

# Lowell Area Fire Department



## 2020 Year End Review

## CORE VALUES:

### Service:

We protect and serve our entire community with a commitment to performance excellence.

### Professionalism:

We are dedicated to serving at the highest level of excellence, in a manner showing commitment and respect to our mission. A commitment to excellence, possessing a positive attitude, and having pride in your work while conforming to a high standard of conduct.

### Honor/Pride:

The enormous commitment necessary to perform the Department's task requires excellence of character. We inspire each other through pride in our department, which is a belief that every action reflects on all the members of the department, both past and present. We take pride in ourselves as individuals, our members as a team, our department as a family, and our citizens as a community.

### Integrity:

We are committed to honesty and ethical behavior and we will make decisions based on moral standards regardless of personal belief or benefit. We will work hard every day to maintain the highest professional standards and to earn public trust through our actions.

### Family:

We are a fire department family. We are committed and accountable to each other because our lives depend on it. We value each member in our organization. We respect those who came before us and will strive to make the organization better for those who follow.

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### A Note from Chief Shannon Witherell

The Lowell Area Fire Department is pleased to submit to you the 2020 annual report. In this annual report you will find general information on the station, vehicles, response statistics and reports from our staff on programs they are responsible for. 2020 was a unique year for LAFD.

We responded to 819 emergency calls for service that included fires, motor vehicle accidents, HAZMATs, medicals, rescues, alarms, etc.

The Lowell Area Fire Department provides fire, EMS, rescue services and community education programs in 60 square miles for three municipalities including Lowell Township, Vergennes Township, and the City of Lowell as well as a mutual aid partnership with our surrounding townships.

This past year was filled with many victories and triumphs, such as lives saved, goals accomplished and awards received.

We look forward to 2021 with high expectations of improving our department and keeping our citizens safe. Our entire team is truly honored to serve our great communities!

Respectfully,

*Shannon L. Witherell*

Shannon L. Witherell

### 2021 GOALS

- Improved efficiency with new software Programs
- Increased paid-on call membership
- Develop a part-time program
- Conclude the Engine 3 replacement Spec and award a bid

## Governing Body

The Lowell Area Fire Department is governed by the Lowell Area Fire and Emergency Services Authority Board. This board is made up of a elected member from Lowell Township, Vergennes Township and the City of Lowell, as well as a citizen from each of the three municipalities.

The Board meets once per month on the 2nd Thursday at 7:00pm at the Lowell Area Fire Station. The Board is responsible for the direct management of the Fire Chief as well as approving and overseeing the annual budget for the Fire Department .

In 2020, the Board elected a new Chair person, Jessica Marks of Lowell Township. With long time member and chair , Jim Herb vacating his seat, Vergennes Township added Kate Dernocoeur as new member. The other Board Members are; Vice Chair Tim Wittenbach of Vergennes Township, Treasure Carlton Blough of Lowell Township, Mike DeVore of the City of Lowell, and David Pasquale of the City of Lowell.

In 2020, the Board received a comprehensive report from the McGrath Consulting Group. This report was a year long project looking at all aspects of the Fire Department, from equipment and staffing needs to call response data. The Board has began working with the Department and Chief Witherell to implement some of the reconditions of the report.





## Personnel Changes



In September Chief van Overbeek retired after 31 years of service.



In October Firefighter Kem Charron resigned his position with the department after 7 years of service.



In January Probationary member Matt Harrison joined the department.

Matt is a recent graduate of Lowell High School.



In September Probationary member Brenda Herron joined the department. Brenda is a EMT. She and her husband Carl are residents of Vergennes TWP.

## Honorable Mentions



Firefighter Jim Oswald 2020  
Firefighter of the Year and life  
savings award.



Probationary Firefighter Jordan Lambert  
2020 Rookie of the Year



Lieutenant Erik Kelley life saving award

## 2020 Achievements

In 2020, several members were enrolled in several different classes, including officer development, EMS, and professional education, with the goal of providing the best possible customer service to those who call on us.

Probationary Firefighters Ashely Putney, Donald Shaffer, and Matthew Harrison successfully completed their Medical First Responder Training from Life EMS, which was hosted by Courtland Fire Department.

