



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

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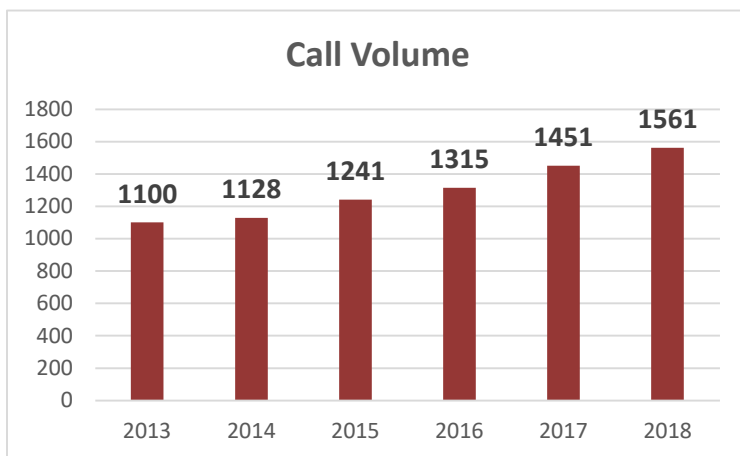
2018 Westminster Fire Department Report

Introduction

2018 has been a year of significant change for the Westminster Fire Department with the retirement of Chief Kevin Nivala, increasing call volume and multiple personnel changes.

Chief Nivala retired on June 15, 2018 after 35 years of service to the Town of Westminster taking with him a lifetime of knowledge and experience. Following the Chief's retirement a search was conducted for his replacement and Captain Kyle Butterfield was selected to take the reigns as the Department's next Chief.

The department ended 2018 with a record breaking 1,561 incidents, exceeding the previous record set in 2008 of 1,459 incidents. This was a 9% increase over 2017 and a 42% increase over the past five-years. Aside from these Emergency calls the department also performed 974 fire prevention inspections/permits and issued 268 open-air burn permits. These increases are being studied closely to assess how the department responds to meet the increased demand.



None of these calls would be answered without personnel and this year our personnel went thru some changes. We had two of our fulltime members resign each of who were replaced. While adding four new on-call firefighters and having two resign.

Full-Time Staffing

The Westminster Fire Department currently has eleven fulltime personnel. The Fire Chief, Captain and Administrator/EMT-B work a weekday administrative schedule. While the additional eight members, consisting of one Lieutenant and seven Firefighters, work rotating shifts to cover the town with two firefighters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In June with the retirement of Chief Nivala, Captain Butterfield was made Acting Chief and in October was sworn in as the permanent Fire Chief. This promotion opened the Captains position, which will be filled early in 2019. The department also had two of our fulltime Firefighters resign during the year, which were subsequently filled with new members. When filling these positions, it has been hard to attract experienced Firefighter/Paramedics due to a number of reasons, first and foremost being a regional shortage of people with this skillset and licensure. Westminster is not alone in our issues with recruiting experienced employees and supplement with a vigorous training program for new employees.



On-Call Firefighters and Shortage

When Chief Butterfield took over in October one of his main goals was to recruit additional on-call firefighters. Over the last twenty years departments who have on-call firefighters have seen a decrease in their ranks caused by a variety of reasons. The shortage of on-call firefighters is a well-documented local and national problem. Luckily for us in 2018 the department was able to



add four on-call firefighters; however two on-call firefighters left the department. Three of these firefighters came to us fully trained, greatly reducing the timeframe before they are effective to the department. Currently, these firefighters are finishing their last portion of our orientation process which is learning to drive and operate our apparatus. The impact of this increase in staffing is being evaluated to determine the need for additional on-call personnel.

The department continues to struggle to get second and third vehicles out the door for the weekday incidents. These are times where the on-call firefighters are at their fulltime jobs and are not available. In total there are 15 on-call firefighters and 2 support services staff that the respond to incidents when



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

•FIRE •EMS/RESCUE •EMERGENCY SERVICES

available. The department relies on the on-call and off-duty staff to respond to the station to respond with the second and third pieces of apparatus.

Generally, the department does not recruit on-call firefighters who live in other communities to work as on-call staff. The department will consider fully trained firefighters who live near the border of Westminster and are able to respond and be effective as a call firefighter. Many prospective on-call firefighters that live outside the community are not able to meet the commitments to the department, able to respond in a timely manner to be effect to the department or are looking to gain experience for fulltime employment elsewhere.

