

TB(S), CLERK, ACCT, CLERICAL, TA, PUBLIC

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT
August-September 2023

Calls update

7/28: Dispatching toned the fire department out @ 11:30 p.m. for a tree on fire just off the road to Grant's Point. Most of the crew thought automatically we were responding to a tree/powerline call. Nope, it was a tree a hundred yards into the woods that was struck by lightning and burning pretty good. Brian Nelson sprung into action with a trusty chainsaw and dropped a very sizable dead pine tree with the top on fire roughly 60' up. With a bit of effort and a bunch of tools, water, and manpower, we extinguished the fire and headed home well after midnight.

8/12: Another late-night brush fire out of control. Call came out as a structure fire on the lakeside of Sunny Slope Road. Shortly after, the same caller reported to dispatching that the people who started the "brush fire" had a permit and this was a "controlled burn" and we could stand down. We did not, as it looked like half of the woods was on fire. Chief ordered it to be extinguished. The permit was for a 6x6x6 fire. The people involved had 5 different fires going that added up to 1/4 acre of so. DNR was briefed of this, as it involved a repeat offender who has cost the town a lot of money over the years. Another call that got everyone home well after midnight. No matter how we discourage these "illegal fires," it still comes down to the same situations where they can't wait for 100% snow cover to clear property. Side note: This was 2 days after the Maui wildfires, so that was on everybody's minds as well.

8/16: Why not yet another late night "trees on powerlines" call after a storm rolled through. Chief was given a heads up from a couple of concerned towns folk via text. Upon arrival, Chief had dispatch tone out the fire department for traffic control/powerline safety protocol. Roads were closed, town text sent to public, and we prepared to wait for Xcel Energy. As this scene was being secured, we got another call for another tree/powerline on Hagen Road. Amazingly, Xcel got a truck over to relieve us. Last fire department crews back in service at 2:30 am. I like to follow up with Xcel; we were guarding very "live" electrical lines.

8/22: Dispatched to a remote location past the Town Park on lake side of Big Bay Road. The call came over as an area the "size of 2 bodies" was smoldering and smoking. The unusual terminology to describe this fire also prompted an impressive turnout by fire/EMS/law enforcement. Small area was indeed smoldering and was the remnants of a poorly extinguished campfire. The campers had been there for a few days, judging by the garbage left and the numerous "bathrooms" we dug up a large area that was mainly peat moss and pine tree needles to deal with the smoldering mess.

8/27: Guess what??? Another call to a remote location just past the Town Park for a smoldering area. And, yes, it was the exact location as the call on 8/22. Peat moss is sneaky when it comes to poorly extinguished campfires. This time we ran hose lines through the woods and dumped a bunch of water on an area the size of 2 bodies. We also used our thermal imaging technology to ensure we had indeed got to the root of the fire. There's a pun in there because there was a certain amount of roots/peat moss/pine needles.

9/2: Dispatch toned out two personnel and our drone pilot to Big Bay Town Park for a missing person. Drone was deployed and search also began on foot. Shortly after, subject was found via cellphone.

9/14: Dispatching toned out for tree/powerline near Equaysayway. Dispatch added that firefighter on scene made the 911 call. Protocol: Close roads to traffic and wait for Xcel Energy to relieve us.

9/17: This late night call involved a boat leaving the Beach Club restaurant's dock struck a parked ferry and ultimately became lodged under two parked ferries. It was obvious they were at a fairly high speed at the time of collision. People who witnessed the crash immediately went to the scene to help the driver and passenger. One of these good Samaritans was a probationary firefighter with assistance from bystanders and a few more Beach Club patrons. Emergency services arrived to an interesting situation. There was alcohol involved, but we waited for the Coast Guard's assistance. The Coast Guard, with help of ferry line crew members, dislodged the boat and tied it off at the nearest safe location. After 90 minutes of figuring out whose jurisdiction it was to deal with the driver of the boat, the Coast Guard assumed incident command. The driver was given field sobriety tests and a Breathalyzer by the Coast Guard. These tests were passed, and the driver and passenger were left to deal with their basically destroyed vessel. Chief Reichkitzer remained on scene mainly to assist the Coast Guard, as everything was thrown in their laps. The Wisconsin DNR were contacted early on by law enforcement but felt they didn't need to respond. Sort of a strange call with many jurisdictional issues but, in the end, nobody was seriously injured.

A big shout out to Marty Curry and his team that put on the best polka party ever. With the help of fire/EMS and many townspeople, we more than doubled our monetary goal of 15k that is earmarked by both the fire department and EMS for our repeater/communications issues. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU.

Our brand-new engine/pumper has been geared up and put into service. A small group has studied to become very proficient with the new apparatus and will pass the knowledge to the rest of the department. A large part of future training events, of course, will focus around our new apparatus.

Be safe,
Chief Reichkitzer