Firefighters Erik Kelley and Kevin Jones are enrolled in the Fire Officer I & II program hosted by Walker Fire Department, scheduled to conclude in March 2021. Firefighters Charles Putney, Ashely Putney, James Oswald, and Nigel Heftye are enrolled in the EMT course hosted by the Grattan Fire Department, scheduled to conclude in April of 2021.

Probationary Firefighters Brenda Herron and Matt Harrison are enrolled in Firefighter I & II scheduled to conclude in April of 2021.

# Department Organization

Shannon Witherell  
Fire Chief

Cory Velzen  
Deputy Chief

Sean Donahue      Justin Soyka  
Captain              Captain

|             |            |                 |             |
|-------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Kevin Jones | Bob Hults  | Charles Johnson | Erik Kelley |
| Lieutenant  | Lieutenant | Lieutenant      | Lieutenant  |

Firefighters

- Tim Hill
- Brenda Herron
- Nicole Witherell
- Dustin Hendryx
- James Bolan
- Ashley Putney
- Charles Putney
- Nigel Heftye
- Donald Shaffer
- Jordan Lambert
- Zachery Jahnke
- James Oswald

## Vision Statement

The Lowell Area Fire Department will set the standard of excellence by honoring tradition, professionalism, customer service, and public education; We will also create leaders through training, education and strong ethical values.

## Personnel Leadership

### MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to providing fire suppression, medical services, and other emergency and non-emergency activities to the residents of the greater Lowell Area.

We accomplish this mission through training, dedication, and education to the protection of our membership and the community.



Chief Shannon Witherell  
1998



Deputy Chief Corwin Velzen  
2009



Captain Justin Soyka  
2006



Captain Sean Donahue  
2008



Lt Kevin Jones  
2017



Lt Robert Hults  
2008



Lt Charles Johnson  
2009



Lt Erik Kelley  
2013

## *Personnel Roster*



Tim Hill



Brenda Herron



Nicole Witherell



Dustin Hendryx



James Bolan



Ashely Putney



Chuck Putney



Nigel Hefty



Don Shaffer



Jordan Lambert



Matt Harrison



Zack Jahnke



Jim Oswald

## **Facility Report**

In spring of 2020, our staff focused on repairs to our outdoor lawn sprinkler system as well as landscaping updates. In the Fall we updated the inside of our facility including a complete makeover of the Chief's office consisting of new paint, ceiling tiles, and flooring. We also began repainting the interior walls in the front portion of the building, starting with the hallway and EMS supply room. In addition, we updated the truck bay area, offices, and bathrooms to LED light to help save on energy costs.

It is our intention to have the training room and bathrooms repainted in early 2021.

We performed our filter service on the exhaust filter system in the truck bay area. This is a service that is required every three years and costs approximately \$3000.00.

In 2021, we would like to begin updating the training room and kitchen, as well as flooring in the front portion of the building.





Captain Justin Soyka  
Equipment Officer

### 2021 Equipment Goals

- Complete the County truck purchase.
- Evaluations of replacement rescue tools
- Improved record keeping through Emergency Reporting System

## Equipment Report

In 2020, our team began working with the Kent County Purchasing Department on the replacement specifications for the Engine 3 Replacement. It is our intention to award a bid on this project in early 2021, with a delivery of the new truck in 2022. A Lowell Area Community Fund grant has been applied for to assist with the purchase of this truck.

In June, we received a donation to purchase a Zodiac Rescue boat from a local business and a donation of a new outboard boat motor from the Lowell Police Department. The new boat was placed into service after training was concluded.

In November, the Fire Authority Board approved the purchase of a new Chief Command truck. This truck will also serve as a medical response unit and will be well equip with equipment for firefighting and incident command.

We replaced rear tires on our Brush 7. Throughout the year, we also repaired several miscellaneous items, as needed.

Keeping our fleet ready to go is a top priority. While we can ignore and sometimes prolong repairs on our personal vehicles, that is not an option with emergency vehicles. We are fortunate to work with local companies that assist us in keeping our fleet on the road.

As part of our weekly activities, we check the trucks and the equipment that is carried on them. All trucks are checked at a minimum of once a month, with most being inspected weekly. These checks are then documented in Emergency Reporting Systems for tracking.

In addition to the vehicles, we also have to maintain and test other equipment per NFPA standards. Our hoses and ladders must be tested every year.

