



Buxton Fire-Rescue

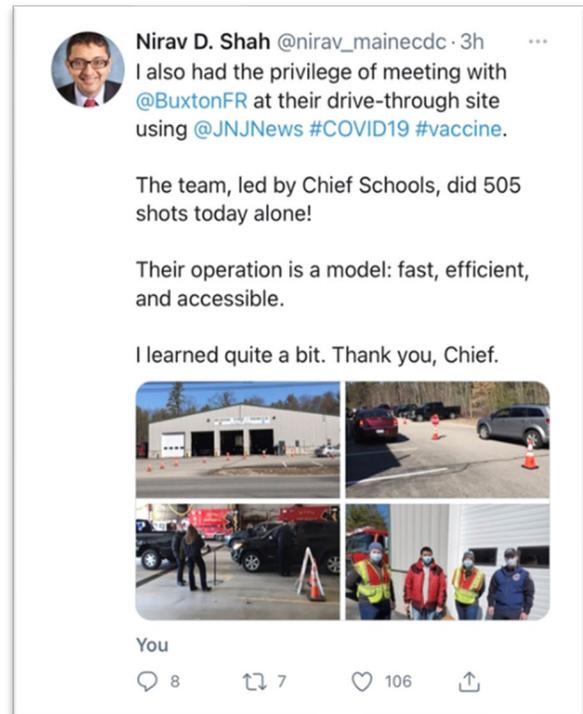
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Chief Nathan Schools, *EFO*
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Buxton Board of Selectmen
185 Portland Road
Buxton, ME 04093

Board of Selectmen:

It is my pleasure to submit the 2020-2021 Annual Report on behalf of the Officers and Members of Buxton Fire – Rescue. As I write this report, I am reminded what we all experienced just one year ago, in the second year battling the COVID-19 Pandemic, when hope began to emerge. In late 2020, the first COVID-19 Vaccine was prioritized to First Responders across the state, and on December 23, 2020, the first members of BFR were immunized, leading our organization out of the worst of the Pandemic. As Fire-EMS services often do, BFR rose to the occasion and assisted during first responder and community-based COVID-19 Vaccine clinics in York County, eventually immunizing over a thousand people in the battle against COVID-19. As an organization, BFR’s mission shifted for several months and focused on public health. The department hosted the state’s first drive-through vaccine clinic of its kind and reached members of our community who trusted our staff with their health. Although COVID-19 ravaged many people, families, and organizations, we all were reminded that Mainers come together to get things done. It was the people that made these very important initiatives work. I was humbled to be a small part of the mission and bring hope to so many people.



During the FY 2022 Budget process the voters approved the creation of a career assistant chiefs’ position within BFR, and in late June 2021 the position was offered to the paid-on-call assistant chief, Jeremy Redlon. Assistant Chief Redlon had been with the department for over 20 years and was the perfect fit to seamlessly transition from a paid-on-call position to a career position. The priority for this position has been for the recruitment and retention (R&R) efforts of our paid-on-call membership (what many call volunteers). Aside from R&R, Assistant Chief Redlon is responsible for our maintenance program, fire suppression tanks/hydrants, and the coordinator of recruit training/education. As with many volunteer organizations, BFR has struggled with keeping people engaged and often times those volunteers fade away after initial training is completed. As a fire and emergency medical service, we struggle with retention as many other employers do. To date, our losses have not been offset by our gains, although BFR will not stop recreating ourselves to best support the organization’s mission.

During FY 2021, BFR applied for and was awarded (in FY 2022) an Assistance to Firefighters Grant for the purchase and delivery of a wildland/urban interface pumper (WUI). The grant totals \$450,000, with 5% of the funds coming from the Town of Buxton. The purpose of this apparatus is to replace the department’s oldest fire engine (2001 E-One) and the department’s Forestry Truck (1968 Military Surplus) with a single vehicle that can respond as a fire engine on a structure fire or a forestry engine for a brush fire. The specified apparatus comes to

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us on a 4-wheel drive Freightliner Chassis with pump and roll capabilities with seating for four firefighters. The apparatus will carry structural and wildland firefighting equipment and will respond to emergencies as assigned. When the apparatus arrives, the engine and forestry that it replaces will be decommissioned. This has been an exciting process and BFR looks forward to delivery of the apparatus in 2024.



In other apparatus news, During the Special Town Meeting on December 29, 2020, the taxpayers voted to approve spending \$114,000 to re-mount the town's 2013 ambulance box on a new chassis. The project saved nearly half the cost of an ambulance and provided the department with a truck that meets our needs. BFR will attempt this with our 2017 ambulance when the time comes for replacement. The re-chassised ambulance went into service in October 2021.

During FY 2021, the department responded to 1,088 emergency calls. This number is not largely over or under previous years, although the number of fire related emergencies was 5% more than other years. This was a trend that fire departments across the country saw during the Pandemic, because people stayed home, began work from home programs which lead to increases in fire related responses. During FY 2021, the department responded to 5 working fires in Buxton, with one reported fatality. BFR has always relied on mutual/automatic aid, in recent years the need has grown and departments are working more closely to ensure fire and emergency medical emergencies are handled with the appropriate resources to mitigate hazards.

The officers and members of Buxton Fire-Rescue appreciate the support that the community provides us each year. We look forward to the "new normal" as we continue to reduce COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and enjoy community related events such as our annual open house and community days.

Respectfully,



Chief Nathan R. Schools, *EFO*