

**A HISTORY OF THE
NORTH STONINGTON
VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC.**



**CELEBRATING
75 YEARS OF SERVICE**

FIREMAN'S PRAYER

*When I am called to duty God
Whenever flames may rage
Give me strength to save a life
Whatever be the age.*

*Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late
Or save an older person
From the horror of that fate.*

*Enable me to be alert
And hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently
To put the fire out.*

*I want to fill my calling
And to give the best in me
To guard my neighbor
And protect his property.*

*And if, according to your will
I have to lose my life
Bless with your protecting hand
my children and my wife.*

Author Unknown

Table of Contents

01 Forward

02 North Stonington: The Earlier Years

03 Village Fire Engine Company- 1845

04 The Unprotected Years

05 North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

06 Charter Members

07 Our Ladies Auxiliary

08 Fire Chiefs

09 Company Presidents

10 Current Officers

11 Current Active Members

12 Life Members – Active

13 Life Members – Associate

14 Firefighter of the Year Award

15 Junior Firefighter Program

Table of Contents

16 Rescue Squad

17 RIT – Going the Extra Mile

18 Fire Police

19 Fund Raising

20 The Company's Social Life

21 The Station: Past and Present

22 The Apparatus: Past and Present

23 Major Incidents

24 Our Future Vision

25 75th Anniversary Committees

1- Forward

As we celebrate our 75th Anniversary, it is important to understand our past in order to visualize our future.

The North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company was founded in 1945 by a small group of about forty-five citizens who stepped up with a vision to fill a void in Town – the lack of any organized fire protection. Their sense of community and commitment to that vision lead to countless hours of fundraising, beginning almost immediately. Equally important were the efforts of the Ladies Auxiliary who also worked tirelessly to assist in fundraising. Their combined tireless efforts and sacrifice have allowed today's members to be part of one of the best firefighting units there is.



The fire service is a calling, not a hobby. Members willingly give up their time, talent, and safety to help those in need. Many a birthday party, anniversary, or holiday dinners have been missed in order to serve their neighbors and the local neighboring communities.

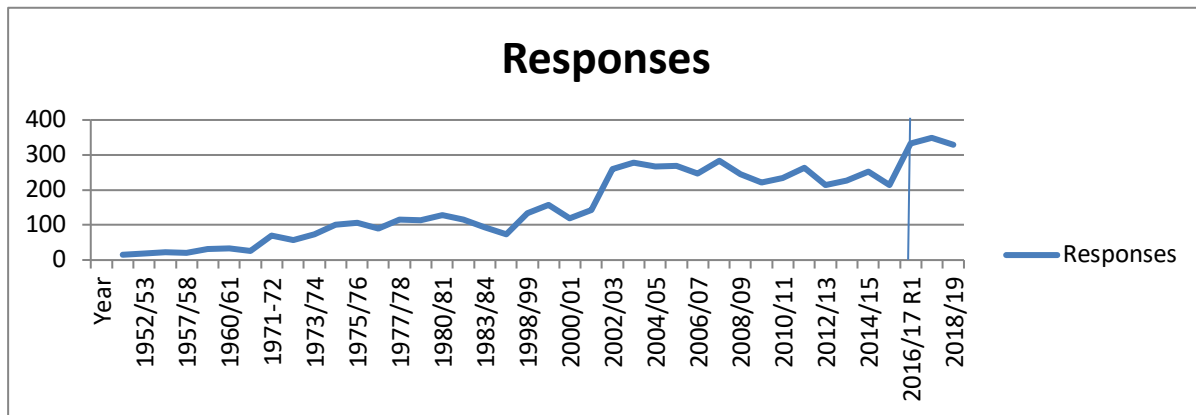
1- Forward

Today several North Stonington members are from families of multi-generation volunteer firefighters.

Likewise, North Stonington has produced many members who have taken career firefighter jobs in surrounding departments over the years. Despite that, these members never forgot their roots, with many still volunteering with us today.

Firefighters are traditionally part of a larger brotherhood. Whether paid or volunteer, they will come to the aid of their comrades at a moment's notice. Unless you are part of this group, it is hard to understand what drives and motivates them.

Today's 2020 firefighting force remains at about forty trained members. While the number of active firefighters has stayed about the same since 1945, today's annual response numbers are around 300, a drastic increase from the approximate 20 calls at our founding. As important as the social aspect of the Company was in its beginnings, it remains a vital part of our present and future success.



Time has changed technology and tactics which continue to allow for the efficient and safe operation of the Fire Company.

1- Forward

The hours of training required for today's volunteers to meet and maintain the various skills needed are the same as those of paid, professional firefighters.

The Town's financial support of the Volunteer Fire Company has allowed us to focus on training while possessing some of the best maintained apparatus and equipment in the area.

This book will try to cover ground not told in our 25th and 50th Anniversary booklets. Information provided has been gleaned from old newspaper articles, Company documents, many of which were hand-typed by past Company Historian Frank Murphy, and individual member scrapbooks. While some repetition is needed to create our past, newer stories and events have been added to provide an overview of the last 75 years of the North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company, Inc.



And finally, special recognition and thanks must be given to the families of the volunteers who also sacrifice family time to accommodate the Company and its duties.

We hope you enjoy the reading.

1- Forward



2 - North Stonington: The Early Years

While a few small mills began to crop up within the area in the early 1700s, a marked increase of activity occurred in the village along the Shunock River in the late 1700s. The area became known as “Milltown”.

In April **1807**, a group of residents voted to secede from Stonington and create their own town. Although the desired name was Jefferson, the State Assembly directed the new town to be called North Stonington.

A census of the population was taken in **1808**, showing almost 2,500 residents.

Growth continued in Milltown along the Assekunk and Shunock Rivers, including grain and wool processing mills, a tannery, along with an iron works. This was helped by the opening of the original New London-Providence Turnpike in 1820. Town population in the **1830s** grew to about 2,800 residents.



2 - North Stonington: The Early Years

With the increase in demand combined with the limited size of our available rivers, the town was soon bypassed to larger towns. Residents left to work in the larger mills in the surrounding towns.

By **1840** the town's population had dropped to 2,260.



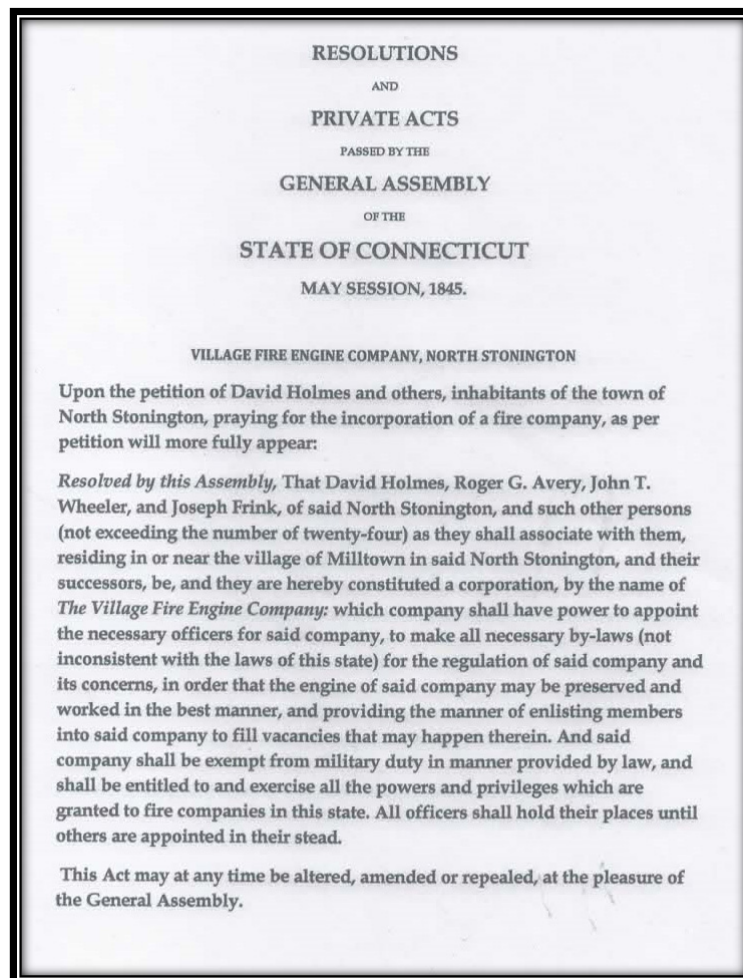
NS Village Square

NS Historical Society Photo

3 - Village Fire Engine Company - 1845

Despite the reduction in population, there remained commercial operations in the village area. With both the close proximity of buildings, and their wood construction, fire was always a threat.