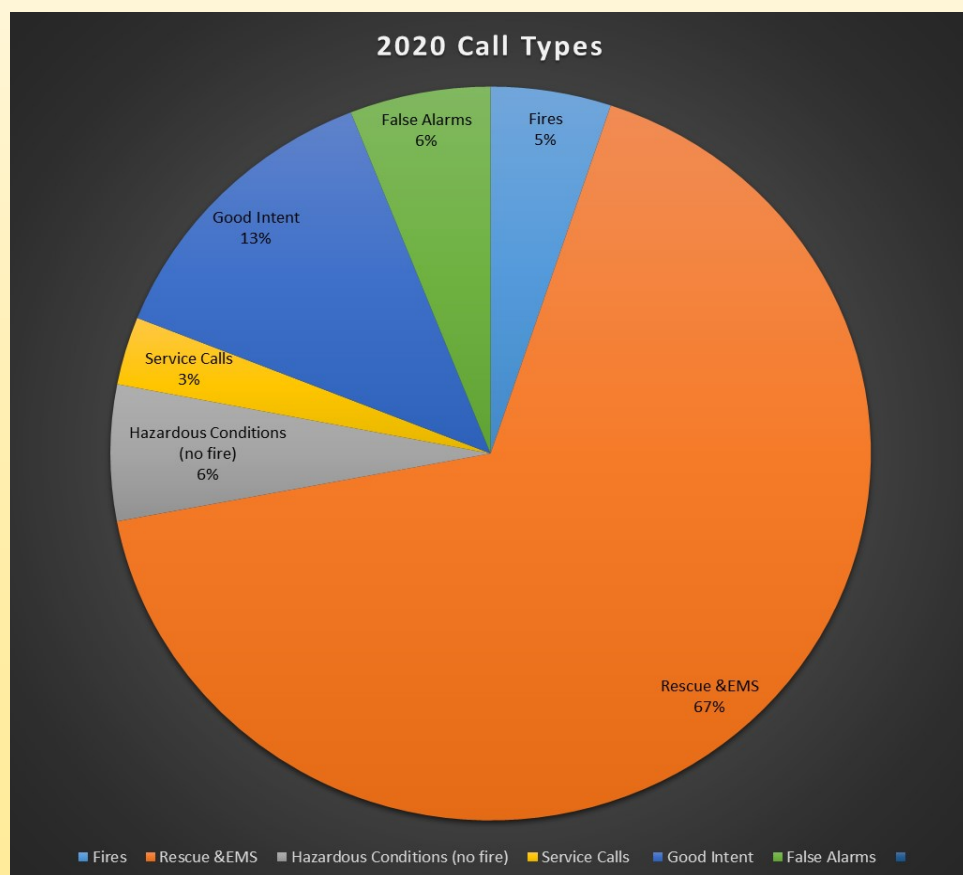
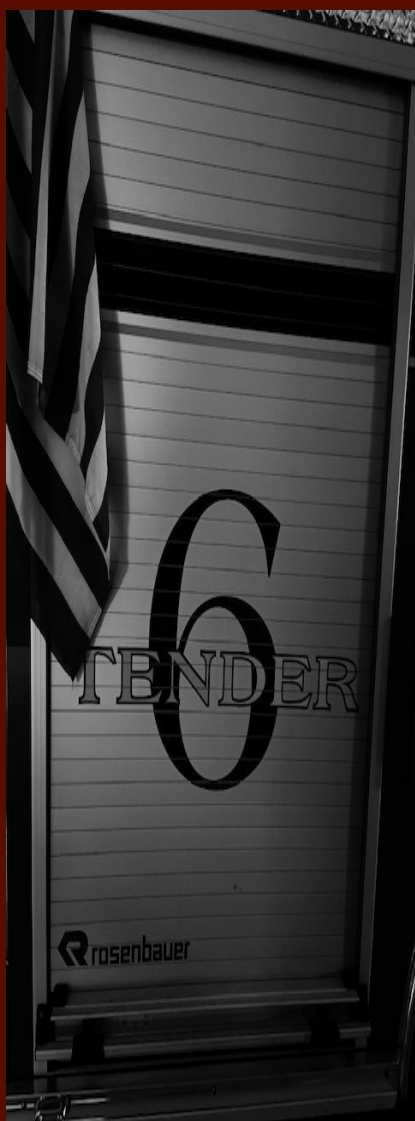
This year, all the ladders passed their testing. Our hose testing produced five lengths of hose that failed. They usually fail due to leaks in the jacket or around the couplings. We have roughly 6,715feet of hose that we test and 123 feet of ground ladders.

