

**2019 Fire Chief's Annual Report  
West Barnstable Fire Department  
Chief Joseph V. Maruca**

The West Barnstable Fire Department (WBFD) responded to 609 emergency incidents in 2019. About 55% of these calls were for emergency medical services. There were no significant fire losses in the community in 2019.

<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
	2018: 661
	<b>2019: 609</b>

After having peaked with 758 emergency calls in 2015, the WBFD is averaging about 630 emergency calls per year. Emergency call volume has been fairly stable for the past four years. This is likely due to the lack of new homes and a lack of economic growth in our village. Plus the aging of our population may have peaked or slowed. We are awaiting the 2020 Federal Census in order to better analyze our community's demographic changes and how they affect emergency incidents.

Overlapping emergency calls (when we get a second or third emergency call while we are still handling a first emergency) continue to challenge us, particularly in the daytime or when we require a second ambulance, but we've been successful in managing these incidents without a loss of quality of service. The drop in overlapping calls from 14% in 2018 to 7% in 2019 is not

<b>Overlapping Emergency Calls</b>			
2019 43 calls	7%	2018 90 calls	14%
2017 74 calls	12%	2016 52 calls	8%
2015 93 calls	12%	2014 64 calls	10%

surprising because of the drop in overall calls. We would expect that overlapping calls will drop faster than the actual number of calls do, and inversely as calls increase, the likelihood of overlapping calls is much greater.

From a planning, training, and administrative perspective, 2019 was a busy year for the WBFD.

**Goodbye Ladder Truck**

The WBFD has decided to eliminate its Ladder Truck (a 2002 Pierce Quantum Quint) from the fleet and rely upon automatic aid and mutual aid for our aerial ladder needs, instead, of owning and operating a ladder truck, the WBFD plans to purchase a used fire engine to replace our ladder truck. **Here's Why:**

Last year, I reported to you that rust and corrosion had forced us to place the aerial ladder out of service. We have continued to use Ladder 297 (L-297) as a fire engine, but we have not been able to use the 75' aerial ladder.

We issued a Request for Bids to repair the truck and the only bid was for \$280,000. This would have repaired the rust in the frame and aerial body supports, and overhauled the hydraulic systems for the aerial ladder. However, after a cost-benefit analysis, we decided that spending \$280,000 to repair a 15-year old truck was not a good investment for the community. There would be no guarantee that we wouldn't have equally expensive additional drivetrain repairs in the next five years. A new truck would cost between \$950,000 and \$1.3 million. Purchasing a new ladder truck was ruled out as too expensive.



We next looked at purchasing a used ladder truck. This is the norm for the Wbfd. In our department's history, we have owned three ladder trucks and all three were purchased used. Our current ladder was purchased used in 2005 for \$350,000 (and using a \$300,000 federal grant). We found that there are few short wheelbase ladder trucks available on the used market, and those that are available in good condition were priced significantly higher than

most used fire trucks. If the Wbfd were to own a ladder truck, we would need one with a single axle on a short wheelbase in order to access the many tight driveways and small streets in our community.

After a risk-benefit analysis, we further determined that while a ladder truck made our work easier and safer, it was not essential to our operations. We don't use the aerial ladder enough to justify the expense we are facing. (Not only the expense of purchasing a ladder truck, but the expense of maintaining it. It costs us an average of \$8685 a year to maintain the truck.) We will have to adopt a new deployment model for firefighting operations and change our training to address the loss of the ladder truck, but we are confident that we will make the transition successfully.

We believe that we can find an affordable engine in good condition to serve as our second fire engine and fill the fire attack and rescue role that the ladder truck currently serves. Article 14 at the 2020 Annual Fire District Meeting asks to appropriate \$50,000 for this purpose. We can do this with savings and not raise taxes.

