

## WHATCOM COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 11

### Lummi Island Fire Department

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[www.lummiislandfire.com](http://www.lummiislandfire.com)

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

The first two months of 2020 were predictable: powerlines, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls, chaining up the trucks. There was one exception: the chassis for the new fire truck was delivered to the manufacturer. Then on March first, things changed very quickly to an unprecedented, fifth dimension type twilight zone. I spent the last two weeks of March in the Emergency Coordination Center helping procure PPE (one tiny part) of the Whatcom Unified Command COVID-19 response. It is mind-blowing how much effort goes into such a massive response. The level of success is directly proportionate to the level of group cooperation and the ability for people to tame their personalities and leave their egos at the door. The experience made me realize how thankful I am to serve a small, tight-knit, thankful community.

The department continues to have a low number of responders, so the Board of Commissioners held a special meeting at the end of February to discuss alternate staffing models. One option discussed was to increase stipend amounts and add a second guaranteed responder with the Battalion officer, then the pandemic hit. Fortunately, during the lockdown we had enough team members available to send four responders to each call and had all others stay home until we needed additional help. This worked well to provide the best service to the community while keeping our responders as safe as possible. Our Battalion Officers enjoyed knowing there was an adequate number of initial responders to take care of incidents. On the flip side, the financial implications of having guaranteed responders created a reality check about the effects on future budgets. All things must come to an end though, and we returned to normal response operations at the beginning of 2021.

Interestingly, during the pandemic, the district saw one of the largest influxes of new members with six additions to the roster. On the other hand, three members - Brian Thompson, Jette Baker and John Mulhern - left the Department. Combined, they provided District 11 with 43 years of medical, firefighting and leadership experience which will not be easy to replace. This ebb and flood of volunteer responders always remains a challenge for our district. The District's emergency response system saved a Islander's life using CPR in June - just the 2<sup>nd</sup> in our history. (The first was in April 2019.) This was a team effort that involved Bellingham Fire's Dispatch Center, local first responders, Whatcom Chief, Ferndale Medic unit, Airlift Northwest and PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center. Emergency Medical Services of Whatcom County are not provided by one agency, it is a combination of many organizations and governments working together that makes the system work.

Covid-19 had little impact on our training schedule; we missed only a few sessions in April before getting set up with Zoom. In May, when restrictions eased, were able to resume in-person training by taking appropriate precautions. Normally, we take a break from training in July and August, but this year, the new members went through their orientation training during that time and received their pagers in the early fall. Towards the end of October, we had an exciting training with the aircrew of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. Together, we practiced bringing a patient to the helicopter while the blades are turning (called a "hot load"). This is a dangerous operation, but-doing it in a non-emergency situation with supervision and guidance prepares us for the real thing when it happens. The East County Recruit Academy used our training grounds for the final skills assessments for 21 recruits at the end of November. Lynden Fire Department, Districts 1, 19, 14, and Washington State Fire Marshal's office all descended on our facilities. The event was a huge success and helped foster relationships among all the agencies.

Our back-up alert system, *IamResponding*, has proven to be a valuable tool. In addition to being more reliable than our radio paging system, it provides more details about the incident. Responders can indicate if they are responding and we can send urgent messages to our responders directly. We added a cordless cutter/spreader tool (Jaws of Life) with funds donated in memory of Craig Smith. The battery power allows a faster deployment by eliminating starting an engine and hooking up hoses, both of which limit where an operator can use the tool. Another donation provided two portable light stands to increase visibility and safety. Craig Smith was memorialized with a granite bench donated by his wife Sharron. It sits under the overhang by our front door and hopes to find a home inside a new station someday.

In July Michael, Lisa and I flew to South Dakota to do a pre-delivery inspection on the new fire truck. Unfortunately, we identified several significant issues and could not approve it. We spent the rest of the year working with the manufacturer to get those items resolved to our satisfaction.