## 2020 Response Report

2020 was a very unique year for incident tracking to say the least. Compared to 2019, we saw a 7% increase in requests for EMS services and 10 additional Fires. However, we ended the year with a 8% overall decrease in calls, ending 2020 with 819 requests for service. We also noted a decrease of trauma calls by 17% and a 69% decrease in Hazardous Condition (No Fire) calls.

The stay-at-home order that occurred early in the COVID-19 pandemic aided in the reduction of trauma -related call, and the lack of storms in 2020 directly related to the reduction in Hazardous Condition (No Fire) calls.

Also notable, apparatus response time in the months of October—December 2020 during the 8:00 am to 4:00 pm time frame were reduced by over 3 minutes, compared to the same time frame in 2019.

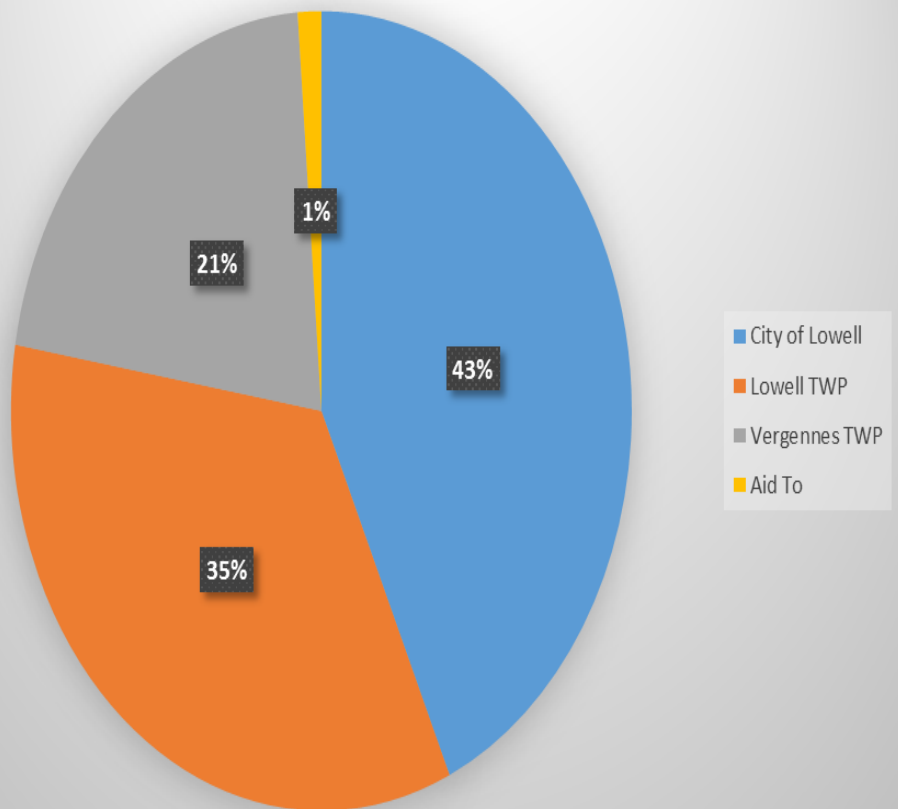


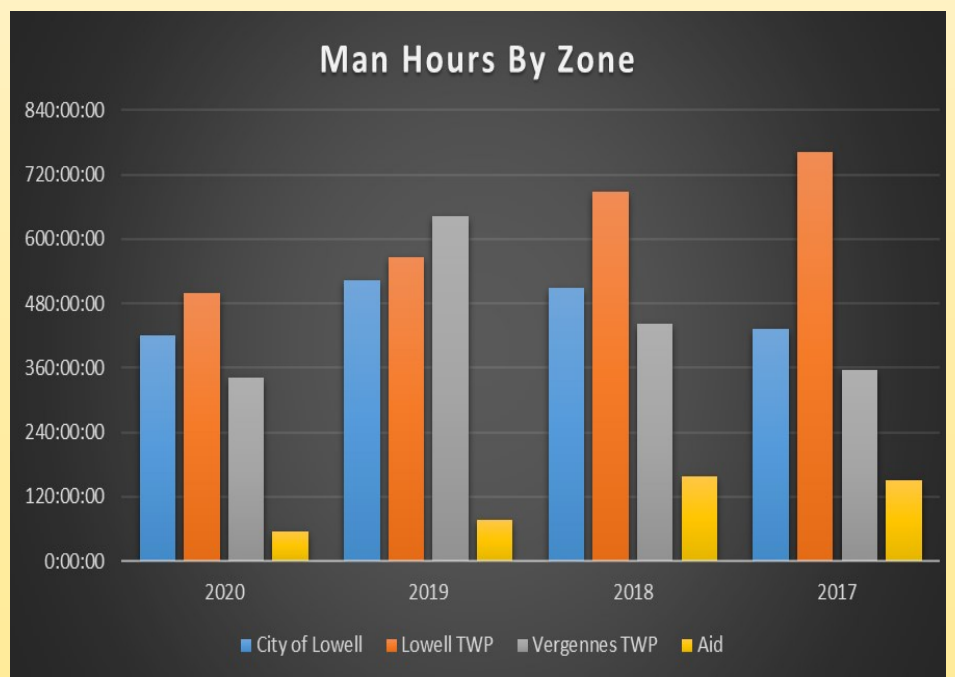
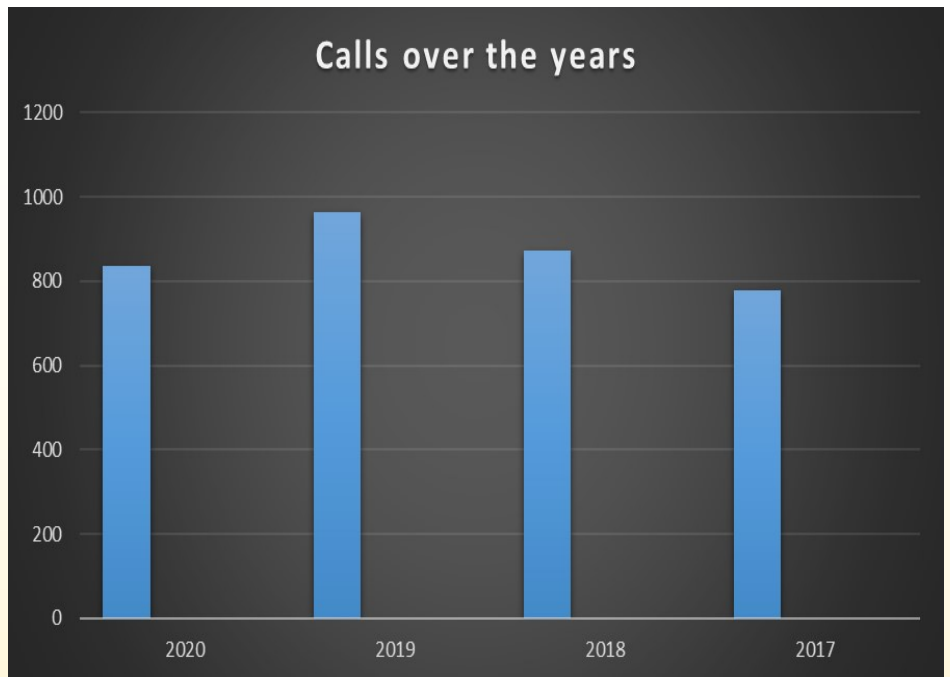


In 2020, the City of Lowell had the calls 354 for service , down from 407 in 2019; Lowell Township had 282 calls , down from 315 in 2019; and Vergennes Township 173 requests for service, down from 228 in 2019.

