



## Fire Department Report, December 2016

In November, We responded to 12 calls for service; 7 Medical, 1 Fire, 2 Assist Citizen, 1 False Alarm, and 1 Nuisance. The Department completed 305 training and response hours in November. Additionally, I completed 160 admin hours bringing the departments total hours for November to 470. I completed a total of 196 hours for the month.

### **Fire District Formation Committee:**

In October, I wrote an addendum to a report offered by the Fire Chief of Garibaldi with regard to the conclusion of Garibaldi's Steering Committee. In that report I stated my recommendation that we form a district with the City of Garibaldi, and the Garibaldi Rural District. Here is my opinion of the options that we currently face.

The Committee did look at several options in the process of our meetings.

**Option #1 Regional district.** This is my recommended option. I feel that this option gives the citizens of a Bay City a sustainable model for fire protection for at least 15 to 20 years.

This will result in a special district with a tax rate, and to fulfill the current level of service it will cost the rate payers a bit more money. In the case of Bay City we would go from our current \$1.28 per thousand (General Fund and Levy) to approximately \$1.78 per thousand. Can it be done? It will be hard, but maybe we could get a commitment from the city to not asses the \$0.81 per thousand portion of the general fund for a few years to mitigate costs? **This is still my recommendation.**

**Option #2 Contract with another agency.** For Bay City this may be possible. It will also have a cost that may exceed our current general fund budget allocation and the levy that is set to expire next year.

This option can also lead to reduction in services as the closest Fire agency does not respond to medical call as we do. We can also expect to lose the identity and eventually many of our volunteers as we become a substation of a larger organization. And the contracted agency will be free to move our equipment to areas that they feel meets their response requirements and that may be outside of the City of Bay City.

**Option#3 Establish a Fee based system.** In what I read about these entities they are problematic in the extreme. And I would have several questions. 1) How do we collect and manage enrollment. 2) Who funds the agency if not enough people enroll 3) Do we simply watch houses burn down, or refuse to respond to John Doe's house if he didn't pay his membership?

Option #4 **No Fire Protection** This would be a disaster for our community and citizens. All of our residents and businesses would eventually pay more for insurance than we would be asking for the most expensive plan option considered. This insurance coverage would also be far less comprehensive than everyone's current fire policy. We would basically be paying a high risk pool rate to cover our mortgage requirement with almost no protection for our personal property absent extremely costly policies with secondary carriers.

And, beyond the cost of insurance, what is our personal safety worth. No initial response for medical calls so we will be waiting for an ambulance from either Garibaldi or Tillamook? We currently have the quickest response times in the county. But that would all change. And there are many other things our department and volunteers offer to the community, Emergency response in disasters to citizen assists for anything you could imagine.

And one more point. **Tillamook County's Emergency Response Systems** would all take a hit if Garibaldi or Bay City discontinued fire protection. Here are several secondary concerns. The current Ambulance Service Agreement requires response from Fire Agencies to augment their ambulance pool. For example we have 4 scheduled ambulances at most times and it is not uncommon to have more than one and often several ambulance runs occurring simultaneously. Many calls would require more than one ambulance to complete once fire resources were not available for lift assistance or other help. Neighboring Fire agencies would take a hit in ISO ratings, and in their response capabilities as Automatic and Mutual Aid would no longer be available from the areas with no fire protection. Police matters would also increase. We can and do respond to calls that are more police related than fire related. This would also place an increased burden on Law Enforcement, especially at times when there are no deputies on duty.

**Where are we now? I am hearing from Garibaldi that they were prepared to follow the committee's recommendation until Bay City began negotiations with Tillamook Fire District.**

**In October, I reported that the Garibaldi Steering Committee and I recommended that the City proceed with the formation of a Fire District to include Bay City, Garibaldi, and the Garibaldi Rural District. The Garibaldi steering committee and I have more than a year invested in this process, and we made our recommendation to the Council. If another option is being considered, shouldn't our volunteers and citizens be included. Our past process was a bottom up process from the departments and volunteers with as much input as we could garner from the councils and citizens at large. We currently face a couple of issues of time pressure. 1) Our Public Safety Levy will expire with the next budget, and we will not be able to continue to function anywhere near our current service level without that funding. 2) What is the time frame of the considered options? This is important as I am hearing the possibility of the formation of a regional district. What will this district look like? If it is Garibaldi, and Bay City, we can proceed at our discretion.**

