

**2018 Fire Chief's Report  
West Barnstable Fire Department  
Chief Joseph V. Maruca**

From an emergency response standpoint, 2018 was the West Barnstable Fire Departments (WBFD) second busiest year. The WBFD responded to 661 emergency calls in 2018. Of these, 28 were fires and 384 were for emergency medical services (EMS). Administratively, politically, financially and in all other aspects it was busy year and every year seems to get busier and more complex than the year before.

**Emergency Calls**

There were no big fires or complex emergency incidents in 2018. Our total fire loss (damage to West Barnstable property from fires) in 2018 was modest at \$32,000. This represents a sharp decline from 2017 when we had \$721,000 in fire losses. There were a few building fires that the fast, effective response of the WBFD made a substantial difference in the outcome and reduced the amount of damage. For instance, on Thursday, August 16, 2018 at 4:06 PM the WBFD was called to Tumbleweed's Quilt Shop for a fire. An electrical fixture in the ceiling caught fire and burning material fell onto the carpeting and inventory threatening to spread. Quick action by the employees by calling 911 and using a fire extinguisher to slow down the fire prevented a lot of damage. The WBFD's first engine arrived at the fire in 4 minutes and 48 seconds, and we had three engines and 12 firefighters on location in 9 minutes. As a result, there was little damage to the property and business.

<b>Annual Emergency Call Volume</b>	
Calendar Year	
1975: 156	2008: 651
1980: 309	2009: 533
1985: 326	2010: 567
1990: 305	2011: 649
1995: 396	2012: 608
2000: 431	2013: 654
2005: 536	2014: 630
2006: 502	2015: 758
2007: 534	2016: 627
	2017: 628
	<b>2018: 661</b>

Sixty percent of our emergency call activity was for EMS and motor vehicle crashes (MVC). This percentage of EMS/MVC to all other activity has remained steady for the past five years or more. Our emergency call volume has also remained somewhat steady for the past five years with four years having emergency call volume between 628 calls and 661 calls, with 2015 being the outlier with 738 emergency calls.

Our call volume and mix of calls is determined by the demographics of our community. The population of West Barnstable is heavily skewed towards older adults with about 30 to 35% of our population being over age 65. Statewide, the population over age 65 is only 16%. We have twice as many over age 65 persons as the typical community in Massachusetts. People over age 65 account for 50% of all ambulance trips in Massachusetts. This is why West Barnstable experiences twice as many calls for EMS as many similar towns across Massachusetts.

## Overlapping Emergency Calls

We continue to monitor how often we experience an overlapping emergency call. This is when we get a second or third emergency call while we are still handling the first call of the day. The WBFD, as with most small town fire departments, is best suited to handle one emergency call at time. Multiple simultaneous calls stretch our resources and capabilities, and in many cases they require us to call our neighbors for assistance (mutual aid).

Overlapping Emergency Calls		
Year	Overlapping Calls	% of Calls
<b>2018</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>14%</b>
2017	74	12%
2016	52	8%
2015	93	12%
2014	64	10%

In 2018, the WBFD experienced 90 overlapping emergency calls representing 14% of our emergency call activity for the year. One out of about seven times when we respond to an emergency, there will be a second emergency call before we've completed the first emergency call. While 14% overlapping is the highest percentage we've experienced since we started tracking this, it is still close to what we expect.

## New Ambulance (A-293)

On March 6, 2018 the WBFD placed its new ambulance in service. The ambulance was built by Lifeline in Iowa and is built on a Ford F-550 4x4 chassis. The ambulance cost \$300,000 and we were able to pay for the ambulance with cash (without raising taxes or borrowing money) because we have been setting aside money every year in savings for its purchase. We plan to continue saving annually for the next ambulance, and you will be asked to approve \$30,000 to be set aside in our Ambulance Stabilization Account for FY 2020. We expect our new ambulance to give us eight to ten years of service.



In addition to the new ambulance, we installed a new stretcher system in the ambulance. Our new stretcher lifts and loads itself with the use of electric motors and batteries. This significantly reduces the amount of lifting of patients that our firefighters must do. It makes our operations safer. The new stretcher system cost \$27,804 and half that cost was paid for by donations.

