



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

•FIRE •EMS/RESCUE •EMERGENCY SERVICES

2023 Westminster Fire Department Report

Introduction

The Fire Department continues to see increases in the request for emergency services. This year the department had a 0.68% increase in calls to finish the year with 1,919 incidents. There was one 2nd Alarm Fire, seven Working Fires and four 1st Alarm Fires. In addition to this the department completed 786 inspections and issued 298 burn permits with 762 activations.

The department remains at a critical crossroads as the department's staffing model. The current model has reached its effective limits due to the increase in calls that the department has seen. Couple this with a steady decline in on-call firefighters and those two factors have created a safety issue where the department is not able to staff apparatus. More often than not at fires the second piece of apparatus on scene is from a mutual aid partner.



The department continue to see a decline in on-call firefighters. There is an inability to recruit and retain new and existing on-call firefighters. This problem is not unique to Westminster and is a national problem with a decline in volunteerism. Since the Pandemic in 2020 there has been a national decline in the work force and that has hit on-call/volunteer organizations particularly hard.

The second major issue that effects the department staffing model is changes to the housing market within Westminster. Over the past ten years there has been a dramatic increase in housing costs. Due to the cost of housing the majority of the fulltime staff live outside of the community. Since the addition of fulltime staff in 1986, they have been strategically added as a stop gap to fill voids created in the on-call system as they appeared in order to maintain services. Up until ten years ago the majority of the fulltime staff lived in Westminster or in very close proximity, allowing them to be an effective resource when additional staff was needed for larger manpower intensive incidents. As the numbers of on-call firefighters dropped and fulltime staffing added they were a two fold benefit as they covered shifts while on duty and acted as on-call firefighters coming in for major incidents to fill the void. Fast forward ten years and the majority of the fulltime staff live in other communities and continue to move farther away in order to find

affordable housing, which increases their response time off duty making them less effective in filling the spots created by the lack of on-call firefighters. These firefighters come back for major incidents but due to their extended drive to the station they can no longer be counted on for the second and third pieces of apparatus as they have in years past.

To combat these factors the department has increased the on duty staffing in the fire station. Currently there is one Lieutenant, and three firefighters on duty (two fulltime firefighters and one per diem firefighter). The on-duty personnel take care of the lion share of incidents, inspections and training. However, when a major incident occurs the department relies heavily on mutual aid. In years past the department was able to rely on the on-call and off-duty staff when major incidents occurred with mutual aid being in the second tier of apparatus responding to incidents. Due to these changes, mutual aid apparatus are often times filling the role of the second or third piece of apparatus on a scene of a major incident. These mutual aid apparatus come from our neighboring communities which increases the time before they can be integrated into operations at a scene by an average of 10 minutes in the first group of units from our closest allies and as much as 15-20 minutes for a second group if the incident requires additional units. All told we continue to walk a staffing and manpower tightrope while balancing the increasing emergency response needs of the community with multiple significant changes to our historic staffing models and the financial constraints of the community. The department has been proactive in lessening the impact of these changes with continued recruitment and in house training of on-call firefighters, the use of per-diem firefighters to supplement the fulltime staffing and the pursuit and award of a federal staffing grant that started this year that provides us with two additional fulltime members for three years.

On-duty Staffing

The Westminster Fire Department currently has fifteen fulltime personnel. The Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and Administrator/EMT-B work a weekday administrative schedule. While the additional 12 members consisting of four Lieutenants and eight Firefighters, work rotating shifts to cover the town with two Firefighters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The department supplements our full-time staff with a part-time Firefighters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Throughout the year the department remained stable. Josh Emerson was promoted to Lieutenant in January of 2023 with the departure of Lt. Algarin from the department at the end of 2022. With the SAFER Grant Firefighters Steve Robinson and Sam Johnson were hired in March of 2023. These firefighters will be funded by the grant 100% of their regular salaries and benefits for a period of three years.

Moving into the next few years the department will continue to study the issues that face the department. The two primary areas that are being looked at are the increase in call volume that the department has seen. Over the past five years the department a 368 incident increase in calls. The administration of the department has studied this issue, the growth of the community is the driving factor. There is no single call type increasing, it is call types across the board driving this increase. With that said as the town is poised to grow in the near future the department is expecting to continue to see increases in calls for service. The second area that is being studied is the departments staffing model. Currently the department is at the upper end of what the current staffing model nationally is capable of handling.