At the January Board meeting Commissioner Ed Scott announced he would be resigning his position at the close of the April meeting. The Governor’s proclamation prohibiting elected officials from meeting in person proved challenging when it came to executive sessions where confidentiality is the reason for these sessions. We overcame the challenge and after interviews and deliberations, the board appointed Steve Kopanos to fill the vacancy. The board considered hiring an architect to create conceptual drawings of a new station in order to elicit feedback from the community. Unfortunately, the price tag for these architectural drawings was steep: \$30,000. David Nesbitt was willing to generate drawings of a proposed station for the purpose of community input. The pandemic put brakes on the project, but David and I are in communication and the project is moving forward again.

Covid-19 did not slow down the Disaster Preparedness (DP) Division. The Firewise/Adaptive Community group performed 12 home evaluations and worked with Lummi Island Scenic Estates to complete three fuel reduction projects. Sixty volunteers put in 400 hours removing, chipping, and disposing of 700 cubic yards of debris. Funding was provided through a grant, private donations and Scenic Estates Homeowners Association. Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) held several lead trainings, helping develop new MYN groups, participating in two Washington State DP Outreach Programs, creating a data base of participants in the DP programs, and a new DP map in photoshop. A survey of previous and existing MURS (multi-use radio service) and HAM radio operators uncovered some issues to that program. An action plan was developed, a technical committee convened and improvements started.

In addition to gaining new members, another positive outcome of the pandemic was the first drive-thru flu clinic on the island. Twice as many people were vaccinated than in previous years; it was so successful and well-received that it will likely be the “new normal” for future flu clinics. Unfortunately, it was impractical to do a drive-thru for the Covid vaccines.

Department members spent 1,820 hours training on self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs), pumps, hoses, patient care, report writing, scene size up, “reading” smoke, hazardous materials, and lots more. Members also spent 376 hours on incidents (not including time putting rigs back in service and writing reports), 284 hours on weekly inspecting the apparatus ensuring their readiness and ongoing familiarization of the equipment and locations. Our low call volume requires a constant repeat of the basics to keep sharp on the vast variety of skills needed to respond to all hazards the community may call upon us to mitigate.

Years	Member	Training	Rank	Occupation / Company
43	John Granger	Firefighter EMT	EMS Chief	Retired Flight Nurse - Airlift Northwest
31	Duncan McLane	Firefighter EMT	Chief	Fire Chief - Whatcom County Fire District 11
27	John Mulhern	Firefighter EMT	Captain	Purser / Operator - Whatcom Chief
16	Gary Poole	Firefighter IFA	Captain	Operator - Whatcom Chief
16	Michael Lish	Firefighter EMT	Asst Chief	Training / Operations Officer - WCFD #11
12	Chris Immer	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Pastor - Village Missions
12	Jette Baker	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Co-Owner, Sail the San Juans Charter Company
12	Lisa Lish	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Secretary - Whatcom County Fire District 11
11	Sam Bowman	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Self Employed/Student Bellingham Tech
7	Dan Ohms	FireFighter EMT	Firefighter	Retired Paramedic / Firefighter - Bellingham Fire
7	Doug Cash	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Purser / Operator - Whatcom Chief
6	Brittany Swaen	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Registered Nurse - Northwest Endoscopy
5	Alissa Daschbach	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Research Scientist - WWU
5	Cara Blake	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Student - Saint John's University NY
4	Brian Thompson	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Attorney - United States Air Force
3	Gabel Bredy	Firefighter EMT	Firefighter	Deckhand / Purser - Whatcom Chief
1	Kjerstin Secord	Firefighter IFA	Firefighter	Teacher - Omak School District
1	Loren Conroy	Firefighter IFA	Firefighter	Administrative Assistant - Self Employed
1	Kayla Venema	Firefighter IFA	Firefighter	Endoscopy Technician - NW Endoscopy
1	Leah Paisano	Firefighter IFA	Firefighter	Self Employed, Legoe Bay Shellfish
1	Nick Kluge	Firefighter IFA	Firefighter	General Contractor - Self Employed