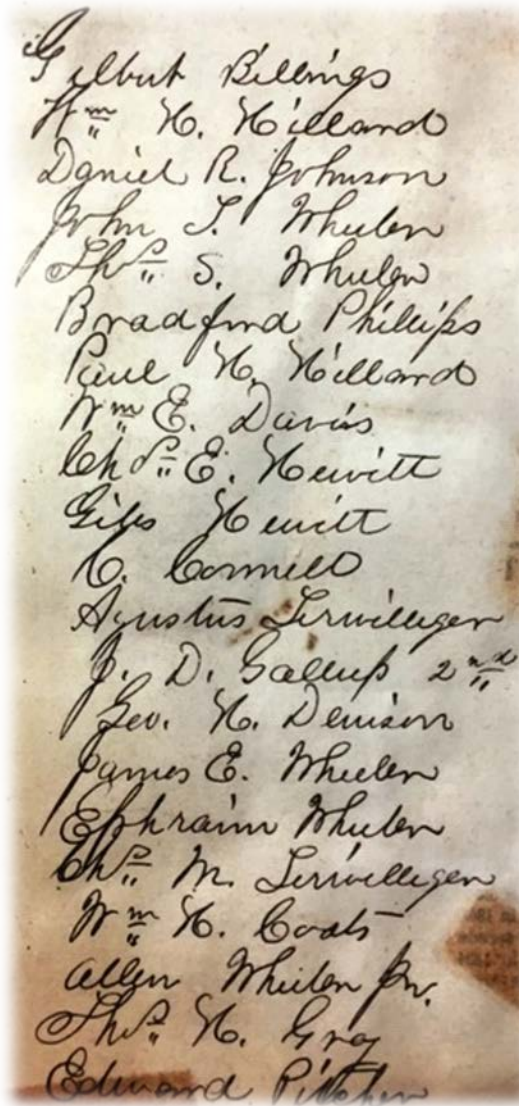
During the **May 1845** meeting of Connecticut General Assembly, upon petition of residents David Holmes, Roger Avery, John Wheeler, and Joseph Frink, the creation of the “Village Fire Engine Company, North Stonington” in the village of Milltown occurred. This authorization allowed for up to twenty-four members, the creation of appropriate bylaws “...in order that the engine of said company may be preserved and worked in the best manner...”



3 - Village Fire Engine Company - 1845

Some accounts indicate that the Company had a 12-man hand pump engine which was housed in a small building on today's Wyassup Road near Main Street.

George Stone, a local historian, owned a list dated October 13, 1858, showing the hand-written signatures of the members during that particular time. Many of the families still reside in the area.



Gilbert Bellings
H. H. Willard
Daniel R. Johnson
John S. Whelan
John S. Whelan
Bradford Phillips
Paul H. Willard
Wm. E. Davis
Chas. E. Hewitt
E. Hewitt
W. Cornell
Augustus Linnelager
J. D. Gallup 2nd
Rev. H. Denison
James E. Whelan
Ephraim Whelan
Chas. M. Linnelager
Wm. H. Coats
Allen Whelan Jr.
John H. Gray
Edward P. Pithers

3 - Village Fire Engine Company - 1845

Sometime around 1870 the Village Fire Engine Company ceased to exist. What transpired is a mystery, along with any material or relics related to it, including its hand pumper.

The lack of any remaining mills today may indicate that fire had taken its toll.

In the mid 1970's, member Maurice O'Rourke donated a hand-drawn hose reel to the Company. It appears to date back to the middle to late 1800's and is likely the type of vehicle used to bring hose to the fire scene during the existence of the Village Fire Engine Company.



3 - Village Fire Engine Company - 1845



4 – The Unprotected Years

After 1870, organized fire protection was not available in North Stonington. As the town's population dwindled to around 1,100 in 1901, this likely contributed to the lack of able-bodied volunteers to support an organized fire suppression unit.

A glimmer of hope came to Milltown after being connected to Norwich and Westerly by the Norwich/Westerly Railroad trolley line in 1906. Sadly, a rebirth of the Town's business base did not follow and the line ceased operation after about 15 years of operation.



For a period on time, the Pawcatuck Fire Department would send a response to the town, but the time required to make notification, and travel the distances left little chance for success.



4 – The Unprotected Years

Large forest fires occurred in and around North Stonington and in western Rhode Island in the 1930s and again in the 1940s. A reported 1,400 acres burned in the Lantern Hill area in 1942. Although State Forestry had created volunteer crews to fight these fires, a localized structural firefighting force remained largely unaddressed.

Despite expansive woodlands, it wasn't until 1951 that North Stonington became home to one of the state's numerous fire towers. It was located on Stewart Hill near Wyassup Lake and overlooked the Pauchaug Forest and beyond. It remained there until the 1970's.



From the tower, spotters were able to triangulate with towers in Norwich and Sterling to pinpoint the location of a smoke source and notify the appropriate forestry crews.

4 – The Unprotected Years

Once a home owned by the Wheeler family burned in **1938** in the location of today's Town Hall parking lot, it probably became a stark reminder of the continued lack of local fire protection every time a meeting or vote was held.



NS Historical Society Photo



Ripley Parks House

Wyassup Road

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

The first meeting occurred on **September 6, 1945**, with 30 prospective members showing up. Within the following weeks, membership swelled to almost 75 persons, including almost 20 women.

Tandem projects immediately began, first with finding a location for a fire station and obtaining a fire truck.



With no direct funding coming from the Town, money needed to be raised through donations, loans, along with fund-raising events. Almost immediately members formed Building, Purchasing, Publicity, and Entertainment committees to address the Company's needs.

A separate Ladies Auxiliary was formed in August 1946 to help support the efforts.

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

Discussions on where the fire station should be located varied from being adjacent to the school or on Mr. Stone's property in the Village. It was agreed that the current location, which was under Government control, would best serve the Town. While construction efforts were underway, the legal process transferred the land from Federal control to the State on November 4, 1948. On February 4, 1954, the land was transferred from State to Fire Company control.

The steadfast efforts of the membership lead to the formation of a Mortgage Burning Ceremony Committee in October 1953.

The first apparatus purchased in March 1947 was a 1941 Ford Army surplus fire engine for \$1,929. With no building yet constructed, the engine was temporarily housed in Ernest Gray's barn in the village.



By 1949 a two-bay building was constructed to house the Company's apparatus.

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

Other vehicles were purchased and renovated to fulfill the firefighting needs in the town. Training nights were initially set for Mondays to ensure members were well versed in existing and newly acquired equipment.

To say that members weren't visionaries would be an understatement. As early as 1949 members realized that their role would evolve beyond fire suppression. The donation of a 1st Aid kit and anti-Snake Venom Serum in November likely provided the roots for today's Rescue operations. First aid classes were initiated in January 1951, with a resuscitator purchased in February 1953. A separate Ambulance Fund was created in 1958 to collect donations in an effort to purchase an ambulance.

The early 1960s showed a significant seasonal population increase due to the presence of Boy and Girl Scout camps, along with Camp Whitman within our borders. The Fire Company began to identify the need for more rescue capabilities.

While the Fire Company had taken on some rescue services with the purchase of a small delivery truck in the mid 1960s, the majority of patient transports were only possible by calling the Westerly Ambulance Corps. It wasn't until 1970 that a separate ambulance organization was formed in North Stonington. Many of the founders of the North Stonington Ambulance Association were also members of the Fire Company at the time, serving double duty to the Town.