In 2023 Pvts Zack Racicot, Colton Mauch and Sam Johnson all graduated from the Career Recruit Training Academy at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Springfield Campus. Each class the recruits elect one person as their spokesperson to speak on their behalf. Pvt. Racicot was honored as the class spokesperson for his recruit class. In each class one recruit is selected as the top recruit based on the student's grade point average and practical performance. Pvt. Mauch received the Richard M. Bangs award for the outstanding recruit in his class. He was the first recruit from Westminster to receive this award and a testament to his skillset and performance.

On-Call Staffing

The department has continued to see the national trend of on-call and volunteer shortages. I would first like to commend and thank all of those who proudly serve the department and community. This group of individuals provide a key service to the community and department; and without their service the department



would not be as successful as it is. The problem is there simply is not enough on-call/volunteers. The department continues to struggle to recruit on call firefighters due to a number of factors which include training, response requirements and a fundamental change in their life style. Lastly a gap exists with those who are interested in joining the fire service as a career.

On-call firefighters are required to complete a rigorous training program in order to become a firefighter. This training runs from four to six months long depending on the program and requires recruits attending two four-hour evening classes and one eight-hour weekend class. Completion of this training is just the start of their journey. Once a recruit becomes a firefighter there are additional training requirements where these firefighters are taught about department specific equipment, policies and procedures and other department specific requirements.

To become an on-call firefighter requires a fundamental change in lifestyle which can be a difficult transition for some. It requires responding to incidents in the middle of the night, during in-climate weather, holidays, birthdays and other major life events. It requires firefighters responding to a fire, staying up all night long and then going to their regular job in the morning. Many prospective firefighters are not able to make this change and forgo continuing in the process.

Another area of concern is that the on-call firefighters are asked to respond more than ever. Over the years the department was able to remain a consistently on-call department supplemented by fulltime day staff. As the call volume has increased and necessitated the change to fulltime staff handling a majority of the smaller incidents with the on-call staff being required for the major incidents. As the call volume continued to increase on-call firefighters have been asked to respond the incidents a much higher rate than previously and that has become unsustainable to maintain a strong call force.

With that said the on-call department has reached critical levels. The personnel level has reached a record low while the department is experiencing the highest level of emergencies in its history. The issue was first identified Chief MacAloney in 1999. This issue has been well studied by Chief MacAloney, Chief Nivala and Chief Butterfield. This shortage developed beginning with the on-call staff working out of town with critical service gaps between the hours of 6:00AM through 6:00PM. Today the critical issue is not being able to recruit and retain on-call firefighters while at the same time changes to the town's employment base have necessitated that on-call firefighters have relocated due to their employer moving from the area. This was most evident with Simplex and most recently Johnsons Controls shutting down operations in Westminster.

Lastly as the fire service continues to grow, expand and become more technical many who enter the ranks of on-call firefighters are looking to become a career firefighter. As these on-call firefighters join departments, gain experience and they also become EMT's or Paramedic's to obtain the basic requirements to be hired in a career fire department. As these firefighter's progress through their career some choose to leave their on-call positions or modify the amount of time they have to offer.

Year	Calls for Service	On-Call Firefighters	Part-Time Firefighters	Full-Time Firefighters
2000	791	34	0	3
2010	1,162	21	7	7
2021	1,783	7	16	10
2022	1,903	6	18	12
2023	1,919	2	22	14

Call Volume

2023 was another year where the department continued to break the previous year's call volume. This year the department responded to 1,919 emergency incidents. This was not as large of an increase as the department has faced in previous years but it still becomes a challenge to continue to provide services.