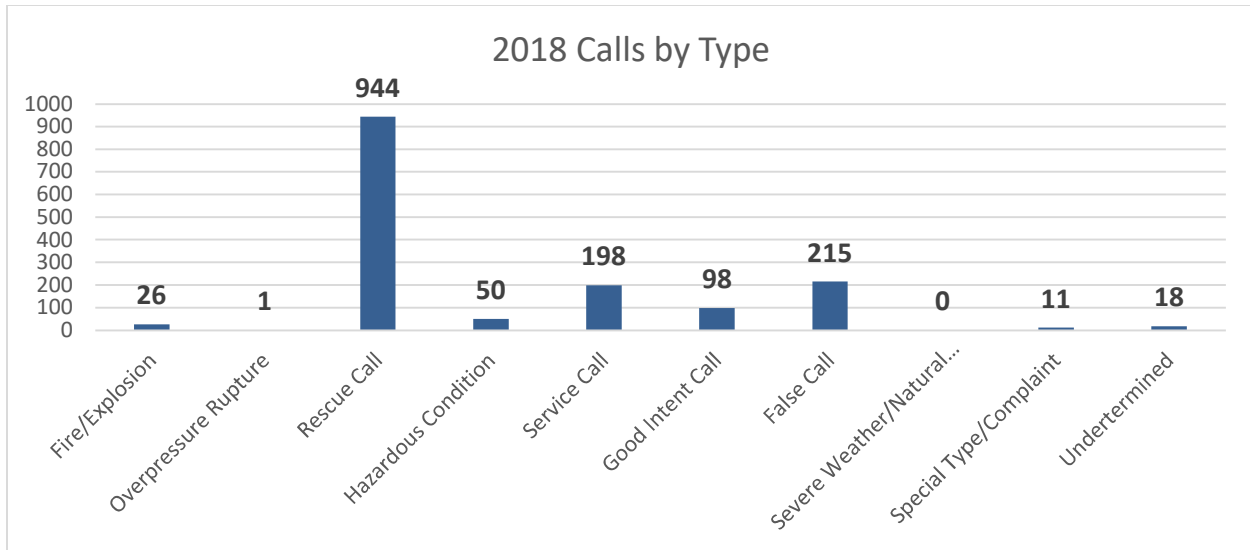
Call Volume

The department continues to face an increasing call volume, finishing the year off responding to 1,561 calls for service. This is a 9% increase over 2017 with a daily average of 4.3 calls. In total, incidents have increased in most types but the largest increase was in rescue calls. There was an additional 96 rescue calls during 2018 which equates to a 2% increase to the total call volume.

Type	Total	Percentage
Fire/Explosion	26	1.67%
Overpressure Rupture	1	0.06%
Rescue Call	944	60.47%
Hazardous Condition	50	3.20%
Service Call	198	12.68%
Good Intent Call	98	6.28%
False Call	215	13.77%
Severe Weather/Natural Disaster	0	0.00%
Special Type/Complaint	11	0.70%
Undetermined	18	1.15%
Total	1561	100.00%

Since 2013 the Fire Department has seen a 42% increase in call volume utilizing the same staffing model. Of this increase, 60% of the call volume is rescue type calls, which includes medical, car accident, technical rescue and other specialty rescue services. The remaining 40% of the call volume is fire related calls such as fires, alarms and explosions.

The nature of incidents that the department faces continue to vary, from simple medicals to complex multi-vehicle responses. The Fire Department responds to multi alarm fires, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescue and many other complex incidents. Westminster's firefighters are highly trained in many different fields to meet the demands placed upon them during the course of their duties. The department also relies on State and regional agencies for specialty resources on an as needed basis.



Ambulance Response

The ambulance budget that is voted on at the annual town meeting provides the funding for the labor, equipment and supply costs associated with the running of the ambulance service. The department runs two Advanced Life

Type	Occurrences	Percentage
ALS	392	41.75%
BLS	323	34.40%
Refusal	203	21.62%
Other agency	17	1.81%
Other	4	0.43%
Total	939	100.00%

Support (ALS) Paramedic Ambulances. The Paramedic level provides the community with the highest pre-hospital care available.