With the loss of L-297, the Wbfd will be one of only three fire departments on Cape Cod without a ladder truck. Currently, only Truro and Cotuit do not have aerial ladders. The Town of Sandwich just added a second ladder truck to their fleet, a single axle 75' aerial ladder, similar to our ladder, at its new Station on Cotuit Road (about 16 minutes away from the center

of West Barnstable). The Barnstable fire district also has a 100' ladder truck that is five miles or about nine minutes away from the center of West Barnstable.

### **Replacing Engine-Tanker 296**

In 2019, we started planning for the replacement our 1985 Engine-Tanker 296 (ET-296). (The need to replace ET-296 was also a significant factor in our decision to eliminate L-297.)

ET-296 is critical to fire protection in West Barnstable because our lack of fire hydrants.

Without fire hydrants, the Wbfd must bring all of its water to fires by truck. For instance, the fire on Lothrop's Lane in 2016 required 85,000 gallons of water to extinguish. This required about 30 trips by water tankers between the fire and a water source. It takes about 17 firefighters to manage this operation and we call for extra tankers from Mashpee, Sandwich, Onset, Plymouth, Joint Base Cape Cod and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR). We annually practice this water supply operation with our mutual aid partners. With the out of town tankers, we can move about 750 gallons of water per minute from hydrants in Marstons Mills, Sandwich or Barnstable to a fire in West Barnstable.

Currently, the Wbfd operates two tankers. ET-296 which carries 3000 gallons of water and Tanker 286 (T-286) which carries 5000 gallons of water. These are the two biggest tankers on Cape Cod. A typical fire engine carries 500 or 750 gallons of water. Our water tanker operation is further complicated by the fact that we are the last community on the Cape without a public water system and fire hydrants. Other communities have eliminated or are phasing out fire department water tankers as they expand fire hydrant coverage. We expect fewer mutual aid resources to shuttle water in the future.

ET-296 is also capable of pumping 2000 gallons of water per minute, the most of any area fire apparatus. It also operates as our backup or reserve fire engine because it carries five firefighters, along with the minimum hose, ladders, and tools for a fire attack company. It is more than just a water tanker.

T-286 is just a water tanker. It is a 1991 Air Force Fuel Truck that the Wbfd converted to a water tanker and does not have firefighting capabilities. Its sole purpose is to deliver 5000 gallons of water to the fire and connect to our fire engine that draws the water from it.



Purchasing a new Engine-Tanker such as ET-296 (a truck that can function as an engine and carry 3000 gallons of water) appears to cost about \$800,000. We paid \$161,000 for ET-296 back in 1985. New fire trucks have recently been increasing in cost by 5% or 6% a year. When

we looked at the need to plan for ET-296's replacement, our analysis clearly indicated that replacing ET-296 is far more important to West Barnstable than maintaining Ladder 297.

We are not asking for any funds to replace ET-296 at the 2020 Annual District Meeting. Our immediate plan is to write a federal grant request for funds to replace the truck. However, we have low expectations of getting the grant. Out of thousands of requests, the federal Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program (AFG) only funds about 100 fire trucks nationally each year.

We believe we have about three years to fund the replacement of ET-296. As we move forward, we will start developing alternate replacement plans to the federal grant approach. We'll keep you posted.

### **Revised Capital Plan –Apparatus**

The situation with our ladder truck and engine-tanker required us to revise the department's capital plan with regard to its apparatus/vehicles. A copy of the new capital plan for apparatus is including in the later pages of this annual report.

### **Tanker 286 Rust Repairs**

We are asking for \$15,000 (Article 13) at the 2020 WBFD Annual Meeting) to repair rust and corrosion on our Tanker 286 (T-286). This is our 5000 gallon tanker built on a surplus military chassis.

In 2019 we experienced a collapse of the baffles inside of the water tank (that keep the water from sloshing when it turns corners or stops) and water tank leaks due to rust and corrosion. We spent \$6967 fixing these immediate problems. We also identified additional corrosion repairs that need attention at cost of about \$15,000.

Having this truck and its 5000 gallons of water is critical to our success quickly extinguishing fires. It represents an excellent value to the community. While it's an old truck, it has no complex parts, and it has a limited use that makes extending its useful life cost-effective.