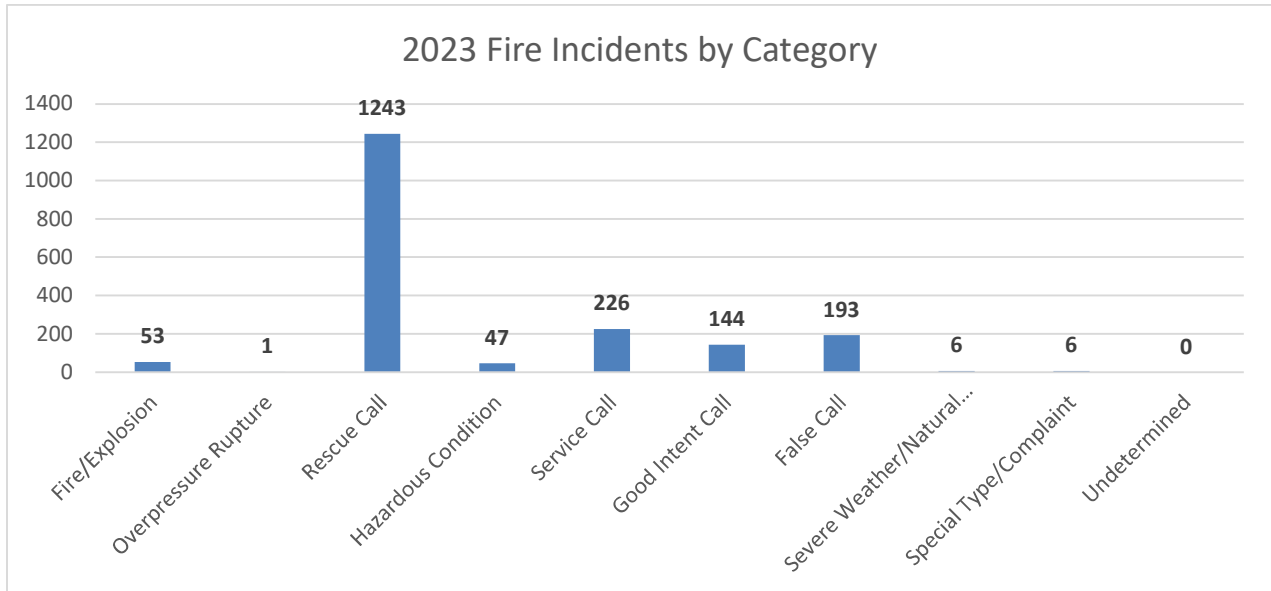
Type	Total	Percentage
Fire/Explosion	53	2.80%
Overpressure Rupture	1	0.10%
Rescue Call	1243	64.8%
Hazardous Condition	47	2.40%
Service Call	226	11.80%
Good Intent Call	144	7.50%
False Call	193	10.10%
Severe Weather/Natural Disaster	6	0.30%
Special Type/Complaint	6	0.30%
Undetermined	0	0.00%
Total	1,919	100.00%

Through 2023 the department responded to a total of 25 building fires and a total of 53 fires. As the department has continued to deal with the shortage of on-call firefighters the department's run card has changed. In previous years a Working Fire was handled



with the apparatus from Westminster only and mutual aid to cover the station. Now a Working Fire brings six pieces of apparatus from our mutual aid partners. This included two engines to the

fire, one ladder to the fire, two engines to cover the station and one ambulance to the scene. Woods Ambulance from Gardner provides the department with a stand by ambulance for fires on all Working Fire or greater fires. In 2020 as the on-call firefighter shortage entered a critical phase this ambulance was added to the run card. At one fire there were two transports as a result of injuries and there was a delay with for an ambulance to arrive on scene. With the addition of the ambulance on scene for fires at least 50% of the time a transport results from either occupant on scene or injuries to firefighters.



Emergency Medical Services

In 2023, our Emergency Medical Services have witnessed another year of substantial development and enhancement. Building on the solid foundation laid in the previous year, we've significantly advanced our systems and processes, reaffirming our dedication to delivering outstanding emergency care.

This year, we've seen further improvements in our medication logistics. We continued to refine our system for managing controlled narcotics, ensuring secure storage and timely replenishment. Upgrades to our medication tracking systems were implemented, improving accuracy and efficiency and maintaining optimal stock levels to meet increasing



service demands. We worked diligently with pharmacy staff to streamline the process of restocking and control of medications.

Our in-house training capabilities have continued to grow. We expanded our Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) program, allowing a greater number of providers to be trained and certified within our department. This enhancement has not only reduced costs but also promoted a culture of ongoing learning and development among our staff. This year we will be offering Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) to our providers. With the growing population of younger families, this training allows our providers to have the most up to date options and knowledge for the potential difficult scenario of providing emergency prehospital care to our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

Collaborating with local Police, Town Hall, and DPW, we extended our training programs to the broader community for the third consecutive year. All DPW personnel received certification in CPR, AED usage, and Basic First Aid. We have maintained the implementation of DPW supervisor vehicles with advanced first aid kits, specifically designed for the emergencies they might encounter.

The Parks and Recreation Counselors and the Oakmont Coaching staff were also certified in CPR, a result of acquiring new CPR equipment funded by the recent town meeting article. As a result, we have expanded the opportunity for the community as a whole to acquire basic first aid training as well as CPR certification.