## New Fire Engine (E-294)

On April 10, 2018 our new fire engine arrived. Shortly after its arrival, when we started training to get ready for active duty, we discovered it had a serious defect. The truck developed an uncontrollable bounce when driven. It took seven months of tireless effort by our **Deputy Chief David Paananen** and **Lt. Bill Murray** to get Rosenbauer (the manufacturer) to take

ownership of the problem and correct it. We are fortunate that after a conference call with Rosenbauer's North American CEO, that Rosenbauer flew their national warranty manager and an engineer to meet with us at the dealership in Connecticut. As a result of the meeting, they agreed the defect was on them to repair. Today the truck is fine.



This new fire engine cost \$465,000. We paid \$165,000 in cash and are paying off the balance over 10 years at \$30,000 per year.

The new engine carries six firefighters, 750 gallons of water and can pump 1500 gallons of water per minute. It also carries our extrication and rescue equipment for motor vehicle crashes.

### **New Pickup Truck Soon (C-280)**

Late in 2018 the department ordered a new pickup truck to replace its 2007 Chevy 4-door pickup truck, known as Car-280. The new truck will be a Ford F-150 4-door, 4x4, with a trailer towing package. We are purchasing the truck at Colonial Ford in Plymouth through the state's group purchasing plan and the dealership's municipal sales division. The truck cost \$41,951 and the **West Barnstable Firefighters Association** donated \$16,951 towards the purchase. We expect the new truck to arrive in the spring of 2019.

With the new ambulance, the new pickup truck, and the new engine, the average age of our fleet has dropped from 17 years old to 13 years old. This should result in some savings on apparatus repair costs. It also means that we are generally driving a safer fleet of vehicles.

### **Ladder Truck Woes**

Each year we have our ladder truck (L-297) inspected by UL (f/k/a Underwriters Laboratories) to ensure it is safe to operate. The inspection is standard throughout the fire industry. They look at the aerial ladder's hydraulic components, electrical controls, and integrity of the steel. They also look at the condition of the hydraulics of the truck's stabilization system and the integrity of the truck's frame and other support systems. This year's inspection revealed some rust in the truck's torque box, a steel framed box that provides the structural support for the aerial ladder turntable to sit on top of. The rust is minor at this point, but we took the aerial ladder out of service until it could be evaluated by a factory engineer. A team, including an engineer, from Pierce Manufacturing, the company that built L-297, came to the Wbfd in November to evaluate the truck. We are still waiting for a clearance from the Peirce Engineer to allow us to use the aerial ladder, or not.

Pierce has provided us with price quotes for the repair of the rust and additional suggested upgrades and preventive steps to extend the life of the truck. The simplest repair was quoted at \$80,000 and the more extensive repair was quoted at \$200,000. Both repairs

are expensive enough to make us pause and evaluate whether or not spending these amounts is appropriate.



As we go into 2019, the department is undertaking a cost-benefit and operational analysis of whether or not we should repair or refurbish L-297, replace it with another used ladder truck, or eliminate it from our fleet and replace it with some other type of apparatus. Purchasing a new ladder truck is about a \$1 million expense and beyond the financial ability of our department and community.

L-297 was originally purchased with \$300,000 of federal grant money and \$50,000 of West Barnstable tax money. It is a 2002 truck. Without its aerial ladder, L-297 still functions as standard fire engine and serves as our second engine.

At this time, the department is not asking for any special funding to repair, refurbish or replace L-297. It will take us some months to determine the best course of action and you can look for our recommendation as part of next year's report and FY 2021 budget request.

### **The Rest of the Fleet**

The rest of our apparatus is in good condition in light of its age. Our 1985 Engine – Tanker is the oldest truck in our fleet at 33 years old. It was refurbished in 2005. It runs well, has only minor rust, and has no significant defects. Its primary issue is its age. It lacks modern safety features and therefore it responds at reduced speed and without sirens. At its age, our primary concern is that it will suffer some major and expensive mechanical failure and parts will be hard to get. We are hoping to keep this truck for another 7 years until it turns 40. ET-296 carries 3000 gallons of water and can pump 2000 gallons of water per minute. Without fire hydrants this truck is important to our operations.