Taken together, the costs of replacing ET-296 and maintaining T-286 are a small price when compared with the alternative, the installation of a water system and fire hydrants.

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

Our Ambulance 293 (A-293) was new in 2018, is in great shape and has a 10-year life expectancy. Our Engine 294 (E-294) was also new in 2018 and in great shape. We expect 15+ years of service from E-294. Our pickup truck (C-280) was bought new in 2019. Forestry 290 (F-290) is a 2011 Ford F-450 with a forest fire truck body and it is in excellent condition with at least another 10 or more years of service ahead.

Only our Squad 287 (S-287), a 2004 Ford F-350 with a utility truck body, will need replacement in the next three or four years, maybe sooner. The utility body and cab have significant rust. This truck is used to bring additional personnel to EMS calls in support of the ambulance. It also carries our hazmat spill supplies and equipment, has a secondary role for fighting wildland fires and providing rescue operations on Sandy Neck Beach. It carries a generator and lighting, and a portable pump.

The department is also building a new forestry truck on a 5-Ton military chassis. This will be Forestry 295 and it will replace our former Brush Breaker 295. This truck is being built in-house to save money and we expect it to be finished in 2020. It will be able to drive on Sandy Neck Beach and operate on the dirt roads throughout our conservation areas.

We also own and operate a military surplus Humvee, C-288, for use in storms and on Sandy Neck.

### **The Fire Station**

In 2019 we replaced the carpeting in our training room at the fire station, and the Cape Compact replaced our lights with new LED fixtures. These were the biggest changes or upgrades to the fire station for the year. We continue to fight flooding in our basement.

We have a comprehensive plan adding to and renovating the fire station. Among the items called for are adding additional truck space, a locker room so firefighter's protective clothing is not stored next to the trucks, reconfigured office spaces, reconfigured bunk rooms, and additional administrative spaces. These plans will require about \$3.2 million, but the need to deal with our fleet issues has pushed this project to the back burner.

In FY 2019, the department spent \$17,343.61 for maintenance of the fire station. Over the past six years, this amount has averaged \$16,388.16.

### **Grant Success in 2019**



The Wbfd had success obtaining grants in 2019. The largest grant was a Federal Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) grant of \$120,307 to replace our mobile and portable radios. We had applied for this grant for four years in a row. The grant allows us to replace the analog radios that we received surplus from the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta with new digital radios. This was critical, because the Massachusetts State Police which own our radio system, is planning to

upgrade the system to digital and our analog radios would no longer work. Each of our new digital portable radios costs \$3558. **Deputy Chief David Paananen** wrote and managed this grant.

We also won an AmeriCorps Grant that provided us with the services of **Emily Smith**, a recent graduate of Clemson University. Emily is working at the Wbfd three days a week for about 10 months. She is managing our strategic planning process and updating our internal emergency operation/contingency plans. Emily is also a first responder and responds to emergency calls with us. This grant has a value of \$16,397.

**Firefighter Andrew Mandel** wrote two successful grants in 2019. The first grant was from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for \$2951.80 to purchase firefighting gloves and protective hoods for our staff. The second grant was also from the state and was for \$6416.73 to purchase a specialty washing machine to clean our firefighting coats and pants.

Since 2005, the Wbfd has successfully written and received \$1,130,592 in grant money for trucks, equipment, software, windows and staffing. (A list of our grants and awards is contained in the later pages of this book.) We are among the most successful of small departments when it comes to grant funding.

### **3.0% Tax Levy Increase Within the Bounds of Prop 2 ½**

If you vote to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget at the 2020 Fire District Annual Meeting, you will be approving a 3.0% increase in the tax levy. This is within the allowable tax levy increase under Proposition 2 ½, even though the fire district is not legally required to follow Proposition 2 ½.

The Wbfd, as with the other 148 districts in Massachusetts, is not subject to Proposition 2 ½. Only cities and towns are legally restricted by Proposition 2 ½. However, the district uses Proposition 2 ½ as a guideline and financial planning tool.