With Dr. Matthew LoContte's medical direction, we've started implementing an expanded scope of practice. This initiative allows our practitioners to effectively manage high acuity conditions in challenging locations like Mount Wachusett. Dr. LoContte expertise in Tactical Medicine and Operations has been beneficial in preparing our team for ASHER (Active Shooter Hostile Event Response) situations, greatly enhancing our operational capabilities. Finally, Chief Butterfield diligently created, authored, and implemented a four-part training system that we have implemented department wide. The program that Chief Butterfield created was granted approval through the Commonwealth Department of Public Health and has allowed us to bring our practices up to date in a rational and systematic manner. This new training is decades ahead of the existing standard that is being taught.

In 2023, we successfully replaced our CPR machines. Thanks to excellent maintenance, we were able to trade in our old machines and outfit 3 pieces of apparatus with new systems. This addition significantly bolsters our ability to handle multiple simultaneous EMS calls.

We have ordered the replacement for Ambulance A1. We are expecting to take delivery of the new ambulance sometime in FY26. The extended lead time is due to material shortages nationwide. Our proactivity in placing this order has resulted in the town saving thousands due to inflation and supply and demand. This new vehicle is expected to further improve our service efficiency and response capabilities.

As we move into 2024, our department is focused on integrating more virtual classes and special training opportunities through local facilities. Our objective continues to be providing the highest level of care by staying at the forefront of medical advancements and equipping our staff with the latest training and tools.

In conclusion, 2023 has been a year of notable achievements and growth for our EMS services. We are committed to serving our community with the highest professionalism and care, constantly seeking to improve and adapt to the changing demands of emergency medical services.

Ambulance Calls By Level of Care

Hospital	Occurrence	Percentage
At Scene Other	0	0.00%
No Treatment Required	8	0.69%
Patient Refused Care	217	18.61%
Treated and Released or Refused Transport	0	0.00%
Treated, Transferred Care	1	0.09%
Treated, Transported by EMS (ALS)	594	50.94%
Treated, Transported by EMS (BLS)	346	29.67%
Treated, Transported by Private Vehicle	0	0.00%
Unknown	0	0.00%
Total	1,166	100%

Ambulance Call by Destination

Destination	Occurrence	Percentage
Health Alliance - Leominster	365	31.30%
Heywood Hospital	445	38.16%
Other, In-State	4	0.35%
St. Vincent's	9	0.77%
UMASS Memorial	4	0.34%
UMASS University	65	5.57%
No Destination	274	23.50%
Total	1,166	100%

Simultaneous Incidents

Through 2023 the department responded consistently to simultaneous calls ending the year with a total of 280 incidents. This was 20 less simultaneous calls than the department faced in 2022 but remains a prominent issues the department continues to grapple with. This issue began to emerge in 2018 with the drastic reduction of on-call firefighters. Response times for second and third calls increased as well as the reliance on mutual to respond to incidents that on-call and off-duty staff used to respond to. Since this gap was identified the department began to look for ways to optimize response and meets the needs of the community. Since the departments request for additional staff was approved by the community the department was able to handle more simultaneous responses within the department than previously. The department had a reduction of 27% of mutual aid medical transports.



2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
132	170	182	233	300	280

Previously the large gap in response was during the daytime hours between 8:00AM through 6:00PM as this was the time where most of on-call department was at their fulltime job. Since the mid 2010's a shift occurred where the department was struggling to meet the response needs during the overnight hours. The ability to handle more than one incident at a time has become a critical issue for the department. The citizens expect timely service when they call 911 for service. The vast majority of these incidents occur during the daytime hours. As the on-call shortage continues the department will be left to rely more heavily on on-duty staff to handle incidents.

Fire Prevention

Throughout 2023 the department compelled 786 inspections and issued 298 open air fire permits. In 2023 town continued to see a decrease in new one and two family construction but the housing resale market remained strong. Along with the residential component the core inspectional requirements have remained the same. These include inspections that are required by law for the renewal of liquor licenses, school inspections and commercial inspections.

Beyond these core areas there has been quite a few large scale projects that will be starting in 2024 which include the new senior housing and a mixed use building located at 152 State Road East. These large projects require a significant amount of plan review, meetings and on-site inspections. These projects are expected to start in 2024 and will require a significant amount of time, inspections and permits issued from Fire Prevention.