<b>INCOME</b>			
<u>TAX REVENUE</u>	<b>Budget 2020</b>	<b>Actual 2020</b>	<b>Budget 2021</b>
Fire - Levy	\$355,833	\$364,124	\$367,469
EMS - Levy	\$98,817	\$99,388	\$100,803
Timber Harvest Tax	\$150	\$419	\$150
<u>OTHER REVENUE</u>			
Interest	\$7,190	\$8,624	\$3,475
Burn Permits	\$200	\$150	\$125
Memorials, Grants & Other	\$1,850	\$14,922	\$650
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$464,040</b>	<b>\$487,627</b>	<b>\$472,672</b>

<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Legislative Services	\$15,415	\$9,149	\$17,220

<u>FIRE CONTROL</u>			
Administration	\$138,814	\$139,020	\$140,565
Suppression	\$37,182	\$49,811	\$39,218
Prevention	\$300	\$82	\$300
Disaster Preparedness	\$500	\$4,168	\$500
Training	\$27,610	\$24,285	\$29,106
Facilities	\$8,100	\$7,574	\$10,030
Repairs and Maintenance	\$7,950	\$7,216	\$10,475
<b>TOTAL FIRE</b>	<b>\$220,456</b>	<b>\$232,156</b>	<b>\$230,194</b>

<u>EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES</u>			
Administration	\$52,786	\$49,406	\$53,260
Rescue & Emergency Aid	\$42,764	\$75,244	\$44,962
Prevention	\$125	\$87	\$125
Training	\$16,513	\$14,105	\$29,936
Facilities	\$3,995	\$3,747	\$5,615
Repairs and Maintenance	\$7,625	\$6,658	\$10,480
<b>TOTAL EMS</b>	<b>\$123,808</b>	<b>\$149,247</b>	<b>\$144,378</b>

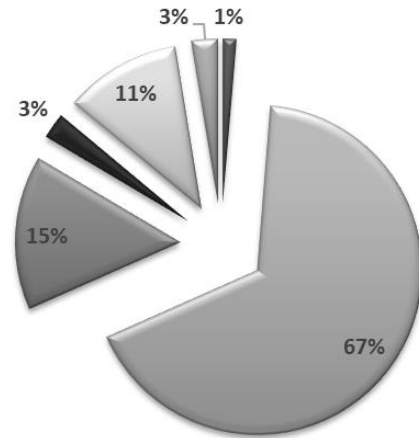
<b>CAPITAL OUTLAY</b>			
Equipment	\$442,949	\$397,704	\$60,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL</b>	<b>\$442,949</b>	<b>\$397,704</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$802,628</b>	<b>\$788,256</b>	<b>\$451,792</b>

**ACCOUNT BALANCES 12/31/2018**

EXPENSE	\$112,470
RESERVE	\$130,176
FACILITIES	\$25,250
APPARATUS	\$204,738
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$472,634</b>

### 2020 Response Data

Fire	1	1%
Rescue & EMS	53	67%
Hazard (No Fire)	12	15%
Service Call	2	3%
Good Intent	9	11%
False Alarm / Call	2	3%
TOTAL	<b>79</b>	100%



Average Response Time 10.9 Minutes

The District is doing everything possible to provide the best service with our available resources. Our most valuable resource is our team of volunteers. Unfortunately, volunteers are teetering on becoming an endangered species. We have some calls where 10 or 11 volunteers respond. The calls when only one volunteer can respond concern me the most. At that point, we have to wait for resources to come from the "big island". If you know of someone who has considered joining our team, or perhaps have thought of it yourself, please contact us. I cannot describe the reward of making a difference in the lives of your neighbors in their true time of need.

THANK YOU to the community at large for the donations of food, funds, or just a "thank you" in passing; the friends and families of the responders for their support; to Lisa Lish, Michael Lish and John Granger for all the hard work they do to help the District function, and to the three Commissioners, for their support and guidance. But most of all, thanks to the members listed earlier for their time, energy and effort to help provide the essential service to our community.

Respectfully Submitted, Duncan McLane, Fire Chief

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## **LUMMI ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

POSTAL CUSTOMER  
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