Today both organizations are housed at the Center for Emergency Services.

Getting the word out when an emergency call occurred was more complicated than it is today. Prior to today's pagers and 9-1-1 centralized dispatching system, several phones were located in the private homes of members who committed to ensure 24/7 answering coverage of the emergency number: 535-1166. They also had the ability to remotely activate the station siren. Members only knew of an incident once the alarm sounded or they received a phone call.

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

Emergency phone call “trees” were set up which ensured members were notified of the incident location and type. With the introduction of home-based alerting devices, members would be notified simultaneously of the event. The lack of centralized dispatching required the staffing of the base radio at the fire station. From there we had the ability to make the necessary notification to summon mutual aid. In subsequent years, North Stonington and surrounding departments each had the ability to activate the home-based receivers of their neighbors in the event mutual aid was needed.

It was not until 1973 that North Stonington residents were able to contact a centralized dispatch center at Stonington Police Headquarters to report emergencies. While they initiated the initial response, most departments continued to staff their own base radio in order to summon help.

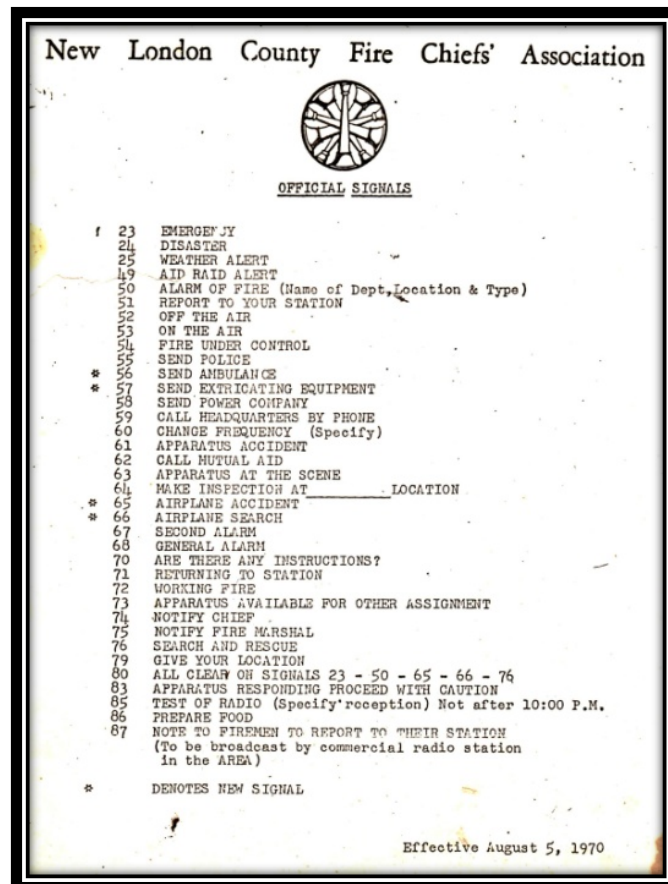
For many years two members, William Lord and Ernest Parsons, covered 99% of the radio duties at the station. The stories of their exploits, while signing off as “KGY225 Clear and Standing By” still make for a great time.

After several years with Stonington, the Town decided to relocate all emergency dispatching to Groton Fire Alarm, which currently provides North Stonington with that service.

Radio communications saw most of the state east of the Connecticut River being on the same frequency. Besides that, several areas in New England and other states shared the same frequency. It was not uncommon for us to communicate with dispatchers in Lakes Region, New Hampshire and Hamilton County, Ohio. The sheer number of departments made it a necessity to formulate call signals.

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

The New London County call signals were widely used, but not exclusively.



As time passed, the need to standardize communications between all responders no matter the location, occurred nationally. Today, “plain language” radio transmissions are used by most, if not all emergency services.

Realizing the sheer size of the town being protected from fire, the Company obtained a piece of apparatus and tried to create a sub-station in Clarks Falls near the old Grist Mill in early 1954. Staffing limitations and funding led to its closure and return of apparatus to Headquarters in November 1954.

5 – North Stonington Volunteer Fire Company – 1945

Today, we still serve one of the largest areas from a single station in Connecticut.

In 1962, the Boy Scout camp officially formed the Lake of Isles Volunteer Fire Company, with Ernest Plaude being named Chief. NSVFC voted to donate their 1930 pumper to the newly formed Company with the understanding that they would be on “standby” duty to North Stonington if needed for mutual aid. When the Lake of Isles VFC ceased to exist is unknown, along with the whereabouts of, or whether NSVFC was ever offered their donated engine back.

As prices and the complexity of firefighting equipment increased, it became evident that the members alone could not continue to solely fund the services needed. In May 1960 the purchase of a new engine costing over \$17,500 was co-funded using both Town and Fire Company funds.

While forming a Fire District was discussed in 1961, the idea never came to fruition.

Over the ensuing years the price of apparatus has grown to several hundred thousand dollars each in 2020.

All major apparatus and equipment purchases are now funded by the Town.

In June 2020 the Fire Company and Town took a major step towards the future by funding weekday per diem firefighter staffing to address the lack of volunteer availability during normal business hours. This shortage has been predicted for years. While initially for one position, the goal remains to get funding for the second position next fiscal year.

6 - Charter Members



Corliss Arzamarski

Harry Eastland

Ellis McGowan

Perry E. Bill

John Geer

George McGowan Sr.

Walter Bradley

Ellsworth Gray

Thomas McGowan Jr.

Eugene Bromley

C. Ernest Gray

Thomas McGowan Sr.

Charles Brown

Forest Hayden

George Miner

Maurice Browning Sr.

Horace Knight

Maurice Miner Jr.

Noah Carocari

John Kynell

William F. Morgan Jr.

Clifton Coats

Walter Larson

William F. Morgan Sr.

Charles Corwin

Irving Main

Charles Palmer Jr.

Stanley Corwin

Ralph I. Main Jr.

James N. Palmer Sr.

Charles Cottrell

Edmond McGowan Sr.

John L. Palmer

6- Charter Members



David Stillman

Frank W. Stople

Howard Thompson

George H. Stone

Clifford B. Thompson

Frank White Sr.

As of the writing of this book, only one of the original Charter Members remains:

Edmond P. McGowan Sr.



7 - Our Ladies Auxiliary



Records indicate that as early as 1945 the ladies of the community determined to form a Ladies Auxiliary in order to assist and support the Fire Company's efforts. They conducted fundraising and community outreach events in tandem with, and sometimes separate of the Company.

One of the earliest events was a reported card party which raised \$19.45.

Funds helped supply the kitchen with the appropriate utensils that would be needed as the pace of activities began.

Everything from selling dish cloths and steel kitchen tools to hosting dinners, bazaars, and other activities became more frequent as time progressed.

A snap-shot of some specific events showed a profit from \$100-\$200 each.

A 1952 bazaar netted \$228.64, while back-to-back dinners in 1954 averaged about \$130 profit.

Another duty that the Auxiliary undertook from almost its inception was the making and delivery of refreshments to firefighters on scene of major events. Phone calls would be made at all hours of the day or night, members would respond to the station to prepare food, and then transport it to the emergency scene. After several hours of fighting a brush or structure fire, the PB&J or tuna sandwich felt like a gourmet meal. Many a sandwich and gallon of coffee were served over the years.

7 - Our Ladies Auxiliary



By 1976 the Auxiliary became an integral part in the Baby Sitter Certification classes. This training provided attendees the basics in child care and emergency actions to help those youngsters looking to get baby sitting jobs. Many times a parent would check with the Fire Company to see if their baby sitter had been trained in the program.



7 - Our Ladies Auxiliary

Records indicate that the Ladies Auxiliary had a membership of 89 in 1978.

An activity schedule for the Auxiliary in 1981 showed a continuation of almost monthly events, many in conjunction with Company events.