Over the past decade, the average annual tax levy increase for the fire district has been 2.14%, well under what the district would have been allowed to increase its tax levy pursuant to the terms of Proposition 2 ½. In that same time period, the Town of Barnstable tax levy has increase at an average of 3.38%.

I would also like you to note that in the past 15 years, the fire district has never overspent its budget. Financial planning is strong element of the district's management.

This year, the district is continuing to increase its annual contribution to the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund. The OPEB Trust Fund is a fund to pay for retiree health insurance. The FY 2020 contribution was \$70,000 and the FY 2021 proposal is \$80,000.

From this fund the district will withdraw \$40,622 to pay the health insurance for the district's three retirees. This means we are increasing the value of the trust fund by \$39,378.

The current balance of the OPEB Trust Fund is \$220,314.31. An analysis of our need indicates we should have a balance of \$993,775 to cover current and future payments. We plan to keep increasing the contribution to the OPEB trust fund until we reach that goal. At that level, the fund should be able to sustain our retiree health insurance obligations unless or until there is a change in our career staff. Only full-time employees who work for the WBFD for ten or more years are entitled to health insurance as a retiree.

The other significant change to the budget is an increase in the salary of the fire chief and deputy fire chief. For details on this, refer to the Prudential Committee Report.

The budget also shows an increase for Fire Department Payroll-Training. We have increased this from \$21,000 to \$26,000. This is overtime money we use when a newly hired career member of the department attends the Massachusetts Fire Academy's 10-Week Career Firefighter Training Program. In FY 2020, Lt. Kim Sylvia attended this class. In FY 2021, Lt. Curtiss Cottrell will attend, and in FY 2022, Firefighter Andrew Mandel will attend. An analysis of the cost of attendance at this program found that our actual cost (payroll, housing, meals, travel, and books) was \$34,729. Increasing the payroll cost to \$26,000 will avoid some of the underfunding of this expense.

An area of our budget that causes stress and we are working to better manage is portable equipment maintenance, EMS equipment maintenance, and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus maintenance. These maintenance areas combined represent an average cost of \$13,793 each year. Additionally, EMS supplies and drugs for the ambulance now average about \$23,940 each year. These are difficult costs to control because of the specialized nature of the equipment or use, and there is a limited pool of vendors we can deal with.

We know that the WBFD represents a significant cost to each of you; however, we believe we provide an excellent level of service and feel that you are getting a superior product for your money.

### **Strategic Planning**

The WBFD's new Strategic Plan is being written. We expect it to be in place by mid-2020. The strategic plan is being developed by a civilian planning committee made up of five West Barnstable Residents and one AmeriCorps Member. The Strategic Planning Committee consists of the following members:

- Dave Cameron of Parker Road
- Dan Devlin of Meetinghouse Way
- Andy Lee of Percival Drive
- Dhiraj Malkani of Lombard Avenue

- Holly Rogers of Main Street
- Emily Smith, AmeriCorps

The Strategic Planning Committee is holding a series of stakeholder meetings with residents, West Barnstable Non-Profits/Organizations, firefighters, elected officials, and our partner agencies to explore the strengths and weakness of the WBFD. They are also seeking ideas regarding future initiatives and potential issues facing the department. From this information, they will determine the strategic goals of the WBFD for the next five years.

### Promotions

2019 saw nine promotions among our firefighting staff. These promotions brought the department to the desired position of having two officers on each of our four response groups and lowering the officer-to-firefighter ratio. A ratio of one officer supervising no more than four firefighters is important to safe operations and maintaining personnel accountability at emergency scenes.



**Troy Jewett** and **Bill Murray** were both promoted from Lieutenant to Captain. Captain Jewett is our Group 4 Shift Commander, a paramedic, and has served with the WBFD since 2007. Captain Murray is our Group 3 Shift Commander, a paramedic, and has served with the WBFD since 2006. Together, they manage our apparatus driver training program. Captain Jewett leads our volunteer firefighter recruit training program. Captain Murray is our health & safety officer and a Hazmat Technician.