One area where the department has seen significant change is in the solar and battery power markets. Solar power related inspections significantly increased over the past year and is only expected to grow as the push for renewable energy sources continues. These inspections are a two fold process for the department. Firstly fire prevention reviews each plan for compliance with setbacks for firefighter access and the inspection itself to ensure the installation was completed per the submitted plans. Working on roofs becomes increasingly dangerous under smokey conditions encountered during a fire so ensuring there is access to the roof is important. The second part of this process are these installations are entered into the dispatch software database so firefighters are able to determine whether solar exists on a property prior to their arrival. This is important so a firefighter can shut the system down and reduce the chance of electrical related issues.



Battery installations are another area that the fire department has seen significant growth. Technology to store power has become readily available to homeowners and this area is expected to increase in the coming years as technology increases and costs reduce. Battery storage has proven to be a safe and effective way for homeowners to reduce utility costs. However, lithium ion batteries present a significant hazard to firefighters when they fail. Each installation above 1KW of storage requires a permit for installation from the fire department in conjunction with the building department. This ensures that the proper safeguards for occupants and firefighters are provided. As this new market continues to evolve it is expected that these installations are going to become more common.

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.

One of the main changes to Fire Investigation in 2023 was the formation of a regional fire investigation unit through Massachusetts Fire District 8. This unit came online July 1st of 2023. Each department in the district has continued to face a decline in the number of investigators due to many factors. These include aging out of longtime fire investigators, lack of new fire investigators, and the overall decline in on-call departments throughout the district. Fire investigation has continued to become increasingly technical and requires far more training to maintain the standards of the field.

Lt. Chadbourne was selected to join the Fire Investigation Unit representing Westminster due to his technical competence. Throughout the year the department requested the investigation unit to investigate two fires in town and Lt. Chadbourne investigated 12 fires within the district.

Public Education

In 2023 Lt. Emerson was appointed to the position of SAFE Coordinator. Throughout the year there was a continued drive to deliver SAFE education through the Senior Center as well as getting involved in the school system to a greater extent. To that end, a week was spent with the 5th grade class reviewing fire safety topics, talking about the fire department, and showcasing the trucks to the students. Additionally, the 4th grade class utilized the SAFE program to learn about the heart and medical emergencies. Throughout the year various levels of boy scouts were educated in fire safety at the fire station as well as showcasing the Fire Service as a potential career. Finally, based on several cases in the community Lt. Emerson has been setting up a community risk reduction program to better identify, assist, and coordinate resources for members of the community who require temporary help but do not meet criteria for traditional services. 2024 will see a continued move to better develop the program and utilize it to a greater extent. Further, there will be a greater initiative in addressing fire safety in the elementary schools to target all age groups as well as developing a SAFE program for the high school students.

Specialty Community Services

National Night Out

Due to weather events in 2023 National Night Out was cancelled. The department looks forward to this event in 2024.

Halloween Bonfire

2023 the department saw a resurgence of the Halloween Bon Fire. With three years of Covid behind the department 2023, was a well attended event. This is the highest attended event that the department puts on each year alongside our partners at the Forbush Memorial Library. The apple cider and costume contest are done by the Forbush Memorial Library.



Event Planning

The department continues to be part of community event planning. Due to the ongoing pandemic a majority of the annual events were cancelled. The department looks forward to working with our community partners ensuring a safe enviroment for all those in attendance.

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 occuring.

Fire/Police Department Softball Game

In 2023 the Police and Fire Department Softball game made a return. We hope to make this an annual event. It was a close game but the Fire Department inched out the win for 2023.



Department Training

The Training Division is led by Deputy Chief Bean in collaboration with the Fire Chief, EMS Coordinator, Lieutenants and a number of the Privates throughout the year. The Training Division is also an active member of our districts training officers working group and works in concert with the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, Central Mass EMS, Medical Director Dr. Loconte, MIIA, Professional EMS and Mount Wachusett Community College.

In 2023 the Division provided the Department with 266 hours of training on a myriad of topics. The first six months of the year focused on honing our core skills while achieving compliance with State and Federal mandates. These courses incorporate an annual refresher on our breathing apparatus, bloodborne pathogens, hazardous materials response, the skills needed to operate as a member of an Engine or Ladder company, auto extrication and



roadway safety. During this time the department also hosted the MIIA driving simulator and were one of the first departments in the region to utilize a cutting edge, virtual reality training provided by CMEMS focused on improving field medical providers care of children. In the second half of the year we conducted an apparatus operator academy, rural water supply drill and wilderness rescue training with our mutual aid partners as well as hosted the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy's Flashover program. Aside from these larger scope training sessions the Lieutenant on each shift provided their groups with a daily shift drill which honed in on more specific topics, some of which included the proper use of our 5 gas meters, rollout of a new ventilation chainsaw and a deep dive into the various components of Rapid Intervention Team operations.