Just about each year the group would present the Fire Company with a piece of needed equipment at the annual Fire Company's Christmas party which they funded through their activities.



After several years of service, the Ladies Auxiliary became inactive in April 2000.

The membership today owes a debt of gratitude to the countless number of ladies who supported the Fire Company behind the scenes over the years.

7 - Our Ladies Auxiliary



Presidents



Eva Kynell	1946
Elsie Browning	1947
Lucy Stewart	1948
Margaret Main	1949
<i>Inactive</i>	1950-1968
Jean Shirley	1969
Meredith Sawyer Coats	1970
Harriet Bond	1971
Joan Coats	1972-1973
Nina Bill	1974-3/75
Harriet Bond	4/75-1978
Joan Coats	1979
Sally Humphrey	1980-1982
Alice Turner	1983-1984
Elaine McGovern Collins	1985-1987
Lisa Meardy Beatrice	1988-1990
Norma Holliday	1991-1995
Alice Turner	1995
Norma Holliday	1996-1997
Connie VanLew	1998-3/2000
<i>Inactive</i>	4/2000

8 - Fire Chiefs



Forest Hayden
1945-1949



Jack Sylvia
1949 -1951
1952 - 1953



Charles Barker
1953 - 1957



Richard Senior
1951 – 1952
1957 - 1970



Richard White
1970 - 1972



Robert Sawyer
1972 - 1974

8 - Fire Chiefs



Charles Smith III
1974 - 1977



Arthur Wheeler
1977 - 1979



Donald Howell
1979 - 1984



Charles Steinhart IV
1984-1985
1989-1991



Arnold Perkins
1985 - 1987



Edmond McGowan Jr.
1987 - 1989

8 - Fire Chiefs



Michael Howell
1991 - 1996



Timothy Main II
1996 - 2009



Charles Steinhart V
2009 - Present



9 – Company Presidents



Stanley Corwin	1945-1949	Charles Smith III	1979-1980
George Madden	1949-1951	Fred Leary	1980-1982
Irvin Main	1951-1952	Stephen Holliday	1982-1984
Ralph Main, Sr.	1952-1953	Steve Sawyer	1984-1985
James Palmer	1953-1958	Everett Main	1985-1987
Jack Silvia	1958-1961	Emerson Rusich	1987-1988, 1989-1990
Myron Main	1961-1963	Jeffrey Collins	1988-1989
Clifton Coats	1963-1965	David Cornell, Jr.	1990-1991
Louis Bayer	1965-1967	William Peterson	1991-1996
Roy Lee	1967-1971	William Fitzgerald, Sr	1996-2003
William Lord	1971-1973	Andrew Bogan	2003-2006
Richard Senior	1973-1974	Charles Steinhart IV	2006-2007
Walt Weismuller	1974-1975	Robert Shabunia	2007-2014
Frank Shabunia	1975-1976	Gary Baron	2014-2017
Steve McMahon	1976-1979	Kyle Bergel	2017-Present



10 - Current 2019-2020 Company Officers

Fire Line

Charles Steinhart V	Fire Chief
Giuseppe Cassata	Deputy Fire Chief
James Tuttle	Assistant Fire Chief
Stephen Sadowski	Fire Captain
Jonathan Bosma	1st Fire Lieutenant
Kyle Bergel	2nd Fire Lieutenant
Matthew McGowan	3rd Fire Lieutenant
Cody Morgan	Rescue Captain
Samuel Burdick	Rescue Lieutenant
Patrick Chute	Engineer
Gary Bond	Assistant Engineer

Fire Police Officers

Kathleen Bond	Captain
Mark Adams	Lieutenant
Jesse Able	Sergeant

Executive Officers

Kyle Bergel	President
Matthew McGowan	Vice President
Kathleen Bond	Secretary
Larry Chappell	Chaplain
Susan Pike	Treasurer/Bookkeeper

Board of Trustees

Zachary Abbotts
Chris Appleton
Kathleen Bond - Secretary
Larry Chappell
Gregory Howell
Andrew Leary
Grant Leiper
Charles Steinhart IV – Chairman
Michael White
Jonathan Bosma - Alternate
Nathan Browning – Alternate

10 - Current 2020-2021 Company Officers

Fire Line

Charles Steinhart V	Fire Chief
Giuseppe Cassata	Deputy Fire Chief
James Tuttle	Assistant Fire Chief
Stephen Sadowski	Fire Captain
Jonathan Bosma	1st Fire Lieutenant
Kyle Bergel	2nd Fire Lieutenant
Matthew McGowan	3rd Fire Lieutenant
Cody Morgan	Rescue Captain
Samuel Burdick	Rescue Lieutenant
Jason Tagg	Engineer
Phil Allen	Assistant Engineer

Fire Police Officers

Kathleen Bond	Captain
Mark Adams	Lieutenant
Jesse Able	Sergeant

Executive Officers

Kyle Bergel	President
Matthew McGowan	Vice President
Kathleen Bond	Secretary
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Zachary Abbotts
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Kathleen Bond - Secretary
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Larry Chappell
Gregory Howell
Andrew Leary
Charles Steinhart IV – Chairman
Michael White
Phil Allen - Alternate
Grant Leiper – Alternate



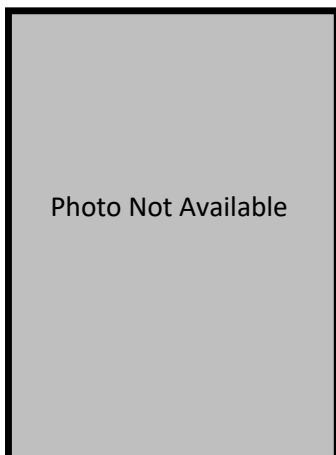
**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Zachary Abbotts
Active Member Since 2012



Jesse Abel
Active Member Since 2017



Mark Adams
Active Member Since 2011



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Phillip Allen
Active Member Since 2019



Christopher Appleton
Active Member Since 2004

Photo Not Available

Tyler Banker
Active Member Since 2006



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Gary Baron
Active Member Since 2009



Richard Bauer
Active Member Since 1994



Kyle Bergel
Active Member Since 2012



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Gary Bond
Active Member Since 1980



Kathleen Bond
Active Member Since 1983



Jonathan Bosma
Active Member Since 2009



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



**Nathan Browning
Active Member Since 2017**



**Samuel Burdick
Active Member Since 2012**



**Jon Carner
Active Member Since 1981**



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



**Giuseppe Cassata
Active Member Since 2005**



**Larry Chappell
Active Member Since 2010**



**Patrick Chute
Active Member Since 2018**



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Connor Doyle
Active Member Since 2018



Ethan Emert
Active Member Since 2018



Justin Gigliello
Active Member Since 2017



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



**Joseph Gross, Sr.
Active Member Since 1964**



**James Gumbert
Active Member Since 2010**



**Gregory Howell
Active Member Since 1978**



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Hayden Leach
Active Member Since 2019



Andrew Leary
Active Member Since 1993



George Leiper
Active Member Since 2014



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Timothy Main II
Active Member Since 1989



Thomas Marsh
Active Member Since 2018



Matthew McGowan
Active Member Since 2012



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Photo Not Available

Dennis Mello
Active Member Since 2020

Cody Morgan

Active Member Since 2010

Photo Not Available



Colby Sadowski
Active (Junior) Member Since 2019



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Stephen Sadowski
Active Member Since 2010



Bruce Sawyer
Active Member Since 1977



Steven Sawyer
Active Member Since 1975



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



**Robert Shabunia
Active Member Since 1986**



**Charles Steinhart IV
Active Member Since 1972**



**Charles Steinhart V
Active Member Since 1998**



**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Jason Tagg
Active Member Since 2018

Cameron Thompson
Active Member Since 2015

Photo Not Available



James Tuttle
Active Member Since 2011



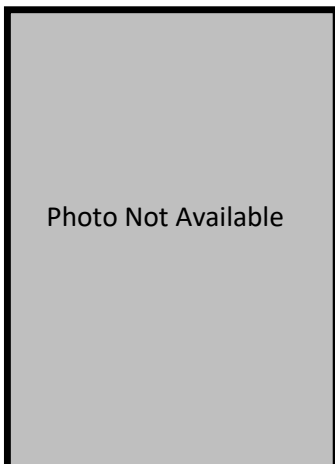
**11 - Current Active
Members
2019-2020**



Chelsey Welch
Active Member Since 2018



Michael White
Active Member Since 1996



Michael White, Jr
Active Member Since 2019





12 - Life Members Still Active 2019-2020



Gary Bond

Kathleen Bond

Jon Carner

Joseph Gross, Sr.