**Kim Sylvia** and **Curtis Cottrell** were both promoted to Lieutenant. Lieutenant Cottrell is our Group 1 Shift Commander, a paramedic, and has served with the WBFD since 2015. Lieutenant Sylvia is the Group 2 Shift Commander, a paramedic, and has service with the WBFD since 2010. Lt. Sylvia is the EMS Coordinator. Lt. Cottrell manages the department's public education programs.

Captains Jewett and Murray and Lieutenants Cottrell and Sylvia are career members of the department.

Volunteer firefighters **Luke Walsh** and **Ian Diaz** were promoted to lieutenant. Part-time firefighter **Steve Frye** was promoted to lieutenant. Lieutenants Frye, Walsh and Diaz join volunteer Lieutenant **John Garofoli**, as our four Executive Officers. Each of our four volunteer response groups is led by a Shift Commander (career officer) and an Executive Officer (volunteer officer).



Volunteer firefighters **Ben Stacy** and **Steve Kilmurray** were promoted to Engineer in 2019. Engineers are firefighters who are qualified to drive and operate all of the Wbfd's apparatus, and are our most capable equipment operators.

### **We Are Mostly Volunteers**

Speaking with West Barnstable residents over the past year, I was surprised to find that many people didn't realize how reliant the Wbfd is on volunteer firefighters and EMS providers. Everyone had a sense that we used volunteers, but didn't realize how heavily we use volunteers. The Wbfd currently has forty volunteer firefighters. Without them we could not function.

We only have five full-time (career) firefighters and five part-time firefighters in the department. By comparison, the Barnstable FD has 16 full-time firefighters and the Sandwich FD has 41. Truro has 6 full-time firefighters, Chatham has 27 and Orleans has 23.

Provincetown has 68 volunteer firefighters. The Provincetown FD is the only entirely volunteer fire department on the Cape. West Barnstable has the second largest volunteer firefighting force with 40 volunteers. West Barnstable has the Cape's smallest career firefighting force.

When you walk into the Wbfd in the evening or anytime on the weekends, there is only one full-time firefighter on-duty. The rest of the firefighters that you see are volunteers and maybe one part-time firefighter. In the daytime on weekdays, we typically have two full-time firefighters on-duty at the station, along with one part-time firefighter, and any other firefighters you find there are volunteers.



Ten Volunteers & One Career Firefighter on Group 2 Staffing the Fire Station.

Are you interested in volunteering at the Wbfd? We are always taking applications and training new volunteers. We need more West Barnstable residents to join us, because much of our force lives in surrounding towns and can't get to the Wbfd as fast as West Barnstable residents can. Stop by the fire station and learn more about volunteering, or check us out on Facebook or at our website.

### **Call 911**

We've noticed an increase in people calling the Wbfd on its business phone when they should be calling 911. Your safety depends on calling 911, not the fire station on its

business phone line. Even if you think your problem isn't an emergency it is still best to call 911.

911 is the way our system gets activated. It might seem faster to call the fire station, but it usually isn't. When you call the fire station directly, the firefighter you talk to has to take the information and then he/she has to call 911 for you. Skip the middleman and call 911 directly.



When you call the fire station on the business phone we might not be here to answer the phone. You might get our accountant or a mechanic on the phone, and these people are not trained to handle emergency calls.

When you call 911 your call will (usually) be answered by the Barnstable Police Department. Once the police confirm your location and that you need EMS or a fire response, they will immediately connect you to the regional fire department dispatcher at the Barnstable Sheriff's Office at Joint Base Cape Cod. That is the dispatcher that activates our paging system and handles your call until we arrive.

### Carbon Monoxide Calls - Advice

Each year the Wbfd responds to a half-dozen or so calls for Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms. These tend to be in the winter months when homes are closed up tight. We'd like to pass on some advice on how to react when your CO detector goes off.