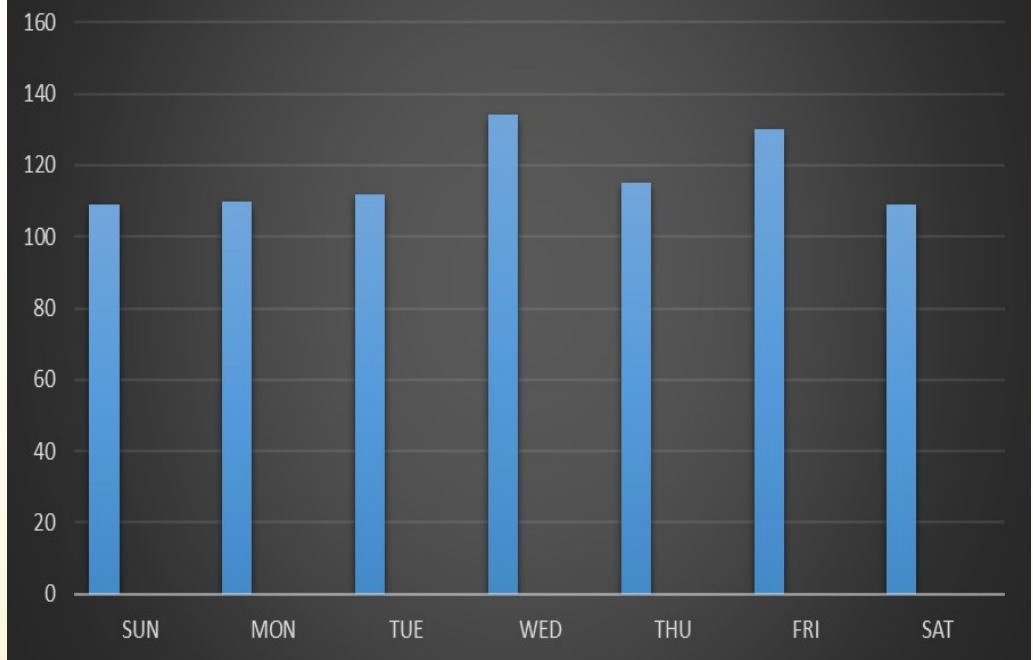
In 2020, we were requested to provide aid to outside communities on 10 incidents and received aid on 11 call.