Emergency Medical training this year consisted of quarterly Morbidity & Mortality rounds conducted by our Medical Director Dr. Loconte from UMASS. These rounds give our staff an opportunity to review the care that we delivered to select cases with our Doctor, who provides insight into the outcome of the patients and any potential improvements we could make on our patients care. We also provide our staff with access to a self paced learning system thru Professional Ambulance in Cambridge that encompasses all the topics required to re-certify their licensure. In addition to this re-occurring annual training we provided a major focus on our response to potential Active Shooter events, this project was spearheaded by Chief Butterfield who developed a complete series of lessons based on the NFPA 3000 standard. The Chief delivered these lessons to the Police, DPW and Fire Departments in both Westminster and

Ashburnham. With a regional school district, responses to our Middle and High Schools are a joint response between both communities and having all of the stakeholders on the same page is vital. Aside from the training series the Chief also put countless hours into improving this joint response by spearheading a joint response memorandum and hosting table tops drills with the School District staff and all of the involved agencies.

The department held an apparatus operator course for seven members this summer. This course was coordinated by Lieutenant Chadbourne and taught in house by department personnel following the IFSTA curriculum for apparatus operators. This course, coupled with an Emergency Vehicle Operator (EVOC) class as well as a pre-determined amount of practice, driving and operating each piece of apparatus, gives the members the didactic and practical skills needed to drive and operate the department apparatus. This program has been recognized and approved by Mount Wachusett Community College as meeting the curriculum needed for credit in their Fire Science program and the members that completed the program are able to apply to the college for 3 college credits.

Looking into 2024 the Training Divisions focus is to continue sharpening the spear, preparing our members to mitigate the emergencies of the Town of Westminster with precision and professionalism.

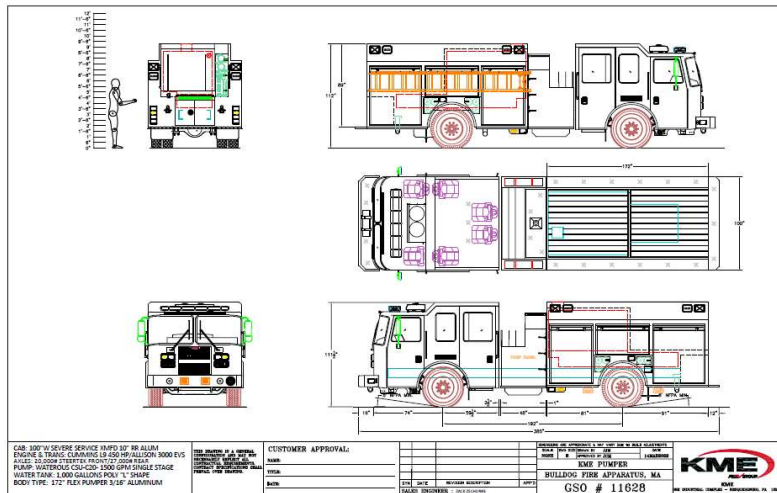
Apparatus

With the establishment of a preventative maintenance division within the department we have been able to combat common use issues, and provide a more thorough inspection of apparatus and equipment. Small engine maintenance which has typically been outsourced has been able to be kept in house. Lubrication of frame components and small non-mechanical issues have also been able to be completed by our maintenance division which has been assisted in taking some work load off the department of public works mechanics. Working in New England our apparatus is affected greatly by the corrosion which has shortened the life span of our equipment drastically. In conjunction with the department of public works, a preventative plan has been implemented to establish routine washing and inspection of the undercarriages followed by seasonal undercoating. The execution of this plan has shown to slow corrosion of our current apparatus and will likely help to prevent costs of larger issues moving forward.



Engine 1 - (2019 Class A Pumper) KME. The vehicle has a 1,500gpm pump with 1,250 gallons of water and is equipped with Class A foam for ordinary fires, this Engine is the primary attack truck for structure fires. This vehicle is three years old and is in excellent shape. It serves as the main attack engine and sees the lion share of response.