With fulltime staffing, the department staffs one ALS/Paramedic Ambulance 24/7. The second ambulance is available for second calls and staffed by on-call or off-duty staffing when available. In 2018, the department completed the planned Cardiac Monitor Replacement. The original Phillips Cardiac Monitors were replaced with Physio Control Life Pack 15 cardiac

Hospital	Occurrences	Percentage
Heywood	468	49.84%
UMass	25	2.66%
Leominster	223	23.75%
Non-Transport	222	23.64%
St. Vincent's	1	0.11%
Total	939	100.00%

monitors. These monitors provide the Paramedics with improved patient monitoring capabilities. Included in the new monitors is carbon monoxide monitoring that will automatically alert when it is above a certain threshold. They also provide increased capabilities in their sensitivity



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

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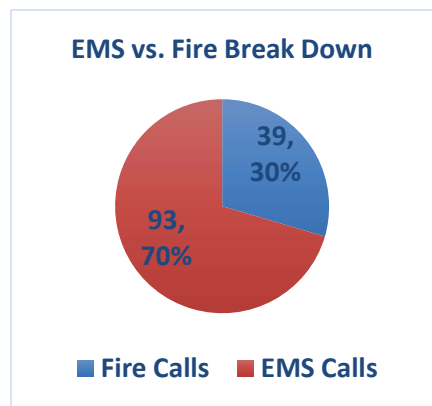
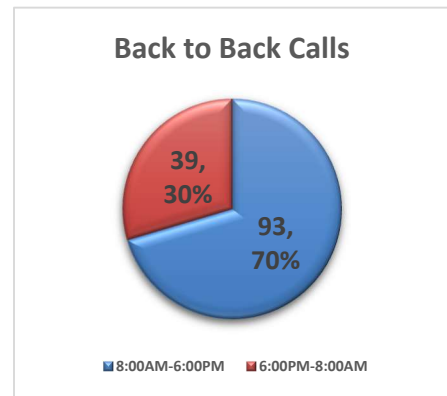
increasing accuracy of cardiac rhythm interpretation. Currently the department has one on-call EMT who responds to medicals and fire incidents. During the year, one EMT left the department and one completed firefighter training. These personnel provide coverage for the ambulance and assist on scenes, providing an invaluable extra set of hands. The department continues to attempt to recruit medical personnel from the community.

Back-to-Back Calls and Missed Inspections

In 2017, we began to see a significant amount of back-to-back calls. These are calls that occur at the same time as another call. With the calls increasing it is inevitable that the department will begin to see an increase in the back-to-back calls. We are doing more calls in the same 24-hour period leading to an increased likelihood of multiple calls occurring at the same time. This led to tracking of these calls in 2018.

In 2018, there were 132 back-to-back calls with 70% of the calls occurring during the hours of 8:00am through 6:00pm.

This period is significant for the department as this is the normal time where the on-call



firefighters are at their regular jobs and not available for response. Of the 132 calls, 70% were medical in nature. Our department was able to staff the second ambulance for 44 of these transports while relying on a mutual aid ambulance for the other 39.

In October, the department began to keep records of missed inspections due to calls. During that period, there were 34 inspections that were rescheduled or the inspection was completed late due to crews being tied up calls. Back-to-back calls and missed inspections will continue to be studied. Once

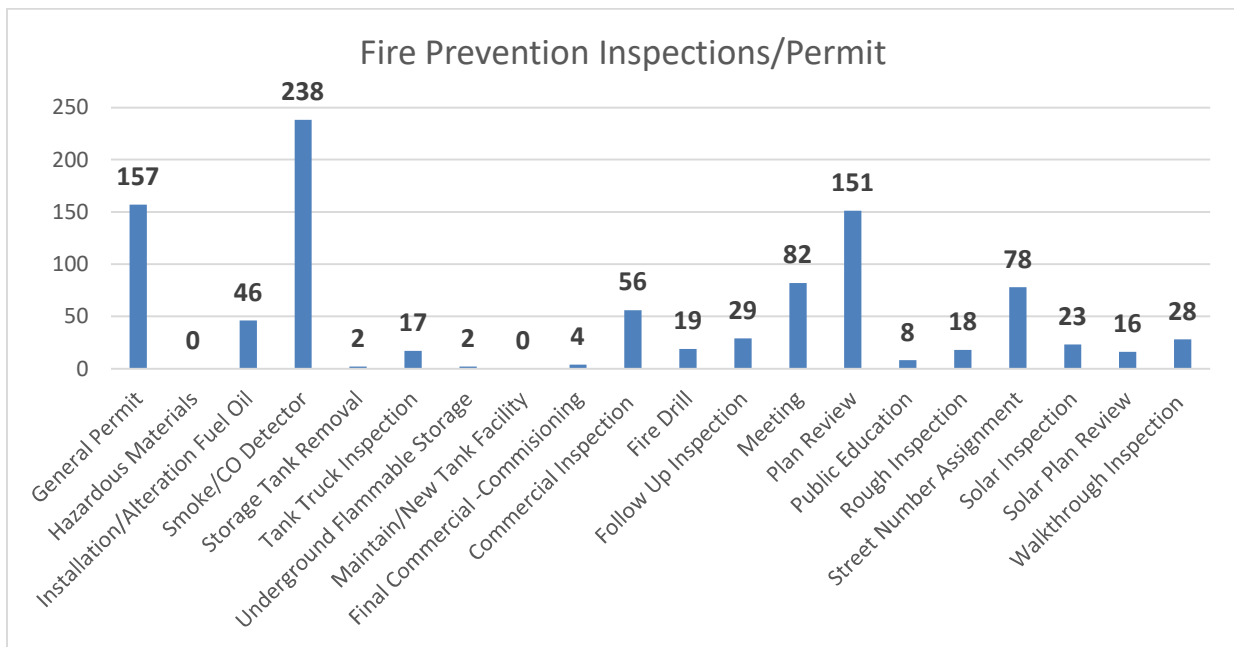
sufficient data is collected, the department will be able to determine what the appropriate response to this increased demand is.

