

## Fire Chief's Report April 2023

Recent calls: downed powerlines. We had two calls for powerlines that were a result of the fine spring weather we've been enduring.

The first was on Schoolhouse Road in between Chippewa Trail and Kron/Dahlin Road. Called to my attention by the roads foreman, Pete Wiggins. Upon arrival I saw a large tree branch had taken out the neutral line and had the primary line pinned to the mountain of snow in the ditch, causing a lot of smoke and some flaming. I contacted Ashland dispatch to tone out the fire department and contact Xcel Energy. Due to limited ferry service, I was asked quite a few questions as what the power company needed for equipment and eventually sent pictures to they could come with the proper apparatus. The fire department closed a section of road and awaited their arrival. This section of line supplies 58 residents and carries 7,900v. Very dangerous, very live powerline in the snow.

Next morning, recieved a call for a downed powerline at Nebraska Row and Big Bay Road. I was responding from the north end of the island but was getting Intel the entire trip. This line left many people and businesses without power. The fire department blocked the area at 5 locations as we awaited Xcel Energy, with again compromised ferry service due to extreme conditions. This broken line was part of a 3-phase system and the dangling wire actually started the road (asphalt) on fire. The power company made it to the island and restored power again.

Consequences of the last call: When calling dispatch to inform them we were back in service, we had nothing but radio silence. Four tries later and a call to dispatch confirmed a bad situation. When the power came back online, it fried out something in our repeater station/antenna located on Miller Farm Road. Three firefighters spent a bit of time chiseling ice away from the entrance to the station and attempted to reset it with no luck. Many ideas later, we came up with an alternative tower on the mainland we could get dispatching from until DSC Communications in Superior could get a technician to the island. Long story short, they were here less than 24 hours later with a replacement repeater unit. These temporary borrowed parts come with little warranty,so we are awaiting a price for a replacement repeater/labor. Unfortunately, this cost will have to be endured by both the fire department/emergency services/Town of La Pointe. Probably the single most important piece of equipment for communication. I'll keep everyone posted on this. BTW, helmets off to DSC Communications for getting here and taking care of a huge problem immediately.

New pumper update -- Chassis is being delivered to our builder May 23rd. Our next payment will also be due on this date, I believe. The tank and pump will arrive there soon as well. Mid-June, it will be approximately 75% complete and a group of us will be visiting our new baby. Delivery pending for the end of July, and that will prompt our final payment.

Problems with new emergency services building –

1. Clean air system in equipment bay not functioning and needs attention immediately. We have to at some point quit relying on the builders and take care of problems ourselves.
2. Backup generator during the last power outage sounded horrible and that the only way to describe it. Needs attention immediately.

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3. This year (like last) the ice from the roof destroyed the gutter system replaced last year with a new twist....This time it ripped off the snow retention systems over the entry doors and I'll guarantee as a builder we now have many holes in the roof. Hence a leaking roof that needs attention immediately. We need to install an engineered snow retention system before next winter. When the little section above the doors gave way, I don't need to say what would have happened if it came down as the door closed with someone leaving the building. Fairly large liability indeed.

Let's embrace the upcoming melting snow and be safe.

Chief Reichkitzer