Gregory Howell

Timothy Main II

Bruce Sawyer

Steven Sawyer

Robert Shabunia

Charles Steinhart IV





13 - 2019-2020 Life Members - Associate

(as of 01-01-2020)



Paul Ames

Lisa Beatrice

Andrew Bogan

Robert Boissevain

Earl Bond

Mark Bond

Shiela Bond

Maurice Browning, Jr.

Carol Burdick

Hilding Carlson

Paul Carner

Marvin Chase, Jr.

Allen Coats

C. Thurlow Coats

Gordon Coats

Jeffery Collins

Peggy Collins

George Coon

David Cornell, Jr.

Hilare Cote

Peter Devaney

Jane Novack Dibble

Michael Dibble

Alice Fitzgerald

James Fitzgerald

Judy Fitzgerald

William Fitzgerald, Jr.

Glenn Gavitt

William Giesing III

Kay Gross

Joseph Gross Jr.

Ralph Herrick

David Holliday

John Holliday, Sr.

Norma Holliday

Stephen Holliday

Barbara Howell

Carolyn Howell

Sally Humphrey

Wade Kepler

Michael Kimball

Thomas Knight

Jackie Kunz

Fred Leary

John Leggett Jr.

Ronald Lewis

Joyce Main

Timothy Main, Sr.

Dennis McGowan

Donald McGowan



13 - 2019-2020 Life Members - Associate

(as of 01-01-2020)



Douglas McGowan

Edmond McGowan, Sr.

Rose McGowan.

Stephen McMahon

Cheryl Murphy

Frank Murphy

Arnold Perkins

Mark Perkins, Sr.

William Peterson

Robert Priest

Michael Riley, Sr.

Emerson Rusich

Kristine Shabunia

Charles Smith III

Susie Stedman

Mark Taylor

Judy Wheeler

David White

Gloria White

Richard White, Sr.

14 – Firefighter of the Year Award



In 1994 the Fire Company created the Firefighter of the Year Award in memory of past Chief Edmond P. McGowan Jr. This award continues to be presented annually to a member who exhibits outstanding service in the same spirit as Edmond.

Bruce Sawyer	1994	Michael Podzaline	2007
Kenneth Burrows	1995	Robert Shabunia	2008
Matthew Reissner	1996	Giuseppe Cassata	2009
Gregory Howell	1997	Jonathon Bosma	2010
Jared Priest	1998	Charles Steinhart IV	2011
Gary Bond	1999	James Tuttle	2012
Charles Steinhart V	2000	Samuel Burdick	2013
Christopher White	2001	George Leiper	2014
Donald Howell	2002	Kyle Bergel	2015
Richard Bauer	2003	Larry Chappell	2016
Timothy Main II	2004	Nathan Browning	2017
Maurice Browning III	2005	Stephen Sadowski	2018
Joseph Gross Sr.	2006		



15 - Junior Firefighter Program

The need to increase the ranks with able-bodied recruits to assist in firefighting, especially during brush and forest fires became a topic of discussion. With limited numbers being available during the day, tapping into the school for members was being considered. After investigating the existing Niantic Fire Company's Junior Firefighter program, a bylaw change was made to create our own program in April 1957. Junior members, between the ages of 16-18 were incorporated into many of the tasks. One of the most prominent tasks they would perform was being designated a State Forestry Crew. Once the station siren sounded, members would leave school and report to the fire station for assignment. On several occasions the State requested our crew to assist in fighting wild-land fires, sometimes as far away as Lisbon and Oakdale.

While the Juniors trained with the regular firefighters, they also had their own sessions. This helped build a "team" mentality.

During the 1979 Harvest Festival in Oakdale, a Junior Firefighter class water battle was scheduled. Once it was determined to attend, the team aggressively practiced, standing up against a formidable secret foe; a deck gun.



15 - Junior Firefighter Program

Our team of newcomers went on to beat all but one of the competing teams, taking 2nd place. When asked how we could get so skilled on our first time out, we told them our secret. While being told we were “nuts”, the response was “...yah, but we won!”



Despite today's stringent workplace requirements, our Junior Firefighters remain a vital part of our overall operation. As senior firefighters begin to age-out, the influx of younger trained members is needed as the next generation to serve.

1983 Junior Firefighters



Top row (L-R) M. Chase, Rob White, J. Carner

Bottom row (L-R) M Birkbeck, A. Cote, M. Howell, G. Bond, K. Kochran

16 - Rescue Squad

As early as 1949 members realized that their role in Town was going to be much more than just firefighting. While there was a move to create an ambulance service in 1958, fund raising was limited and the idea faded until 1970, when the North Stonington Ambulance Association was formed. In the early 1960's though, the need to provide rescue-services came to a head. A small delivery van was purchased, affectionately called the "Pie Wagon"!

Decked out in red turnout gear, Rescue Squad members were easy to locate on scene. The major focus at the time was on motor vehicle accidents.



North Stonington remained one of the few dedicated rescue squads in Southeastern Connecticut for years.

16 - Rescue Squad

Our level of expertise became a resource which was, and still is summoned to assist surrounding departments.

One incident of note was during a winter storm in 1974 on Interstate 95 in Groton. A multivehicle accident, including a college team bus and several trailer trucks left several people entrapped in the wreckage in the north bound lane near today's Allyn Street overpass.



Despite several emergency agencies already on scene, North Stonington's rescue personnel and equipment were at the front line of patient extrication.



16 - Rescue Squad

A nearby medical office dispatched doctors to assist with medications and patient care. Shortly after the incident a concerted effort was made by several agencies to improve their own rescue assets.

A somewhat humorous incident occurred a few years later. Fire and ambulance assets were dispatched to a multivehicle accident in the north bound lane of Interstate 95. Upon arrival, patients were placed in the ambulance and it started towards New London. The lone remaining patient, with minor injuries, was placed on the stretcher in the back of the Rescue Truck and his trip to the hospital began. During the trip, the patient advised the crew that he was a member of the Boston Red Sox and wanted to go to Boston. This led to a good chuckle. A short time later, we came upon the ambulance, which had experienced a flat tire near the Mystic reservoirs. The Rescue stopped to assist in changing the tire, loaded the flat alongside the stretcher. The trip then continued to the hospital, where the patient was turned over the Emergency Room staff. Our return trip conversation evolved around our patient's desire to be transported to Boston. The next day news papers reported that Red Sox pitcher Roger Moret was fined for not being in Boston at the required time prior to game. Apparently he was in New York and was trying to beat the curfew before being involved in the accident. One can only imagine the locker room stories!

Over the ensuing years the Rescue Squad has responded to everything from airplane accidents to water rescue emergencies to lost and injured hikers on Lantern Hill. During each response, the skill and training of our members is readily evident.

The vision of our predecessors continues to live on with our Rescue Squad today. We remain one of the best equipped and experienced groups in the area. Members are not only trained in vehicle extrication, but also in hazardous materials, confined space, search practices, water rescue, along with high and low angle rope rescue techniques.

16 - Rescue Squad

The hours need to remain proficient in those skill takes an added commitment by those members, over and above that of the regular firefighters.



17 – RIT: Going the Extra Mile



North Stonington has long been known to be one of the finest firefighting groups in the area, excelling in the latest training and tactics available.