Our other water tanker, known as T-286, carries 5000 gallons of water. It is a converted military fuel truck that is 27 years old. It also responds at a reduced speed and doesn't have a siren because of safety concerns associated with its age and being a converted military truck. So far it runs well and serves our need.

Squad 287 (S-287) is suffering from a great deal of rust. It is a 2004 Ford F-350 4x4 pickup truck with a utility body. It carries hazardous materials spill supplies, a portable pump, a generator and lights, some wildland fire equipment, and EMS supplies. It is a special hazards unit. It will

probably need replacement within the next three to five years. Our capital replacement schedule shows the truck being replaced in six years.

Forestry 290, a Ford F-450 4x4 forest fire truck, is in excellent condition. It was acquired in 2011. We don't anticipate having to replace this truck until at least 2031.

### **The Fire District Budget/Appropriation**

At this year's Annual Fire District Meeting (April 24, 2019), we will be asking you to approve a fire district budget of \$2,112,029.00. This represents a 3% increase in the average real estate tax bill. There are no requests to fund any major capital or special projects. There is one request for \$5000 for a new initiative, the creation of a Firefighter Critical Illness Fund. It is, for the most part, a level services budget.

The 3% real estate tax increase is similar to the annual tax increases by the Town of Barnstable, and all of our neighboring towns. The tax increase is what would be expected under Proposition 2 ½ if the fire district was subject to that law.

The significant changes in the FY 2020 budget over past budgets are increases in retiree health insurance. The department now has three retirees who are eligible for health insurance benefits. One of our retirees is on Medicare (because he's over 65) and the district only has to provide a relatively inexpensive supplemental insurance plan. This plan will cost the district \$3672 in FY 2020.



Our other two retirees are not yet eligible for Medicare and this means that we must provide them the same insurance plan we provide to active employees. One receives a family plan and the other receives an individual plan. These insurance policies will cost us \$26,388 and \$10,517 respectively. These new expenses made budgeting for FY2020 tight.

The district pays 75% of the cost of retiree health insurance and the retiree pays the 25% balance.

You will also notice a \$60,000 debt payment in the proposed FY 2020 budget. This payment is for our new engine. We had planned on paying \$30,000 per year for ten years for the new engine. And in future years we expect that to be the case. However, because of the timing of a refinancing of the debt, we will need to make a double payment in FY 2020.

The fire district plans to fund this budget with \$1,751,453 in tax revenue, \$225,000 in ambulance billing revenue, \$40,577 from the OPEB Trust Fund, and \$60,000 of free cash. The

OPEB Trust Fund is a fund the district maintains to cover “Other Post-Employment Benefits” for its retirees. Free cash is unappropriated money from prior years that is created when not all budget money is spent or unanticipated revenue is collected.

We estimate that the average tax bill for FY 2020 will be \$1303 per household. This is a higher tax bill compared to other fire and emergency medical services departments, but we believe that we provide a level of service that is excellent and commensurate with what you pay. However, our overall fire department operational budget is among the lowest on Cape Cod. A key reason why your tax bill is higher for fire/EMS services than in other communities is because so much of West Barnstable is exempt from real estate taxes and this shifts the cost of services heavily upon single family homes. For instance, the 6% of the WBFD’s emergency calls are at the Cape Cod Community College, however, the college is exempt from paying any taxes to us because it is a state facility.

### **Firefighter Critical Illness Fund**

The WBFD is asking you to approve the creation of a new stabilization fund (special saving account in the municipal accounting world) to put funds aside in the event that a WBFD Firefighter is diagnosed with certain cancer, heart, or lung diseases. We are calling this the Critical Illness Stabilization Fund and asking you to fund it with \$5000 in FY 2020. We plan to add \$2500 per year to the fund in the following three or four fiscal years.