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 for ordinary fires. This vehicle is a dual role vehicle able to perform as an attack pumper or a tanker for incidents in the areas of town with no hydrants. This vehicle was refurbished in 2016 and is in moderate shape. The vehicle is starting to show its age. The replacement of this vehicle has been secured and is not expected to arrive until FY2025 when this vehicle has been programmed for the capital plan. By securing the replacement the town has secured a price that will not be subject to inflationary increases.



Engine 3 – (2013 Class A Pumper/Rescue) KME. This 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. This vehicle is in good shape but, has started to experience corrosion and component failure. Due to the compact nature of the vehicle, parts are significantly more expensive to replace. Over the coming years it is expected the cost to maintain this vehicle will rise significantly.

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 starting to show its age and has experienced a couple major break downs to include the motors turbo and corrosion damage to the sub-frame that holds that supports the ladder. These items were repaired as part of the refurbishment. This vehicle is reaching its end of life and it is expected that it will require substantial repairs annually until its replacement arrives. The remainder of the refurbishment will include corrosion control and part replacement on wear and tear items.

Engine 5- (2008 Mini-Pumper) CET. Engine 5 is the departments brush truck. It has 4-wheel drive, 500gpm pump and 300 gallons of water. The vehicle is also equipped with Class A foam to increase its effectiveness on ordinary fires. This vehicle is fair shape, substantial corrosion was

found on its sub-frame and was replaced. The Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) was disconnected from the vehicle due to high repair costs. To replace this system would require a major service and removal of parts of the body. The cost benefit was evaluated and the benefits of the CAFS did not necessitate its repair. This vehicle is scheduled for replacement in the coming year and should meet its life expectancy.

Car 1 - is a 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe that is designed for emergency response and as a command vehicle. This vehicle was placed in service in March of 2020 and is in excellent shape.

Car 2 - Is a 2022 Chevy Silverado 1500 designed for emergency response and a command vehicle. This vehicle was placed into service in 2023 and is in excellent shape.

Car 3 - is a 2016 Ford Explorer designed for emergency response and as a command vehicle. The vehicle is in moderate shape. Its replacement is which is a 2024 Chevy Silverado is currently awaiting outfitting for emergency response and use as a utility vehicle.

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 fair condition. It is showing signs of corrosion but should meet its scheduled life expectancy. The one factor that will extend this vehicle beyond its expected life span is the long lead times that are being encountered. A new vehicle will take 18-24 months to receive which will require more maintenance than expected.

Ambulance 2 – This is a 2020 Ford F-550 with a Braun ambulance body. This ambulance responds to medical emergencies and transports patients to the hospital. This vehicle is in excellent condition.

Support Trailers – In addition to the current fleet of apparatus the department also utilizes and maintains two supporting trailers. These trailers are used to store and transport equipment to scenes where they are more readily available. These trailers include a water rescue unit housing all water rescue equipment, including the department inflatable boat. The hazmat trailer houses spill containment tools, products and PPE which allows a greater amount of supplies to be carried to scenes and readily available.

Station

Please visit the Public Safety Building Committee's webpage on the Town's Website. This site has the most up to date information from the committee.

The committee is currently evaluating the Meetinghouse Road Site for a Police Station only and the current Public Safety Building Site for a Fire Station only. With the loss of the Hager Park Road Site the committee began to re-evaluate other town owned sites. The committee has approved Tecton Architects to provide basic site programming for both sites and these programs are expected to be complete in early 2024. Neither of these sites are as favorable as the Hager Park Road Site; and contain wetlands concerns and the cost of site development which will most likely exceed site development costs at the Hager Park Road site.

Future

The Westminster Fire Department is an all hazards response, prevention and education agency. The level of commitment from the men and women of the department are the backbone of the department. These individuals not only respond to emergencies, they continue their education and training which leads to a more capable firefighter responding to calls. The investment into their training and progress has been overwhelming



supported by the community and I am confident saying that the men and women of the department are top notch and the Town is lucky they choose to serve here. At the end of the day firefighting comes down to firefighters treating patients, extricated patients from vehicles, entering burning buildings to search victims and extinguish the fire. There is no single piece technology that exists to replace a firefighter. As the job continues to evolve it will require a commitment from the department to support their progress through training and equipment to ensure they are ready to respond to all emergencies encountered.

Please contact the office if you have any questions.

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