

Fire & Rescue Department

As the Chief of the Sherborn Fire & Rescue Department, I am honored to provide our 2020 annual report. The Department experienced a very busy year in 2020. We responded to 649 emergency calls, which is 74 more emergency calls than we responded to in 2019. The Department completed 189 fire inspections and issued 587 permits in 2020.

Sherborn Fire & Rescue Department 2020 Statistics:

Total Emergency Calls:	649
Fire Responses	321
EMS Responses	235
Fire & EMS Responses	93
Fires	
• Building Fires	8
• Brush Fires	28
• Vehicle/Other Fires	4
Rescues	6
Hazardous Conditions	144
Alarm Investigations	79
Motor Vehicle Crashes	46
Service Calls	69
Property Losses from Fire (Estimate)	\$1,773,999
Property Saved from Fire (Estimate)	\$1,825,000
Inspections	189
Permits Issued	587

In 2020, the Department, as well as many other organizations, faced what may be its greatest challenge in its history. Sherborn Firefighters started preparing for **COVID-19** in January, through additional training and the acquisition of supplies. As cases in Sherborn were on the rise, our ambulance began treating and transporting patients with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. Due to supreme policies developed by our in-house COVID-19 team, Sherborn Firefighters have remained safe and secure throughout the pandemic.

Amidst the challenge of delivering emergency services to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department responded to several serious emergencies in Town. They include but are not limited to the following incidents:

- January 17th: 3-alarm house fire on Towne Lyne Road. Despite extreme efforts by Firefighters to contain the blaze, the home was a total loss. Nine other Fire Departments assisted at the scene.
- January 30th: Motor vehicle crash and fire on Woodland Street. Due to a fuel spill and components of the vehicle, fire extinguished after 1.5 hours.
- February 14th: Motor vehicle crash with entrapment on South Main Street. Sherborn's Ambulance arrived in less than a minute and extricated a person in the vehicle. Boston MedFlight requested and transported.
- March 8th: Simultaneous brush fires, one on Western Avenue and one on Curve Street. The fire on Curve Street spread to two outbuildings but was quickly contained by fire crews.
- June 25th: Labor intensive brush fire on Nason Hill Road in extreme heat/humidity. Fire contained to one acre. 30 Sherborn Firefighters operated.
- June 28th: Power surge on McGregor Drive from lightning strike. Multiple homes with damage and smoke conditions. 2nd alarm struck, bringing in multiple mutual aid fire crews to the scene and station coverage. Serious damage averted due to Firefighters suppressing power in multiple houses.
- July 13th: Gas leak on Southfield Lane after contractor struck a gas main. Several homes evacuated. Fire crews dispersed gas using hose lines. Multiple mutual aid fire crews to the scene and coverage.

- December 25th: 2-alarm house fire on Morse Road. Firefighters mounted an aggressive attack but were unable to save the home. 5 other Fire Departments assisted at the scene.

The Department continues to work hand in hand with surrounding communities as well as with Fire District 14, of which 26 towns, including Sherborn, are members of. District 14 offers us the capability to ensure the response of a Dive Team, Technical Rescue, Communications, Fire Investigation or Incident Management Team if we need it. Some notable mutual aid incidents that we responded to this year include:

- March 17th: Chief Ward, Engine 3 & Engine 4 responded to Holliston for a 3-alarm warehouse fire on Cross Street. Sherborn units operated for nearly 10 hours in extremely dangerous conditions. This was the worst fire in Holliston in 35 years.
- May 6th: Chief Ward and Engine 4 responded to Speen Street in Natick for a 2-alarm house fire.
- November 7th: Chief Ward, Deputy Chief Dowse and Quint 1 responded to Ashland for a 2-alarm house fire.

The Department continues to be a primarily on-call agency. The Fire Chief, a grant-funded Fire Lieutenant and an Administrative Assistant/EMT are the only fulltime employees working for the Department. The remaining department staff consists of per diem & on-call Emergency Medical Technicians and on-call fire officers and firefighters. Staffing continues to be a challenge given the demographics of the community. The staffing challenges for our on-call Department are not unique to Sherborn, as there is currently a nationwide shortage of on-call or volunteer Firefighters. With the foundation of full-time staff during the day while many of our on-call members are at their full-time places of employment, and with per-diem staff for EMS, we continue to use cost-effective methods to adequately staff our emergency responses.

We are always looking for help! We invite any resident who is interested to be a Firefighter or EMT to contact us at (508)653-3270 or e-mail me directly at zward@sherbornfire.com.

The Sherborn Fire & Rescue Department consists of several divisions that oversee certain aspects of our operations. These include the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division, the Public Education Division, the Fire Prevention Division, and the Training Division.

The **EMS Division** is led by **EMS Coordinator Ari Winograd**, who is assisted by Assistant EMS Coordinators Luke Barney and Andrew Campbell. The EMS Division is responsible for overseeing our ambulance service, which includes all EMS responses and the training of our EMTs. Sherborn enjoys a professional, prompt EMS response at a fraction of the cost of other communities. This is done by staffing our ambulance with per-diem or part time EMTs. In 2020, our ambulance averaged a response time of about 5 minutes, which is quite an accomplishment for a Town the size of Sherborn.