Cancer is suddenly epidemic in the fire service. It is likely that these cancers are a result of exposure to the toxic smoke created by the burning of modern construction materials and plastic furnishings. Today’s fires burn faster and give off a long list of toxic chemicals when compared to the materials of 30 years ago. Massachusetts has reacted to this situation by passing legislation last year that makes certain cancers among firefighters a line-of-duty injury.

The WBFD looked into purchasing a critical illness insurance policy for its entire staff. It would have provided any firefighter with a \$10,000 lump sum payment upon the diagnoses of certain cancers, heart disease, and lung disease. The firefighter would use the \$10,000 to cover medical and treatment expenses that are not covered by their health insurance policy, such as travel to treatment, family expenses, co-payments, deductibles, and such. However, we found that the premium for this policy was \$5000 per year and it didn’t make financial sense to spend \$5000 per year for a \$10,000 policy.

Instead, we feel that it makes more sense to self-insure for this risk. We feel that our department’s exposure and risk is lower than many and that the potential for payout is less than will be seen in urban departments. But, we still feel there is a risk we should plan for.

Our plan is to set aside \$20,000 in a special stabilization fund in order to provide the same \$10,000 benefit, under substantially the same terms as the insurance policy would. This way we have funds on-hand to cover two payouts. The savings account represents what would pay in premiums over four years.

We ask that you support this new initiative.

### Retirements & Moving On



**Lieutenant Edward "Muffy" Clough**, one of the WBFD's career firefighters, retired in 2018 after 40 years of service. Muffy has served the WBFD in just about every capacity from junior volunteer to career fire lieutenant-paramedic-shift commander. In many ways he is the face of the WBFD. Muffy is very much a West Barnstable institution and his daily presence is missed. We trust he is enjoying retirement and having tons of fun with family and grandchildren. Enjoy retirement, you earned it.

**Janice King**, the WBFD's Administrative Assistant announced she will be leaving the WBFD in 2019 to take a similar position at the Wareham Fire Department. The WBFD, with Janice's assistance, has started a process to find a replacement. Watch for more on this in our 2019 report.



**Lieutenant Keith Stranger**, the department's EMS Coordinator and a career fire lieutenant/ paramedic/shift commander left the WBFD for a career position with the Barnstable Fire Department. Keith served with the WBFD for thirteen years, serving about nine years as volunteer and four years as a career member of the department. Keith left big shoes to fill.



In 2018, four members of our volunteer force left us for career firefighter jobs with other fire departments. FF/Paramedic **Scott Thomas** went to the Sandwich Fire Department. Scott joined the WBFD in 2011. FF/EMT **Conner McShera** went to the Eastham Fire Department. Conner volunteered at the WBFD for four years. FF/EMT **Nicholas Donnelly** took a career

firefighter position with the Harwich Fire Department after serving with the WBFD for about a year and having just finished his basic training with us. And, FF **Claire Dewechter** moved back

to Florida. Claire had been a career firefighter with the Tampa FD before moving to Cape Cod and volunteering at the WBFD.

Five other volunteers, **Roger Santos, Ivaylo Pavolov, Kathleen Mitchell, Laura Wildman** and **Mike Whiteley**, left the WBFD because of time constraints related to their full-time jobs or family needs.

### New Staff

In May of 2018, the department hired FF/Paramedic **Kim Sylvia** to fill the position vacated by Lt. Chris Greim's retirement at the end of 2017. Kim has served for about 12 years as a volunteer and then part-time member of the WBFD. She became a paramedic in 2017. She has taken over as the department's EMS Coordinator and as the Group 2 Shift Commander. As EMS Coordinator she manages our medical supply purchasing and inventory, ambulance licensing, EMS regulatory compliance, EMS training and assists our staff with renewal of their EMT and Paramedic Licenses.

Also in May 2018, the department hired FF/EMT **Curtis Cottrell** to fill the position vacated by Lt. Keith Stranger leaving to go to the Barnstable Fire Department. Curtis has been a volunteer member of the WBFD for three years. Curtis is a paramedic student and we expect him to be a licensed paramedic by Spring of 2019. He will be assuming the duties of Department Public Education Coordinator and will be taking over as the Group 1 Shift Commander (the position vacated by Lt. Clough) once he has his paramedic license.