First, when your CO detector goes off, call 911 and tell the dispatcher that the alarm is sounding and if anyone in your house is sick. The primary symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, nausea/vomiting and confusion. **Then go outside and wait for us.** Do not open doors and windows to ventilate your house and remove the CO. Leaving the CO in the house will make it easier for us to find the problem. If you remove the CO our meters won't have anything to measure and this makes it hard to find the source.



### Comings & Goings

As is our norm, the Wbfd saw eight of our firefighters leave in 2019 and we hired twelve new volunteer firefighters.

**John Mahoney** took a career firefighter/paramedic job with the Sandwich Fire Department. John served with the WBFD since 2010. He served as our Group 1 Executive Officer.

**Freddy Nogueira** accepted a career firefighter/EMT position with the Barnstable Fire Department. Freddy was an Engineer (driver/operator of all our apparatus) and volunteered with us since 2012. He was our Group 2 Executive Officer.

**Jennifer Kelleher** joined the Sandwich Fire Department as a career firefighter/EMT. Jenn had served as a volunteer member for a year.

Other volunteers who left us in 2019 include, **PJ Rhude**, a summer seasonal volunteer firefighter who graduated from UMass-Amherst, moved to the Boston Metro area, and started a full-time career as an engineer. **Emma Noyes**, also a summer seasonal volunteer EMT member of the WBFD has left to live full-time in Boston and attend medical school. **Aaron Stewart**, a firefighter since 2017, moved to Boston and works at MassPort. **Forrest LaBelle** left due to time constraints from his job after serving since 2018. **Parker Kelly** left after about a year of service because of time demands from his regular job.



And in 2019 we added twelve new volunteer firefighters to the WBFD. They are **Matt Antoine, Shea Allard, Stephen Brunelle, Sean Crimmins, Devon Crawl, Craig Drew, Ryan DiPilato, Kevin Flynn, Brandon Haughton, Austin Maloney, Anthony O'Donnell, and Austin Osborn.**

Eleven new members are currently halfway through their basic Firefighter I/II Training and are expected to take the Commonwealth's firefighter certification exam at the end of February 2020. One new member, Shea Allard, moved to Colorado to pursue a job opportunity.

### **Kim Wins an Honor**

**Lieutenant Kim Sylvia** graduated top in her class and won the Outstanding Student Award at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA). Kim spent ten weeks at the MFA's Career Recruit Firefighter program in Springfield and graduated on November 22, 2019. The award is given to one student in each training class that demonstrates outstanding commitment and excellent.



Lt. Sylvia is not the Wbfd's only winner of this award. **Deputy Chief David Paananen** won the MFA Outstanding Student Award when he graduated in 2001. It is uncommon and a great honor that a department our size has two MFA Outstanding Students among its staff.

### **Speaking of Training**

The Wbfd continues to have an outstanding fire and emergency medical service training program. The typical Wbfd firefighter, volunteer, part-time and career, participated in 169 hours of training in 2019. The typical Massachusetts small town department provides less than 100 hours of training per year to its staff. Our commitment to training is a key element in why we can deliver excellent service.

For a detail of each firefighter's training, see the 2019 Training Report in the later pages of this annual report booklet.

Each year, we train a new group of volunteer firefighters. This program runs every Thursday Night and every Sunday at the fire station for about 20 weeks and prepares our new firefighters to pass a written and practical firefighter certification test that is based upon National Standards. Very few small fire departments are able to administer and run such a program in-house the way we do. We have an excellent core of both career and volunteer instructors that make this successful. **Captain Troy Jewett** leads this program and has demonstrated a commitment to its success that is second to none.

In 2019, the department sent Lt. Kim Sylvia to the Massachusetts Fire Academy's 10-Week Career Recruit Fire Training Class at their facility in Springfield. The Wbfd sends all of its new career firefighters to this program. Since we hired three new career firefighters over a short time in 2018, we have two more firefighters still to attend this program, Lt. Curtis Cottrell and Firefighter Andrew Mandel.

Because the cost of sending a firefighter to the fire academy's recruit class is about \$35,000 per student, the Wbfd can only afford to send one student a year. Our plan is for Lt. Cottrell to attend in 2020 and Firefighter Mandel to attend in 2021.