Despite that, we have had to rely on surrounding departments to provide emergent rescue services for the actual firefighter.

Firefighters have been lost across the country during emergency efforts only because a dedicated, task-focused group was not immediately available to perform a rescue.

The need to have our own dedicated group of firefighters immediately available whose sole purpose is to rescue trapped firefighters became evident. Due to the sheer size of our Town, our reliance on a surrounding department could take upwards of twenty minutes to get those resources on scene.

In late 2019 a group of more than a dozen of our volunteers decided to commit to hours of additional, specialized training needed to be proficient in the many skills needed to become a member of our Rapid Intervention Team (RIT). The training has allowed the group to become a cohesive Team.

17 – RIT: Going the Extra Mile

Other adjacent departments have now shown an interest in automatically summoning our RIT team to the scene of their fires in order to aid in their firefighters' safety. As always, North Stonington is ready and willing to assist their fellow firefighters no matter the time or location.

We are truly appreciative of these members volunteering to go the "extra mile" to protect their fellow firefighters.

2019-2020 RIT Members

Zachary Abbotts

Ethan Emert

Phil Allen

Grant (George) Leiper

Tyler Banker

Matthew McGowan

Kyle Bergel

Cody Morgan

Gary Bond

Stephen Sadowski

Jonathan Bosma

Charles Steinhart V

Nathan Browning

Jason Tagg

Samuel Burdick

James Tuttle

Giuseppe Cassata

Mike White

Patrick Chute

Mike White Jr.

18 - Fire Police



The first mention of the appointment of Fire Police occurred in November of 1948. It was realized that traffic control near an emergency scene was an important aspect in protecting the safety of the firefighters. The original group included six (6) members:

Louis Bayer

James N. Palmer

Maurice Browning, Sr.

George Madden

Harry Eastland

Aubrey Whitelaw

Since the position of a Fire Police officer was intertwined with Civil Defense, members were required to be sworn-in by the Town Clerk.

As in years past, traffic control many times occurs distances away from the hustle and bustle of the emergence scene. While some of the duties have remained the same over the ensuing decades, the complexity of today's traveling public has made it a more dangerous job. Roads which saw infrequent use are now heavily traveled. Likewise, the speeds have drastically increased along with distracted driving.

The motoring public has become less understanding of any temporary inconvenience they may experience during an emergency, since many times the event is not visible to them. As such, Fire Police usually get the brunt of the driver's angst.

18 - Fire Police

While shifting traffic patterns to accommodate an emergency scene was widely successful in the past, full closures and detours of an entire road section has become necessary to increase emergency responder safety.

As in decades past, their presence remains a vital part of scene safety today.

FIRE POLICE CAPTAINS

Over the Years

Eugene Bromley

Wallace Giachello

Clifton Coats

Earl Bond

Joyce Wright

John Holliday

Robert Burroughs

Audrey Gruber

Kathleen Bond

19 – Fundraising



While many in Town may realize that the Fire Company and Grange co-sponsor the annual North Stonington Agricultural Fair, a long list of other events occurred over the years which have helped sustain the Fire Company since its founding. Without municipal funding, the members needed to solicit and raise all the funds needed to fulfill their vision. Several residents offered loans to obtain equipment, while others outright donated to the cause. Membership initiation dues were set at \$1, with subsequent \$0.25 per month dues assessed.

Plans were made to hold dances, suppers, raffles, and game nights (bingo) to raise funds. Dinners were also held after each Company meeting to help the cause.

As early as October 1945 it was reported that \$19.45 was raised from a card party. In 1946, an offer was accepted to co-host a minstrel with Voluntown. One such event was held at Ward High School in Westerly.

After the forming of the Ladies Auxiliary in 1946, separate fundraising events were also conducted by them. A closer look at their activities will be covered in a following section.

A Bingo night in 1947 netted \$35.

19 – Fundraising

A horse show was scheduled for May 1948, with the event being held in the field behind the station. Subsequent horse shows followed, with a rodeo held in May 1951. A 1957 rodeo saw a profit of \$157.75

Sometimes as frequently as monthly, fundraising dinners were put on, each usually producing between \$100 - \$150 profit.

A more memorable event occurred during a December 1959 Bingo night. (Apparently the Bingo laws had changed in October 1959.)

As games were underway, the fire station was raided by the Connecticut State Police.

All records, equipment, and monies were confiscated, along with ten (10) members being taken into custody. After posting bond, a court hearing was scheduled for December 23, 1959 at the Town Hall. On January 15, 1960, members were found guilty of violating the Bingo laws and fined a net cost of \$5.00 each. The trial judge indicated that while the purpose was fine, the method was wrong.

Bingo as a source of funding was subsequently abandoned and the equipment was sold to the Westerly Order of Moose in September of 1960.

Various fundraising breakfasts, dinners, and raffles continued to occur.

It was not until September 1974 that the Fire Company and Ambulance Association decided to work together on a new Bingo endeavor. It would subsequently provide several thousand dollars of funds to each organization over the ensuing seven years. In September of 1981, competition with the higher-pursed Bingo Hall at Mashantucket and a continued lack of volunteer workers caused it to cease operations.

Over the ensuing years the Fire Company has periodically held fundraising events, such as raffles, Truck Pulls and Christmas Tree sales for specific equipment.

19 – Fundraising

A major undertaking was the raising of funds for our first “Jaws of Life” tool in the late 1980s. It took several years to raise the required funds.



More recently, another fundraising event occurred with the purpose of purchasing a Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) and trailer. The need became evident as responses to incidents occurring in remote wooded areas continued to increase. After almost 5 years of efforts, the vehicle was finally purchased at no cost to the Town. It was placed in service in August of 2014.



Today, the Fire Company continues to co-sponsor the annual North Stonington Agricultural Fair with the North Stonington Grange.



20 – Company Social Life

Society was much simpler in our early years. There was no internet, cell phones, computers, or video games. Television was limited. Families were much closer, which was made all the easier living in a small town. A high level of participation was required of the members to sustain the Company's activities. In many cases entire families were involved in the undertaking.

Over time it became obvious that a social component of the organization would be essential. Things such as dances, suppers, even a masquerade ball, and game nights were organized to keep residents and members involved in the Company's efforts while also raising funds to support the Fire Company.

An example of one of these events was a movie night in December 1946, where a representative of the State Fire Marshal's office discussed fire prevention after showing "...moving pictures in color..." on "The Chemistry of Fire" and "Home Safety".

In September 1948 the Company created its own bowling team. Despite continuing to need funds to survive, the team held a benefit exhibition in 1951 to benefit the March of Dimes Polio Fund. It would tie for first place with Watch Hill Fire Department in March of 1954.

First Aid classes and a Fire Prevention Contest were held in 1951.



20 – Company Social Life

Meanwhile, members prepared for a September 1951 Tug of War with Wequetequock for possession of the trophy cup presented during Stonington's Tercentennial. Today, the cup resides in our trophy case.



A tradition which has endured through the years is our annual Christmas Party for children. The first recorded purchase of a Santa suit occurred in Dec 1952, just prior to the upcoming party.



20 – Company Social Life

Having members spending time at the station was as important then as it is now. Being able to respond immediately versus waiting several minutes for members to respond from home continues to be an asset.

Card games after meetings went into the wee hours. A purchase of a bowling machine in 1955 and subsequent acquisitions of ping-pong and pool tables over the ensuing years showed a desire to make the Station a comfortable place to meet with other members and socialize.

In 1956, the Fire Company formed a basketball team in 1956.

While little is known about who they played, the only expense was the purchase of a basketball in February of that year. It must have provided quite the entertainment value; all without fancy sneakers!

Wanting to maintain a continued civic outreach, the Company decided to sponsor Boy Scout Troop 71 in 1959.

We continue that commitment today.

Camaraderie continued between neighboring firefighters and North Stonington. As part of a fire baseball league, we took the championship in 1979.



20 – Company Social Life

A more formal event was the Company Banquet. It appears that the first such event may have been held in 1967. During these gatherings attendees were able to reminisce the past year's accomplishments and future goals.