Fire Prevention

In 2018 the department performed 974 inspections and permits and issued 268 open air burn permits. The previous high year was 2016, where the department performed 813 inspections and permits. This was the busiest year the fire prevention office has seen and this equates to 2.7 inspections per day being performed.

Much of this increase is attributed to the residential growth within the town. This includes the issuance of 56 building permits for new dwellings. The Fire Department plays an important role in new home construction, ensuring the life safety devices, heating systems and fuel storage are installed correctly from the beginning, allowing the homeowner to move into a safe and compliant house.

Many fire prevention laws can be traced back to a tragic story. Whether it be Nicole’s Law requiring carbon monoxide detectors which resulted from the death of a 7 year old child or the ban of inward swinging exit doors after the Coconut Grove fire killed 492 people. Westminster has always placed a large emphasis on fire prevention and the towns inspectional program is well established, very active and progressive.



All of the fulltime staff are trained to the Fire Prevention Officer – Basic level with three members being credentialed as Fire Prevention Officer – Level 1. This training provides a consistant level of code enforcement throughtout the department. Chief Butterfield also serves on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Fire Prevention Association.

Fire Investigation

The Fire Department continues to investigate all fires in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws in conjunction with our partners from the Westminster Police Department and the Massachusetts State Fire Marshals office. All fires are investigated and when appropriate all legal options are followed.



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

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Public Education

The Department takes an active role in fire education throughout the community. Public education plays a large role in the Departments fire prevention program. Education is a large part of fire prevention, teaching all age groups of the community. The Department has participated in the states Student Awareness of Fire Education program since 1996. Over the past few years the department has also participated in the Senior S.A.F.E. Program assisting the senior population of town to stay safe. The educational programs highlight kitchen safety and other high risk fire behaviours.

Specialty Community Services

Halloween Bonfire

The Halloween Bonfire continues to be the largest event that the department hosts on an annual basis. Each year this event is held at the Public Safety Building and attracts over 500 adults and children. The event is co-hosted with the Library who assists the department with passing out candy and judging the costume contest.



Event Planning



During 2018 the fire department implemented an Event Checklist for large events and code compliance. This resulted from similar issues continuing to surface while performing pre-event inspections over a series of years. The 2018 Cracker Festival was the first time the Fire Department used this event checklist, resulting in zero code violations on the day of the event. Showing that all of the pre-planning during meetings and use of the checklist created a fire safe event for the townspeople and our visitors. We look forward to continue working with our partners and community to help create these safe events for everyone.

Mid-State Mutual Aid

Westminster is a member of the Mid-State Fire Mutual Aid Association. Locally each Fire Department relies on mutual aid for not only man power but equipment resources as well when incidents exhaust or overwhelm the community in which the incident is occurring.

Department Training

The Department holds at a minimum 12 monthly paid training events a year. During which Firefighters learn new skills, refresh on current skills and update old skills. Firefighting changes very quickly and it is important to stay up to date. This is essential to both Firefighter and public safety. Private Bennett Chadbourne took an active role in planning and teaching training in 2018. As an instructor for the Massachusetts Fire Academy he has been able to keep the training relevant and up to date.