### **Akeem's Accident**

Firefighter Akeem MacPherson was seriously injured in a motorcycle crash on May 8, 2019 in Hyannis. His injuries were such that we expected he might die from them. The crash has left him a paraplegic, confined to a wheelchair.

This won't keep Akeem down. He's visited us at the fire station and is getting around well. His car has been specially equipped with hand controls and he drives. While he's still got a lot of rehab and challenges to face, he is steadily moving ahead. He sets an example in resilience and fortitude for us all.

Join us in letting Akeem know that our community and department support him, and in wishing him the best.

### **Firefighter of the Year Awards & More**

It's a tie! The 2019 Wbfd Firefighters of the Year are **Steve Kilmurray** and **Ben Stacy**. Both are excellent apparatus driver/operators and participate in lots of emergency calls. They also help with training others. Steve is a part-time member of the department and Ben is a volunteer.

Lt. **Kim Sylvia** won the 2019 Wbfd Officer of the Year Award. She was chosen by our staff for intensity, dedication, and leadership.

The 2019 Wbfd EMT of the Year went to volunteer firefighter **Stephen Imparato** for his outstanding motivation, and competence, and his willingness to help and train others.

Also at the Wbfd's Annual Awards Night Dinner at the West Barnstable Deer Club, Volunteer Firefighter **Brendan MacDonald** won an award for physical fitness. Volunteer Firefighters **Jason Stoots** and **Ed Longo** received awards for five years of service, and **Matt Cikins** and **Hank Schneckloth** received three year service awards.

Lt. Sylvia, the department's EMS officer, gave out awards for excellent patient care to **Captain Bill Murray, Captain Troy Jewett, Lt. Curtis Cottrell, FF/Medic Austin Osborne, FF/EMT Jonathan Robbins, FF/EMT Andrew Mandel, FF/EMT Austin Maloney, and FF/EMT Matt Antoine.**

## Regionalization

I sometimes get comments from people revolving around the idea that we could save money at the fire department and reduce purchasing costs with increased regionalization. This is something we already doing on several fronts and just don't do a good job telling you about. The WBFD shares a mechanic with the Barnstable FD and we share hydraulic truck lifts and maintenance space. When we purchased our ambulance and engine, we purchased them through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), a Boston Area collective purchasing program that allowed us to pay the "bulk" price (and pay the same for the trucks as if we were Boston, Cambridge or Natick). We purchase our firefighters protective clothing through the same program. We purchase gasoline and diesel fuel as part of a multi-department coop. We purchase all of our office supplies through Barnstable County's collective procurement program. We share dispatching services with 18 other fire departments.

As we start into 2020, we are negotiating with Sandwich, Cotuit, and Mashpee to share a spare ambulance so that none us need to maintain a reserve or backup unit.

Strong financial controls, financial planning, and efficiency is something we are always pursuing at the WBFD.

## Fourteen Years as Fire Chief

It's been 42 years since I first became a volunteer firefighter, and I've spent 28 years as a volunteer and 14 years as chief. In 2020, I expect to see between five and seven of the Cape's sixteen fire chiefs retire. This will be the start of the second changeover of chiefs that I've served with since I became chief in 2005. The typical chief is retiring with about 30 years of career fire service. While fire chiefs tend to last longer on Cape Cod than in other parts of Massachusetts, my tenure as your chief has lasted about three times longer than typical. I am rapidly becoming one of the old timers.

At this point in my career, one of the tough parts of the job is staying fresh and continuing to adapt to change, and to plan and execute for the future. It's easy to look back and live off of past accomplishments. You have an emotional tendency to try and defend and freeze the past or present against the inevitable future change. After 14 years as chief, I have to work harder at keeping ahead of change. It's both physically and mentally challenging, and it very a welcome challenge.

As I start into my 15<sup>th</sup> year leading your fire department, I still can't image leading any other organization or group of people. It continues to be an honor.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chief Joe Maruca