The 1984 banquet had a price of \$8.00 per attendee.



Today the annual Company Banquet has a per-person cost of over \$50.



20 – Company Social Life

The Company continues to hold less-formal dinners for members and their families, along with the annual Family Christmas Party. Maintaining the common bond between all members and their families is as important now as it was in 1945.



As in the beginning, the events are funded without using Town monies.



21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present

The land for the new station was first transferred from Federal authority to state control. It then became available for fire company use.

The original 2-bay fire station was completed in August of 1948, consisting of cinder block walls. It had only enough room to house the apparatus.



Due to the increased level of member activity and fundraising needed, a meeting hall was added in 1955.

21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present



The hall addition was subsequently voted to be called “Barker Hall” in December 1956.



21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present

As our apparatus grew in size and number, space was very limited, two more bays were added in 1963.



The addition of the two additional bays was dedicated to the Ladies Auxiliary in 1964, which had already served and supported the Company for so many years.

THE NORTH STONINGTON
VOL. FIRE CO.
IS DEDICATING THIS ADDITION
AS A TRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN
WHO HAVE SERVED SO FAITHFULLY
THROUGH THE YEARS.
1964

21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present

With the purchase and arrival of a new engine/tanker in 1974, an additional 2-bay building was added to the rear of the station.



These last two bays were dedicated to Chief Charles Smith III, who was instrumental in their construction.



21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present

Like all previous projects, the building was completely funded by the Fire Company.

The volunteer fire company remained on this site until **2018**, when the Town of North Stonington funded a building at 25 Rocky Hollow Road which allowed for combined housing of both the fire and emergency medical operations, and is referred to as the Center for Emergency Services.



21 – The Fire Station: Past and Present

The old fire house complex at 267 Norwich-Westerly Road is now being leased by the Fire Company to the Town for Recreation Department use at a cost of \$1.00 per year.



22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present

As the building project was underway, on **March 6, 1947** the Company bought its first fire truck, a red 1941 Ford pumper, for \$1,929.00. For a period of time it was housed in a barn located in the Village.



Other vehicles were also purchased, with funding still coming from fire company members and donations.



22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present

The first new pumper for North Stonington was purchased in 1960 with some funding assistance from the Town, consisting of a 1,000 gallon water tank and 750 gpm front-mounted pump. More importantly, it was painted white!



Over the years our fleet of apparatus has changed with the times and Company needs.

Following are a few snapshots in time showing our apparatus past, and present.

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present



1950 Fleet



1960 Fleet

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present



Mid 1960s



1970 Fleet

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present



1975 Fleet



1978 Forestry 1

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present



1979 Engine 2



1985 Engine 4

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present



2000 Fleet



2004 Fleet

22 - Our Apparatus: Past and Present

2019-2020 Fleet



Engine 1 (H-11)
1,000 gallons/1,500gpm pump



Engine 2 (H-12)
750 gallons/1,500gpm pump



Engine 3 (H-13)
2,500 gallons/1,500gpm pump



Engine 4 (H-14)
500 gallons/1,500gpm pump



Engine 6 (H-16)
300 gallons/500gpm pump



Rescue 1 (H17)



Service 1 (H24)



Marine 1



ATV 1 (H26)

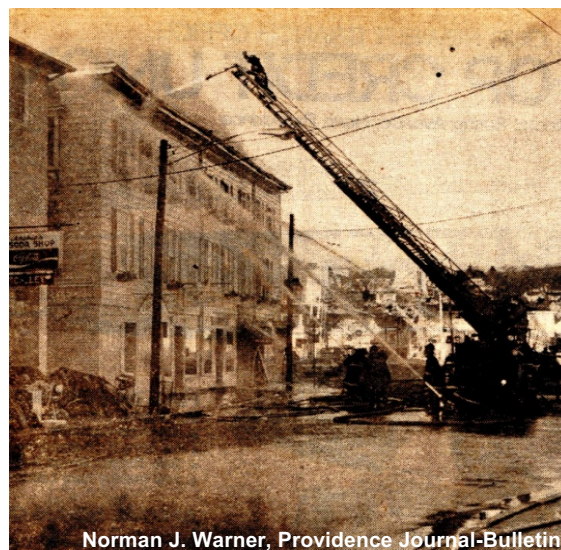
23 - Major Incidents

While the majority of our responses are not noteworthy, occasionally a major incident rises in prominence. The below list is a sample of some of those calls over the last 45 plus years.

Sept. 1973 Pawcatuck Shopping Center – Structure fire (mutual aid)
Engine 2 covered Pawcatuck district while multiple departments fought fire.



Sept. 1974 Whaler Inn, Mystic – Structure fire (mutual aid) Engine 2
assisted drafting from Mystic River near Cottrell Street.



23 - Major Incidents

Mar. 1975 Potter-Langworthy Building, Westerly – Structure fire (Mutual aid) Stood by in Pawcatuck and manpower relocated to scene to assist.



Dec. 1975 Crystal Egg, Preston – 1st mutual aid call for new Tanker fire later determined to be arson.



23 - Major Incidents

Apr. 1976 Boom Bridge Road – 20-acre brush fire.



May 1976 I-95 North Bound – Trailer truck rollover with chemical spill.
Highway shut down for several hours while experts were flown in by helicopter to identify chemicals involved.



23 - Major Incidents

Feb. 1978 Lantern Hill Road – Structure fire after Blizzard of 1978, combined response with Ledyard. Weather conditions required hand dragging almost 500 ft. of 3" hose in snow depths of 30 inches.



Oct. 1978 Dutch Village (at Rotary) – Structure fire. One of the last fires where the 1941 Ford pumped -drafted at brook on Rt. 184.



23 - Major Incidents

May 1979 Rocky Hollow Road - Fire apparatus accident: 5 firefighters injured, Engine 2 involved while responding to structure fire in Stonington.



June 1980 Boom Bridge Road – 2-day search for missing person. Several area companies also involved. Subject was found in woods on second day with only some minor injuries.



23 - Major Incidents

Jan. 1982 Wyassup Road near Babcock – Structure fire during snow storm. Water pumped from Village to scene.



May 1983 Main's Crossing – Plane crash located in tree above house. Pilot and two passengers extricated and transported to hospital. Mystic FD ladder assisted.



23 - Major Incidents

Oct. 1989 Pendleton Hill Road near Tom Wheeler Road – Structure fire
occupants required to escape via 2nd floor windows.



Nov. 1990 Wintechog Hill Road – Early morning structure fire claimed
one victim.



23 - Major Incidents

Dec. 1990 Boom Bridge Road – early morning structure fire claimed four lives.



Feb 1993 Wintchog Hill Road - Early morning barn fire killed 9 show horses.



23 - Major Incidents

July 1993 Foxwoods Casino – Fire in Cedars Hotel while under construction.



January 1994 Clarks Falls Road - Mid-day fire heavily damaged three-family home in Clarks Falls Village.



23 - Major Incidents

March 1994 Anthony Road - Mid-evening house fire during a freezing rain storm. Building a total loss.



April 1994 Cedars Road - Home destroyed in Billings Lake area, along with the loss of two dogs.



23 - Major Incidents

April 1997 Pendleton Hill Road - Early morning structure fire caused moderate damage to home.



May 1999 Pendleton Hill Road - Child trapped within large bolder pile. Rescued with only minor injuries after almost two-hour extrication.



23 - Major Incidents

Sept. 2000 Wyassup Road, Arbor Acres – Structure fire involving large chicken coops. Several mutual aid companies needed to assist. Water pumped from Wyassup Lake to scene.



Tim Martin, The Day

23 - Major Incidents

Sep. 11, 2001

One of the saddest days in Fire Service and American history occurred on that morning when two hijacked planes crashed into the World Trade Center towers in New York. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth hijacked plane crashed in Pennsylvania, after the heroic passengers overpowered the hijackers before it reached its target (reported as possibly the US Capitol building). Within hours, both towers collapsed.