**If we are considering a larger District such as the Tillamook Fire District, that will take some time. I am not entirely convinced that Tillamook will even begin to consider the re-formation of their district in the near term. This would be a huge undertaking for Chief Adams and I don't believe that he was planning for anything like this before his retirement. Also, steering our fire protection in to a larger district may reduce the overall cost, but with that cost reduction, we will face a reduction of services. We are currently providing the vast majority of our administrative, training, maintenance, and outreach entirely on the back of volunteers, Namely the Volunteer/Part Time Fire Chiefs. As we transition to paid staff how can we provide that same level of service for less cost? I don't think that it is possible. A large district can reduce administrative cost by streamlining functions, but there will be a tradeoff. Also, geographically what will the size of the district be? What is the expected call volume, and response times? I understand the need to save money and reduce cost, but please be aware that a reduction in our funding level will result in a reduction of services, and we in good conscious need to include the public in this discussion as soon as possible.**

### **City Ordinances:**

Has there been any progress or movement on our current ordinances with regard to personnel procedures for volunteers. Also, has there been any further discussion of where the Department ends and the Association begins, particularly with regard to liability. This is still a large concern for my Officers and the Association Officers.

On 11/16, I emailed the following to members of the Administrative Committee; "During last year's update of the personnel ordinance this was questioned by I believe the Auditors, and our Attorney as to whether I had had just arbitrarily set the volunteer reimbursement rates outside of council involvement. I had assumed that this was ok, as the budget to support this guideline was approved by the budget committee and council through the budget process. As my memory serves, we were to address this issue via a resolution, but I cannot remember that ever occurring. Perhaps we could complete this during the Administrative Committees review of the Departments authorizing Ordinances." Is there any action required on this matter?

## **Road side Conditions and Access: (All of these concerns remain the same)**

\*) Is there currently a plan for the mitigation of the slide on Portland Ave.? It appears to me to be moving with this recent rain. I have a concern that this slide could severely impact our response to a few residences in the area as it will exacerbate the closure of 9<sup>th</sup> St.

\*) Access to 14<sup>th</sup> St, North of Spruce St. I have in the past asked about maintenance of Williams between 16<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. This road was closed and gated due to concerns of vehicle traffic and mud. We have placed a frangible gate along the road way to block vehicle access. This road has overgrown to a point that it is impassable for fire apparatus. Would it be possible to clear the road and place some of our ODOT gravel in the roadway? The gate would continue to stop un-wanted vehicle traffic, and I would have a secondary access to several residences. This is a concern due to the fact that residences on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> are accessible by less than standard roads. 14<sup>th</sup> is narrow and the initial Apparatus may entirely block this road. We had a structure fire here and experienced this very issue. Luckily, we were able to mitigate the fire in the vehicle before the exposure of the house was fully involved. Had the house required more water, we would have been hard pressed to supply the required water do to the Hydrant on 14<sup>th</sup> and no access to secondary hydrants on 16<sup>th</sup> street. Regarding 15<sup>th</sup> St, there are two residences that we will have to fight from quite a distance away. 15<sup>th</sup> St is so narrow that it is nearly a tunnel of brush, and we will not be able to approach from within that roadway. Currently, we would have to hand carry hose from Spruce St, and 16<sup>th</sup> St. this will result in an extreme delay, and the distinct possibility that we will have to fight defensively and simply protect exposures.

\*) Access to Main St. east of 9<sup>th</sup>, including the Dew point area. In the process of the Patterson creek project, and our near miss of last December, I would like to ask about the possibility of secondary access to this area. Should Main between 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> experience any issues with trees, and or the adjoining creek, we will have no access to the residences (Approx. 37) that are in this area. ***Additional re Main and 9<sup>th</sup>: The recent rain has shown an additional weakness of this area, we had water over topping the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> and Main, and this would add to the need for secondary egress into this area. We have now had a partial failure of the culvert on 7<sup>th</sup> street south of Main. This failure has been plated for the individual access of the residents, but no emergency vehicles will be able to cross this plate. My current concern is with the stability of the culvert under this driveway and the possibility of this affecting Main St.***

**Emergency Preparedness:**

Our preparedness functions have been limited to Fire Department Operations.

**Recruiting:**

We are nearly fully staffed, we could however use another good volunteer or two. We have begun the online training program, and I am working out a system to document training and to incorporate this program into our overall program.

Respectfully,

Darrell Griffith  
Fire Chief  
Bay City Fire Department  
[firedept@ci.bay-city.or.us](mailto:firedept@ci.bay-city.or.us)  
503 377-0233

