20	24	2	183	11	961	112

One of this year's budget request included the fourth year of the four year plan to increase per diem paramedic wages. However a budget was also submitted for additional full-time staff to decrease shortages and eliminate dropping to a BLS level service. If this budget is adopted per diem paramedics would not receive and increase. The pay increase was eliminated in the full-time staffing budget request to minimize the financial impact to the community.

BUDGET

We are three quarters of the way through the fiscal year and the budget is looking good. Currently showing a surplus of \$4,800 in wages due to the staffing shortages. This is a very low surplus compared to years past due to an increase in multiple alarm fires and overtime for full-time staff. We are in a good position going into the last three months of the year when the severity of calls tends to decrease.

GRANTS

Since being awarded \$53,334 from FEMA last fall a selection processed was completed to decide who will take advantage of this grant and attend paramedic school. Captain Cormier and Firefighter/EMT's Jon Kinney, Eric Modica and Mike Whittier were chosen to attend the school of their choice as soon as possible.

Since that time Eric Modica who was already enrolled in a paramedic program has completed the program, obtained his paramedic certification/license and has been reimbursed for tuition cost. Jon Kinney is enrolled in the Mt. Wachusetts paramedic program and will start this fall. Jeff Cormier and Mike Whittier are currently not enrolled in a program but I am hopeful they will be enrolled soon.

In January we received a \$15,000 grant from the Nashoba Community Foundation to purchase advance life support simulation manikins. We are in the process of purchasing these manikins that allow paramedics to perform lifesaving skills on high tech manikins to stay sharp on their skills.

The Mass Health Ambulance CPE program applications were submitted back in October. I anticipate the Town will received approximately \$26,000 in additional Medicaid reimbursement in April or May that will go into the ambulance receipts account.

WEST FIRE STATIONS STATUS

The fire station is finally completed. The final payment request has been processed and the project is officially complete. In the next few weeks we intend to finish up the donated landscaping, plant grass and put the final touches on the monument.

COMMUNICATION CENTER

Nothing new to report on the communication center. The Ashby, Pepperell, Townsend Regional Communications Committee continues to meet on a regular basis. We are currently waiting for Monachusset Regional Planning Commission grant to be awarded to fund a study to regionalize communications between the three towns.

Respectfully

Chief
Boynton