The **Fire Prevention Division** is under the direction of **Chief Zack Ward**. This Division is responsible for conducting inspections and issuing permits, all in the interest of life safety. Some of these inspections include smoke & carbon monoxide detector inspections, annual stable inspections, annual business inspections, and pre-fire planning.

The **Public Education Division** is headed up by **Lt. Kristin Buckler**. The Public Education Division is charged with providing fire safety and medical education to residents of the Town of Sherborn, with the goal of improving emergency preparedness. This is accomplished with fire safety classes at the Pine Hill Elementary School, free CPR & First Aid courses, voluntary home safety visits and social media outreach, amongst other initiatives. The Public Education Division also manages our Project Lifesaver program, which entails GPS bracelets on individuals who are a flight risk from their families. Sherborn Firefighters have rescued several people using this initiative over the years. For more information, please visit our website at sherbornma.org.

The **Training Division** is overseen by **Captain Josh Buckler**, who is responsible for all Department training. As the duties of Firefighters and EMTs evolve, Sherborn Firefighters and EMTs are constantly training to answer the call. Training is held 3-4 times per month for both fire & EMS topics. EMTs are required to have 40 hours of continuing education every two years, and now that municipalities fall under OSHA, Firefighters have approximately 20 hours of mandatory training per year in areas such as respiratory protection, HAZMAT, and other topics. Firefighters are initially required to achieve Firefighter I/II

certification, which includes attending a five-month course that is held on weeknights and weekends at the Mass. Fire Academy in Stow. In 2020, we had two Firefighters, **Arthur Fenno** and **Michael Goldstein** complete this training. Due to the dedication of our staff, we currently have four members in the program, with several more preparing to enroll in it in 2021. The Department also sent four members to the Fire Officer I program through the Mass. Fire Academy: **Lt. Kristin Buckler**, **Lt. Chris Nudd**, **Lt. Chris Winner** and **EMS Coordinator Ari Winograd**. This intensive training will serve these members and Sherborn well for years to come.

We continue to aggressively pursue grants in order to lower our burden on Sherborn's taxpayers. We received the following grants this past year: a \$147,000 Assistance to Firefighters grant, an Emergency Management Planning grant, the SAFE grant, the Senior SAFE grant, and we benefited from the second full year of our SAFER grant, which funds our full-time Fire Lieutenant. The Department was fortunate enough to receive donations of equipment from the Sherborn Fire & Rescue Association (SFRA) which included rescue air bags and a smoke machine for training. We thank the SFRA for their continued support!

The Department experienced several notable personnel changes this year.

The Department benefited from several promotions in 2020. Firefighter/EMT **Chris Nudd** was promoted to **Lieutenant** in February. Lt. Nudd has served with the SFD for over 6 years, and recently became a certified Paramedic. Acting Lieutenant **Kristin Buckler** was appointed as the full-time **Lieutenant** in November. Lt. Buckler has been a member of the SFD since 2004, is a certified Firefighter and has extensive training in other areas, such as Officer training. We look forward to working with both of these Officers in the future!

We were able to hire and train several new members: Probationary EMTs **Mike Anchan**, **Martin Kinsman** and **Nicole Walsh**, and Probationary Firefighters **Rami Chakroun**, **Justin Foster**, **Anthony Luoni**, **Andrew Morahan**, **Matt Morahan**, **Hans Olson** and **Jordan Schweigert**. Welcome to our team!

Two members reached years-of-service milestones in 2020: both **FF/EMT Dan Gould** and **FF/EMT Mike Murphy** completed their 5th year of service to Sherborn.

Thank you all for your continued dedication to the Department!

The Department could not complete its mission without the support of the Town's leadership. We would like to thank the Select Board, Advisory Committee and Capital Budget Committee for their continued support. We would like to thank Town Administrator David Williams, Assistant Town Administrator Diane Moores and Jeanne Guthrie for their continued support and assistance.

We would especially like to thank **Interim Police Chief David Bento** and the members of the **Sherborn Police Department**. Our jobs require us to work hand in hand with each other, and we do that very well due to the supreme professionalism of our Police. Our Police Officers also serve as our dispatchers, summoning us to every call that we respond to. We look forward to working with the SPD for years to come.

We would also especially like to thank **DPW Director Sean Killeen** and the members of the **Sherborn Department of Public Works**. The DPW is very supportive of this Department in many areas, but most certainly in the maintenance of our vehicles and our two fire stations. Their work is not unnoticed, and we appreciate the help.

I would like to thank all of the members of this department for their commitment and dedication. Sherborn Fire & Rescue Department personnel make great sacrifices and consistently provide all hazards mitigating emergency services to the community. I would especially like to thank **Deputy Chief Jon Dowse** and **Deputy Chief Neil McPherson** for the support over the past year. My first full year as Chief was made easier by having two knowledgeable people such as these gentlemen as the Deputy Chiefs of the Sherborn Fire & Rescue Department. I look forward to our continued success as an organization in the future.

Call us if you need us. We are here for you!

Respectfully submitted,

Zachary J. Ward
Fire Chief