As we go into 2019, the department is engaged in a hiring process to fill the vacancy created by Lt. Clough's retirement. We expect to have hired his replacement shortly after the start of the New Year.



The WBFD added fifteen new volunteer firefighters in 2018. They are **Michele Michael-Brunco, Seamus Murray, Ryan Flood, Connor Gallagher, Tom Wasierski, Mike Looney, Chris O'Connor, Mike Amick, Molly Herbert, Josh Wedge, Jeff Hall, Fred O'Connor, Joseph Ostrom, Stephen Imparato, and Bob Crosby.**

This year, we are trying a new approach to training our new volunteers. Rather than sending them directly into a Firefighter I/II Recruit Training Program, we are having them serve as trainees, with limited duties, for eight months first. **Lt. Troy Jewett** designed and implemented a custom training program for these new members that prepared them to respond to medical calls and provide non-firefighting support services at other types of emergency incidents. This training program ran for two months. Then, they will attend the Barnstable County Fire Rescue

Training Academy Firefighter I/II Training Program starting in January 2019 (and ending in May 2019).

We expect this new approach to have two benefits. First, it allows us to get our new members active and responding to emergency calls sooner than we have traditionally done by waiting until they have completed their Firefighter I/II Training. Second, it allows us and the new firefighters to see if they and Wbfd are a good fit before investing in Firefighter I/II Training. So far, the program appears to be achieving these goals, but it won't be until after another year or two that we can truly assess its long-term success. As we start 2019, we are preparing to implement this again with a new group of trainees in April.

Of the thirteen new firefighters, twelve have stayed with us and eleven are scheduled to start Firefighter I/II training in January 2019. They are **Connor Gallagher, Tom Wasierski, Mike Looney, Chris O'Connor, Mike Amick, Molly Herbert, Josh Wedge, Jeff Hall, Bob Crosby, Fred O'Connor, and Stephen Imparato**. One new member, **Seamus Murray**, is in military training and delaying his Firefighter I/II training.



### **The Strategic Plan**

The Wbfd's 5- Year Strategic Plan was approved on December 17, 2014 and it expires, after five years, on December 17, 2019. It is time for us to start a new strategic planning process. The department will be seeking residents to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee. Typically, the strategic planning process takes about eight to nine months to complete. We would like to have a new plan presented to the Prudential Committee for approval at the start of 2020. You can view the current strategic plan at the Wbfd's Website.

The current strategic plan included the following goals for 2015 to 2020:

1. Address Volunteer Firefighter Turnover
2. Develop a Capital and Space Plan for the Fire Station
3. Develop and Maintain a Succession Plan for the Chief and Deputy Chief
4. Develop a Plan for the Placement of Water Cisterns for Firefighting in the District.

The current strategic plan also included four smaller goals, that we called “tactical goals”:

1. Develop Improved Response Plans for Sandy Neck Beach
2. Develop a Meeting Space Policy for the Fire Station
3. Create Exit Signs for the Conservation Areas
4. Refresh the West Barnstable Fire Department Website

Addressing volunteer firefighter turnover has become a continuing and resource intensive activity for the WBFD and it is likely to remain a part of our Strategic Plan into the foreseeable future. It is an issue, unlike the other goals within the Strategic Plan that is unlikely to ever be fully resolved. It will always be evolving and a part of our operational and planning needs.



Because the loss of volunteers each year to career firefighter jobs, moving away, or time constraints, the WBFD needs to recruit and train 8 to 10 new volunteer firefighters each year to maintain an effective response force. This is challenging because of the cost of providing training, the time our staff spends teaching new firefighters, and the administrative costs (both time and money) involved in interviewing, testing, and hiring new employees. What worked last year to accomplish this is unlikely to work in five years. Our response to this issue is a constant series of adjustments.