The big topic in terms of training on the horizon for 2019 is the implementation of OSHA laws for the State and Local government. There will be changes Fire Departments will have to make in order to be compliant with the OSHA regulations.

Apparatus

Engine 1 - (1999 Class A Pumper) KME. The vehicle has a 1,250gpm pump with 1,000 gallons of water and equipped with Class B foam for flammable liquid fires. This vehicle is in moderate shape and its replacement is almost complete. The replacement vehicle expected in early 2019.



Engine 2 – (2001 Class A Pumper) KME. This vehicle has a 1,500gpm pump with 2,500 gallons of water. This vehicle is also equipped with a Class A foam system which increases the vehicles fire suppression ability. This vehicle is a dual role vehicle able to perform as an attack pumper or a tanker for incidents in areas of town with no hydrants. This vehicle was refurbished in 2018 and is in good shape.

Engine 3 – (2013 Class A Pumper/Rescue) KME. This vehicle is a dual role Class A pump and Rescue. The vehicle has a 1,500gpm pump with 1,000 gallons of water. The vehicle is equipped with Class A and B foams allowing the vehicle to increase its fire suppression capability as well as fight flammable liquid fires. This vehicle serves as the department's heavy rescue carrying the specialty rescue items such as the Jaws of Life, structural cribbing, water/ice rescue and many other items. The vehicle replaced two vehicles Engine 4 and Rescue 1 combining their capabilities into one vehicle. This allows the department to perform work more efficiently with the decreasing on-call firefighters. This vehicle is good shape.



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

•FIRE •EMS/RESCUE •EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tower 1 – (2005 Ladder Truck) KME. The vehicle is a 95-foot aerial ladder with a bucket. This vehicle is equipped with a 2,000gpm pump and a 300-gallon water tank. This vehicle is in fair condition but will be in need of refurbishment in the coming years.

Engine 5- (2008 Mini-Pumper) CET. Engine 5 is a multi-role vehicle with year round capability having 4-wheel drive, 500gpm pump and 300 gallons of water. The vehicle responds for brush fires, fires where there is restricted response such as Leino Park due to weight restrictions on the bridge and for responses where the larger vehicles are not suited such as dirt or rough roads. The vehicle is also equipped with a Class A foam system and a Compressed Air Foam system to increase the initial fire suppression capabilities of the vehicle. This vehicle is in good condition but is beginning to show signs of corrosion.

Car 1 - is a 2012 Chevrolet Tahoe that is designed for emergency response and as a command vehicle. This vehicle is in fair shape and scheduled for replacement in FY2020.

Car 2 - is a 2016 Ford Explorer designed for emergency response and as a command vehicle. The vehicle is in good shape.

Car 3 - is 2013 Chevrolet 3500 equipped with a plow and is used for daily inspections and as incidents require.

UTV – The UTV is a 2016 Gravelly UTV. The vehicle is designed for multiple roles including brush fire response in remote locations, rescue/transport of injured parties in remote locations and use during large events as a quick response vehicle. The department has seen and continues to have incidents in remote locations where we once relied upon mutual aid from other communities for a UTV vehicle where now the department can handle many of these calls ourselves.

Ambulance 1 – This is a 2016 Chevrolet Chassis with a Braun ambulance body. This ambulance responds to medical emergencies and transports patients to the hospital. This ambulance is in good condition and due to charging issues it received a new Power Load cot fastener system in 2018.

Ambulance 2 – This is a 2012 Chevrolet Chassis with a Braun ambulance body. This ambulance responds to medical emergencies and transports patients to the hospital. The vehicle is in fair shape and is scheduled for replacement in FY2020

Emergency Management

Station

In 2017, the town voted to fund a public safety building feasibility study to evaluate the current building which was built in the mid-1990's. The Selectmen appointed a Public Safety Building Feasibility committee in 2018 which in turn selected Tecton Architects to perform the study, which is currently underway. The study will be completed in early 2019 when the town will be able to look at its options for the future.

Future

The Westminster Fire Department is an all hazards response, prevention and education agency. Over the past few years, the town has continued to grow and so have the volume in calls and inspections. This consistent growth of the community is being studied and should the need arise the department will recommend making the necessary changes to meet the demands.

Looking to the New Year I am excited to return the department to full staff with the hiring of a Captain and filling the vacancies left by a retirement and resignation. The greatest challenge the department will face in 2019 is ensuring that the newly hired Firefighters complete the required training at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and Paramedic school.

Please contact us in the office if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K.S. Butterfield', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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