Among the 2,606 victims of the World Trade Center attack were 343 New York City Firefighters.



Across America, the brotherhood of firefighters mourned the loss, promising to “Never Forget” their sacrifice. Today, their memory lives on.

23 - Major Incidents

Apr. 2005 Pendleton Hill Road – Structure fire involving barn with priceless artifacts. Adjacent house saved.



Jun. 2005 Route 2 – Vacant farmhouse near Swantown Hill Road destroyed during late morning fire.



23 - Major Incidents

Dec. 2005 Sleepy Hollow Road – Structure fire during a cold snap.



Dec. 2005 Clarks Falls Road – Structure fire occurred a week after the fire of Sleepy Hollow Road. Home a total loss.



23 - Major Incidents

Mar. 2006 Pendleton Hill Road – Structure fire creating extensive damage in basement area.



Mar. 2006 Northwest Corner Road – Structure fire was approximately two weeks after Pendleton Hill Road fire. Moderate damage to garage and kitchen area.



23 - Major Incidents

Aug. 2007 Route 2 near Rotary – Structure fire in garage/office building.



Aug. 2008 Babcock Road – Structure fire involving a barn struck by lightning. Fully involved upon arrival.



23 - Major Incidents

April 2010 Significant flooding occurred after heavy rains, causing widespread damage to roadways and buildings. Several water rescues were conducted in town to free persons trapped by high water levels.



Oct. 2011 Ashaway RI – Mill fire 2 Engines from Town; 1 drafted and filled tankers on Wellstown Road, the other drafted from behind the mill.



23 - Major Incidents

July 2012 Airplane down in cornfield on Clarks Falls Road, units had to create their own path through the field.



March 2014 Cossaduck Hill Road – Structure fire resulting in total loss, followed by another fire approximately ¼ mile away a week later.



23 - Major Incidents

Dec. 2014 Pendleton Hill Road – Fully involved garage near Stonington Town line. Pawcatuck FD first on scene. Adjacent house saved.



July 2015 I-95 South Bound – The submersible vessel Deepsea Challenger, being transported by a flat-bed trailer truck near Boom Bridge Road overpass.



23 - Major Incidents

Sep. 2015 I-95 North Bound –Large wrecker crashed through guard rails and down embankment. Large fire ensued. Victim transported by Life Star helicopter but subsequently succumbed to burns.



Aug. 2016 Soundview Drive, Pawcatuck – House struck by lightning during mid-morning storm.



23 - Major Incidents

July 2017 Cossaduck Hill Road – Initial report was for smoke visible to the west of a residence on Wyassup Road. Follow-up call from airport reported fully involved structure fire (National Guard helicopter overhead)



Jul. 2018 Waldorf School, Richmond, RI – Structure fire caused by lightning strike. Twenty departments responded. Complex destroyed. North Stonington tanker itself moved over 75,000 gallons of water.



23 - Major Incidents

October 2018 An EF-0 tornado touched down in the area of Route 2 and 184 with winds of between 65-85mph. While multiple trees were uprooted and power lines down, there were no reported injuries or major structural damage.



Feb. 2019 Pendleton Hill Road –Barn/garage fully involved upon arrival. Over 900' of 5" hose laid to pond near Hangman Hill Road to supply firefighting efforts.



23 - Major Incidents

Nov. 2019 Tom Wheeler Road – Structure fire caused by lightning strike with significant damage.



Dec. 2019 Burdick Lane, Griswold – Mutual aid with a tanker and manpower. Fire occurred during one of the season's first snowstorm.



23 - Major Incidents

Dec. 2019 Button Road – Structure fire, building saved.



Jan. 2020 Route 2 – Early morning structure fire at Red Onion Pizza. Mutual aid called. Building and contents suffered significant damage.



23 - Major Incidents

Feb. 2020 A virus, which originated in Wuhan, China, quickly became a worldwide pandemic, creating an upheaval in society as we had never seen before. Entire states and cities were either quarantined or isolated, with a new term “social distancing” describing the practice. Gatherings of more than five (5) people were prohibited, along with maintaining a personal distance of at least six (6) feet when conducting essential shopping. All schools, churches, and non-essential businesses were closed. In-person meetings are still restricted in size. Any contact outside the home requires the donning of a containment mask where social distancing is a concern.

At of the writing of this account, North Stonington had at least ten (10) reported cases. Schools remain closed and the North Stonington Agricultural Fair has been canceled.

The long-term effects on the economy and society remain unknown.



23 - Major Incidents

March 2020 I-95 North at Rt. 49 – Fully engulfed trailer on truck caused shut-down of north lanes of Interstate for hours.



April 2020 Lantern Hill Road, Ledyard - A full response from North Stonington was requested to a structure fire, including the first response of our Rapid Intervention Team (RIT).





24 - Our Future Vision



From the Fire Chief

During our 75th Anniversary year, we pause to remember our past, where we stand today, and the vision we have for the next 25 years. Little did we know in the latter months of 2019 the social upheavals which were just around the corner in 2020. These changes have significantly impacted our everyday actions now and likely for months to come.

As I sit here today, we are in the middle of a worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic. The United States, along with most of the world, has come to an all but complete stop due to a virus that originated in China. Schools, bars, gyms, all nonessential business, including both casinos are currently closed.

If you asked anyone 6 weeks ago what would happen because of this virus, you would not have gotten a glimpse of what to expect. Such terms as “social distancing”, and “contact tracing” are now in our vocabulary. Today, you must keep at least 6’ from one another and wear a mask whenever in a public setting. Gatherings of more than 5 people are restricted. Sadly, this may be the new normal moving forward. On May 03, 2020 it was decided to cancel the North Stonington Agricultural Fair, which we co-sponsor with the Grange. While we may not know what else tomorrow may bring, our members will continue to be ready and willing to respond when called upon.

Moving past the Pandemic, the Fire Company continues to battle reduced daytime volunteer availability. This has been an issue in the making for over the past 20 years. Town officials had been warned it was coming but continued to fail to plan on providing the adequate funding to support paid daytime staffing. While we continue to reach out to the Town for assistance, as of this time funding has been refused in lieu of a newly created study committee.

This year our members have come together to create a Firefighter Assistance Search Team (F.A.S.T.) that will serve surrounding towns during fires. This is the result of many years of hard work and dedication from each and every member involved.



24 - Our Future Vision



From the Fire Chief

This program exemplifies the willingness and commitment of our volunteers.

Moving into the near future, I would safely say NSVFC will have 2 weekday paid staff that will assist in the response during day calls when a majority of residents work outside of Town. Without an infusion of younger volunteers, the need to increase paid staffing 24/7 may be needed farther out.

The purchase of a ladder truck has been discussed for years and is in the near, long-range plan.

Both items, staffing and a ladder truck, need to be done and will aid our town's future grand list improvements.

Much of our future directly depends on the Town's future growth. With the town not appearing to have or being in active pursuit of a focused long-range plan, it becomes difficult to say what the FC will need or look like in the next 10-20 years.

But, I will say "You don't build your town's development around your Fire Company, you build your Fire Company around your town's development". The question which needs to be asked is what does the town have planned for the future of North Stonington?

As in the past, the Fire Company will continue to keep up with modern equipment and training advancements to ensure the safety of our members while providing the best service to the residents of North Stonington. The Town cannot afford, nor will we EVER replace our volunteers.

Charles A. Steinhart V, Fire Chief

25 – 75th Anniversary Committees

Banquet/Ball

Gary Bond

Carolyn Howell

Andrea Sadowski

Stephen Sadowski

Memorabilia

Samuel Burdick

Patrick Chute

Charles Steinhart V

Matthew McGowan

Uniforms

Kyle Bergel

Matthew McGowan

Hose Reel

Phil Allen

Nathan Browning

Jason Tagg

Anniversary Book

Kathleen Bond

Giuseppe Cassata

Carolyn Howell

Gregory Howell

Matthew McGowan

Charles Steinhart IV

(Member photos by Dawn Franco)