Two years ago, we implemented a new approach to training and getting new volunteers into the field. We created an in-house training program that more quickly qualified them to participate in EMS calls, motor vehicle crash calls and other non-firefighting incidents. With EMS representing about 60% of our emergency call activity, and non-fire emergencies representing another 35% of our calls, we can engage our new staff quicker with more focused or specialized training. Then they and we can find out if they are well suited for the WBFD and the fire service generally. After about six to eight months of service in this limited capacity, they go on to the Barnstable County Fire Rescue Training Academy (BCFRTA) Firefighter I/II Program. Upon completion of the Firefighter I/II program they will take and pass a Firefighter Certification Test at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and be able to participate fully in firefighting activities. This program was planned and implemented by **Lt. Troy Jewett**. Lt.

Jewett put a tremendous amount of effort and thought into the program, and is congratulated for his efforts.

The department has developed a capital and space plan for the fire station. We have a three phase plan for addressing the space needs of the station and any needed upgrades to address aging systems. A complete copy of this plan is available for viewing at the WBFD website. A summary the plan, as well as a summary of other capital planning needs is included later in this report.

The total budget needs for the fire station's capital need is \$3.2 million. This is a lot of money, but significantly less than the cost of replacing the fire station. If we can implement this plan, we believe that we can extend the life of the fire station by 30 to 40 years. If we weren't facing uncertain costs associated with Ladder 297, we might have asked for funding in FY 2020 to start Phase One of this project. We'll keep you posted.



The WBFD is actively preparing for my departure as fire chief. I will be legally required under state law to retire in five years at age 65. The department has engaged a leadership coach to work with and provide training to our deputy chief and other officers to help prepare them for a larger role leading the department. We are also encouraging our newer career staff to get college degrees and other advanced training so that we have an eligible pool of candidates for the deputy chief's position. I am starting to delegate more of my tasks to other department members and starting to assume more of a management teacher role so that much of what I do won't be a mystery to those who might come after me.

To this point, the WBFD has not addressed the issue of siting additional water cisterns (underground water tanks) to provide firefighting water in place of fire hydrants.

With regard to the tactical issues, we were quick to provide for an improved response plan for Sandy Neck emergencies, refresh the WBFD website, and provide for exit signage in the WB Conservation Area. So quick, in fact, that we find ourselves already due to revise and revise our Sandy Neck response plans and refresh the department's website again.

Creating a formal policy for the use of the fire station by outside groups still remains an incomplete project and on our agenda.

## **SHARKS**

There are sharks in West Barnstable. Some of the Great White Sharks that are tagged in Cape Cod waters are electronically detected swimming along the shore at Sandy Neck Beach.

While not as numerous as found on the Outer Cape Beaches, sharks are here. The WBFD's ambulance is equipped to treat a single shark bite patient. Our staff is trained to handle an incident such as a shark bite. Shark bite injuries are an extreme trauma event similar to what we might expect from a gunshot wound, industrial accident involving saws or machinery, or a serious motor vehicle accident.

The WBFD participates in joint training with **Sandy Neck Beach Staff**, and works with the beach staff to plan for a wide range of emergencies at the beach.

The greatest difficulty in managing a shark bite incident in West Barnstable is that much of Sandy Neck Beach is inaccessible to our ambulance, and that reaching a patient at the beach will take longer than we would like. It typically takes us about 9 minutes to reach a patient at the Public Bathing Beach at Sandy Neck. It would take us 20-30 minutes to reach a patient midway down the beach in the area between Trails 2 and 3.

There is no doubt that discussions and planning around shark bite incidents will continue into 2019.

## OSHA

Up until now, Massachusetts municipal departments were exempt from OSHA regulations. This is changing in 2019. Massachusetts passed legislation that brings all municipal departments, including the WBFD, under "OSHA" regulation as of February 1, 2019. We will not be regulated by the Federal agency known as OSHA. Instead, it will be the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards, using federal OSHA guidelines. We were only given a few months warning to prepare for this.

As we approach the deadline for compliance, we are preparing for the new regulations by reviewing and revising our policies and procedures, and by making some modifications at the fire station. We feel we will be able to comply without too much expense, but the increased reporting and paperwork will be felt.

