



TOWNSEND FIRE-EMS DEPARTMENT

Proudly serving the citizens of Townsend since 1875

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Fire-EMS 1st and 2nd Quarter Report

ACTIVITY

Due to the COVID19 pandemic a 1st quarter report was not completed therefore it will be included in this report.

Prior to the pandemic I was able to attend a six day class in January on managing multiple alarm fires at the National Fire Academy in Emmittsburg Maryland. Although I am well versed in Incident Command System (ICS) it was an opportunity to refresh my skills, learn the latest techniques, about new technology and network with Fire Officers from around the country.

Thankfully the first quarter of the year including the pre COVID time was relatively quiet. We responded mutual aid to assist surrounding towns with several fires but had a quiet winter here in Townsend with no major fires. With the pandemic in full swing by mid-March call volume dropped significantly however staff were very busy making adjustments to response and protective measures due to the pandemic.

Due to COVID19 regular meetings and training was cancelled. We relied heavily on email and Zoom meeting to communicate. As you know for the month of March and April directives and changes in operations were put out weekly along with a report of the number and locations of COVID cases in Town. In June we returned to conducting face-to-face training in small groups and outside. In July we intend to return to face-to-face officers meetings and membership meetings while social distancing.

POLICY CHANGES

Regular policy changes over the last six months consisted of several changes to “highly infectious disease” policy and a number of directive changing day-to-day operations. These were shared with the Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen at the same time is was distributed to the membership.

PERSONNEL

Due to the pandemic five per diem personnel have taken a leave of absence to limit exposure and at the time of this report have not returned. Also due to the pandemic we had six personnel resign for various reasons including limiting exposure and being forced to resign by their primary employer. In totality we now short eleven positions. This shortage is causing a high rate of overtime for full-time staff to fill the vacancies.

STAFFING

Early in the pandemic we expedited the hiring of full-time firefighter paramedic Thomas Hall. All full-time positions are now filled. As anticipated the hiring of additional full-time staff has reduced staffing shortages. We no longer rely completely on per diem personnel to cover nights and weekends. However as indicated above and unanticipated shortage of per diem personnel due to the pandemic is creating a high rate of overtime for full-time staff to maintain staffing and maintain a paramedic level of service 24/7. We are recruiting and in the process of hiring additional per diem paramedics to address the shortage.

2018-2019 Shift Shortages

	ALS Short (HRS)		No ALS (HRS)		NOBODY WORKING		Fire Short (HRS)		Total	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2018	2019
January	41	4	3	0	2	0	11	28	57	34
February	14	13	15	0	0	0	0	0	30	13
March	24	3	2	0	0	0	0	6	32	9
April	22	4	38	0	0	0	0	0	60	4
May	20	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	6
June	35	9	14	0	0	0	0	13	49	22
July	56		0		0		2		58	
August	54		0		0		0		54	
September	37		14		0		2		53	
October	23		0		0		0		23	
November	35		0		0		15		50	
December	29		0		0		1		30	
Total	303	39	86	0	2	0	31	41	516	88

BUDGET

We ended the fiscal year 2020 with a surplus of approximately \$15,000. A portion of these funds were used to buy-back unused vacation time of full-time personnel were unable to use due to the pandemic.

The 2021 fiscal year will be challenging. We are starting the year in a budget freeze on a 1/12 budget with two vehicles out of service due to mechanical issues that need to be repaired once we establish a budget. The staffing shortages along with the fact we have over spent the vehicle maintenance and building maintenance budgets the last several year is very concerning. As always I will be tracking payroll and expenses on a monthly basis. If necessary week day per diem shifts will be cut and training and meetings cancelled the second half of the year to stay within budget.

GRANTS

Fire-EMS has received \$7,624 and \$2,050.97 in CARES Act funding to help offset revenue shortages. We also received \$39,280 in Certified Public Expenditure program funding to recuperate lost revenue from transporting Medicare/Medicaid patients.

Spreadsheets of expenses due to COVID19 for FEMA reimbursement have been provided to town officials along with request for equipment and personal protective equipment.

COMMUNICATION CENTER

Due to the pandemic the regional committee has not met. Ashby is now being dispatched by Pepperell. Myself and the Police Chief intend to have information and cost available to the board of selectmen to make a decision before or at a fall town meeting.

Respectfully

Chief
Boynton