Calls By Zone

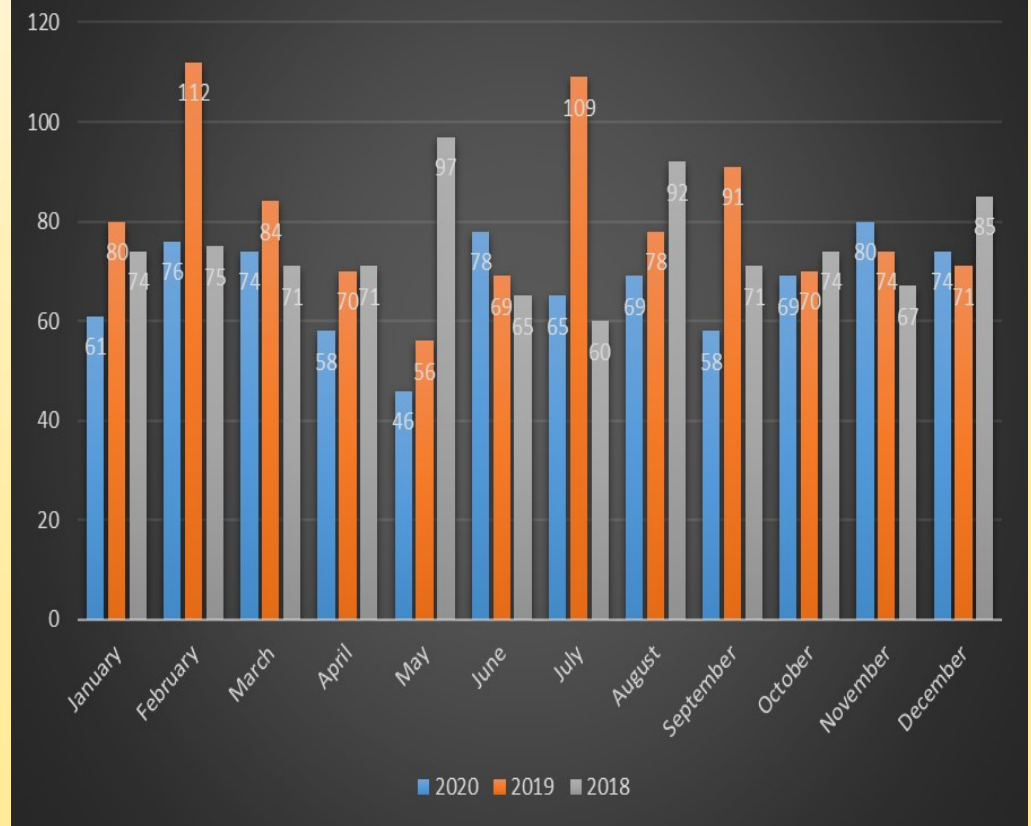




### Calls By Day



### Calls by Month





Deputy Chief Cory Velzen

Sr. Training Officer

### 2021 Training Goals

- 50% of the staff to EMT
- All Officers to obtain Instructor I
- Training Center
- All new members trained FF II and EMT



## Training Report

Training for Lowell Area Fire Department during 2020 has been anything but normal. While COVID 19 presented many challenges on call response it also had its effects on training as well. Lowell Area Fire Department members overcame and adapted to the new requirements and challenges presented to them. Some of the challenges required smaller group learning, distanced training, and switching to a virtual format of instruction.

Training the department on an annual basis is always an active and ever changing challenge. The mission of the training department is to meet all required training during a year, while building on current skillsets through repetition and enhanced drill designs.

Highlights for the year are listed below:

#### Medical –

- CPR/AED license renewal; All personal received a new certificate good for two years
- Pediatric medical/trauma treatment
- Cardiac and airway management
- COVID treatment and PPE protocol changes
- Stroke and Diabetic emergencies
- AED equipment in service

#### Fire –

- Hose Streams and Water supply
- Vehicle extrication with J&K towing donations for vehicles
- Hazmat operations techniques
- Mutual Aid tender shuttle fill and water flow operations
- New boat in service and operations
- Fire Extinguisher and Water can operations
- New county radio training operations (in service 2021 )





Captain Sean Donahue  
Fire Prevention Officer

## Fire Prevention & Community Risk Reduction

2020 was a challenging year for our Fire Prevention Team. We needed to focus on community safety, while staying connected to our community. Class room visits for Fire Prevention week were replaced with a Fire Truck drive -by and coloring books being dropped off to teachers to send home with their students. Station tours were replaced with nearly 50 drive -by birthday parties. Our annual fire station Open House was replaced with a drive -through Trunk or Treat event, where we handed out nearly 26,000 pieces of candy, and our favorite parade of the year—the Lowell Santa Claus Parade- became a drive -through event. Our staff also donated over 100 new unwrapped toys to Toys for Tots in our first year taking part in this great event.

Due to state issued COVID restrictions our inspections department was only able to focus on complaint driven inspections and plan reviews. We were able to perform new building inspections at Maple Ridge Manner, Med's Café, and LUME. We had a part in plan review for One Ethanol, Enwork, New Union Brewing, and several others.

In 2020, we were pleased to partner with MISAFE and WOTV4 to bring no cost Smoke and CO Detectors to our residents. In 2020 we installed 90 smoke detectors and 60 CO Alarms in private homes throughout the area.



### 2021 Fire Prevention Goals

\*Install 180 Smoke Detectors and 120 CO Alarms

Fire Prevention Training, including adding an Inspector I

Be back in the class rooms for Fire Prevention week

Increased fire inspections.

Continuing to hold a Trunk or Treat as well as a Community Open House

## CPR and First Aid Report

### 2021 CPR Goal

Offer community CPR training

Purchase two additional CR2 AED

Work with other organizations to replace their Hart Start units

Over the past several years, our staff has provided CPR training for Lowell Police, Department of Public Works, and staff at City hall. We are looking to expand these offerings in 2021

In February of 2020, we partnered with U of M Metro Health to host a community Stop the Bleed class. Several members of the community attended to learn the importance of bleeding control during a trauma.

Due to a recall, we began to replace our current Hart Start AEDs with new Life Pack CR2 AEDs. These units are Wi-Fi, and they communicate service needs as well as use history information automatically. We also purchased a training unit, which will allow us to offer training for these units.



## Thank You

Our staff is excited to see what 2021 brings to the Lowell Area Fire Department. We look forward to continuing to serve this great community we are all proud to call home.

On behalf of the Command staff and members of the Lowell Area Fire Department , thank you for taking the time to read our 2020 Annual Report.



## Lowell Area Fire Department

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