In the field, OSHA regulation will have little effect on the WBFD. We have always tried to follow the more stringent National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) safety guidelines for all of our operations. This means that we've followed procedures that exceed the OSHA standards for our fire, rescue and EMS operations. There will be some minor nuances that we may need to adjust for, and additional reporting/paperwork burdens, but we feel confident about our compliance.

At the fire station, we will have to improve some of our workplace safety. We are conducting a self-audit to identify areas requiring change. We'll have to do regular safety inspections. We'll have to change some procedures. If anything significant comes of this compliance, we'll report back next year.

## Training

The typical West Barnstable Firefighter (career, volunteer & part-time) completed 193 hours of fire, EMS, rescue, hazardous materials and leadership/officer training in 2018. This is an increase from 160 hours of training in 2018. Among our peers throughout New England, I am unaware of any department that comes close to the level of training that our staff does. Our training program is one of the key factors that results in the excellent level of service that we are able to provide to you.

Of course, it is our training program that is what makes our firefighters so attractive to other organizations and results in them being hired away from us at a difficult pace to manage. However, the WBFD is committed to providing a superior level of service and training is one essential element of that commitment. So while reducing the amount and quality of our training might make our staff less desirable to others, it is not an option we are prepared to take.

## 2018 Awards



This year's WBFD Firefighter of the Year is FF/EMT **Christian Andrewski**. Christian has served as volunteer member of the department since 2016 and he is Group 3's engineer. His fellow firefighters describe him as someone who is always ready to help others, someone who thinks ahead, and someone who is always stepping up his game. He has excellent attention to detail and his team can always count upon him.

**Lt. John Garofoli**, a 10-year veteran and volunteer with the WBFD, was selected as the 2018 Fire Officer of the Year. John is described as the "hero behind the scenes". He is someone who always makes a great effort to make others better and is an excellent teacher. He demonstrates great loyalty to the WBFD and his Group.



The EMT of the Year Award went to Firefighter/EMT **Steven Kilmurray**. Steve has

served with as volunteer member of the WBFD for two years. He is someone who is always improving his skills and provides great patient care. In his short time with the department, he has become a key member of the department and Group 1.

For more about the WBFD Annual Awards Night and the many other awards presented to WBFD members (traditionally held on the Saturday evening before the Super Bowl at the WB Deer Club) check out the West Barnstable Fire Department's FACEBOOK Page.

### **Eric's 20 Years**

**Eric Ill** was recognized by the WBFD for 20 years of service. Eric serves the department in a part-time facilities maintenance role. He washes trucks, cleans floors and keeps our kitchen clean. Join us in congratulating and thanking Eric for his service. We are looking forward to another 20 years.



### **Battling Water**

A special thanks and recognition is in order for **Lt. Bill Murray** for his undying dedication to fighting the water in the fire station basement. Lt. Murray has been engaged in a two-year war against the flood.

The battle has at times been compared to Captain Ahab and Moby Dick.

The WBFD Fire Station basement is below the water table and it routinely floods. Bill has cut drainage trenches, installed extra sump pumps, and laid-down layers of water proofing. And the battle continues. We won't be surprised to find him jacking up the building to get us above the water.



### **Thirteen Years & Counting**

It has been thirteen years since I was selected to serve as your fire chief. In 2019 I will turn 60 years old. In five years, I will be required by state law to retire. Thirteen years ago I never thought I'd be chief this long. It is interesting to find myself in the position of having to contemplate mandatory retirement.

It was throughout much of 2018 that I started to realize how short my remaining years with the WBFD really are, and how important preparing others to take over from me is to the continued success of the department. As we start into 2019, one of my highest priorities is to teach others what I do. Succession planning is front and center. Demystifying how I manage

the department, make decisions and create the budget are important tasks for the next few years.

While there are still a few goals left to finish from my list of goals back in 2005, there is a never ending parade of new issues and goals that get thrust upon me to deal with. I liken these to a whirlwind of work that spins on my desk every day that distracts me from the strategic projects I need to tackle. Overcoming the whirlwind, finishing up my goals and getting new leaders ready to take over for me will be a big part of my job for these final years.

As always, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your fire chief.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chief Joe Maruca

