

# Warrington Township

## **DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Overview**

The Department of Emergency Services is comprised of a Director, 3 full-time firefighters (1 Battalion Chief, two firefighters), Fire Marshal, 16 part-time firefighters, and an administrative assistant. There are four firefighters assigned to a Rescue Engine and a supervisor assigned to the Special Service Vehicle Monday through Friday from 6:30 am until 4:30 pm.

### **The COVID-19 Pandemic**

As Emergency Management is part of the Department of Emergency Services, the Pandemic became part of our everyday routine. The DES became the liaison between our public safety partners in Warrington Township (Warrington Fire Company, Warrington Police, Warrington Community Ambulance) and the Bucks County Department of Public Safety. We coordinated the logistics of receiving PPE and supplies from the county as well as purchasing from vendors, then providing it to our administration and our Public Safety Partners. In addition, we handled the grant and reimbursement opportunities that were made available by FEMA and PEMA.

It is important to note that during the height of it, we lost many members of our part-time staff that eventually returned. This was due to their full-time employers not allowing them to work for other services. This became a huge burden on the DES, due to many staff shortages.

### **Aerial Apparatus Purchase**

The Board of Supervisors approved the formation of a joint apparatus committee (comprised of volunteer members and career staff) to investigate the replacement of the existing Ladder 29 a 2004 rear mount E-one aerial. It is experiencing rusting and mechanical issues that would be extremely costly to repair.

The committee worked through the year, invited every manufacturer in for a demonstration that builds the type of apparatus that was selected by the committee, and wrote a build spec to send to selected vendors. In January 2021 the recommendation was given to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a presentation. The recommended apparatus was approved for purchase and the process has started.

### **Statistics**

In 2020, the Department of Emergency Services responded to 265 fire or rescue calls and 141 EMS Calls. In addition, there were 1130 fire or life safety inspections conducted. Our fire inspection totals as well as our emergency call totals are lower than what was anticipated due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. From mid-March to July 15 we did not conduct any fire inspections. Fire and emergency calls were also low due to people being home and not at work. There was less traffic, and people were scared to call for EMS, unless they absolutely felt they needed to.

There are several types of inspections that the Department of Emergency Services conducts, they are: Commercial Pre-fire inspections, Commercial Use and Occupancy inspections, Residential Use and Occupancy inspections, and Construction inspections per the Fire Code for example rough and final sprinkler inspections.

In addition to emergency calls and inspections, the Department of Emergency services averaged over 10 hours monthly checking and maintaining fire department equipment to ensure readiness. This saves the volunteer fire company thousands of dollars a year by catching problems while they are small or even completing the repairs in-house.

### **Fire Prevention and Outreach**

Due to the pandemic, outreach was at an all-time low. We were able to visit one school to conduct a distanced fire prevention program.

In addition to fire and life safety, the Department of Emergency Services also offers free of charge, car seat installation and evaluation. Battalion Chief McCann and Director Greenberg are certified car seat technicians. They are able to install and provide information to anyone who has a car seat about proper placement, installation, safe travels with children, and the effects of a crash on the passengers. In 2020, they consulted on 21 car seat installations. This amount of car seat inspections is less than half of 2019. We attribute this to the pandemic as well. As one of the only organizations that conduct these inspections in the area, we expect the amount of car seat installations and inspections, to rise again in 2021.

### **EMS Responses**

Even though overall EMS responses were low for the year, we responded and cared for a lot of people either having symptoms, or that were diagnosed with COVID-19. We responded, and assisted Warrington Ambulance with clean-up and disinfection after potential COVID contact. This was necessary, to keep the risk of our EMS partners safer, as their contact with these patients was prolonged due to transport necessity.

Often, medic units from station 129 would come to Station 78, the fire crews would don their PPE and spray the ambulance and assist in the disinfection process. This helped to limit the down time of the ambulances thus getting them back in service quicker.

## **Training**

Training was conducted as often as possible when time permitted. Special consideration was given to work on areas of Fire/Rescue/EMS that we respond to, or have the potential to respond to regularly. Training is the back bone of emergency services. We train so we are prepared for any emergency.

In 2020 most of the outside training was cancelled. This provided the local fire academy an opportunity to start an “online school.” The members of the Department of Emergency Services took total advantage of this. The members took the following classes if they had not already been certified in them previously: Fire Officer 2, Fire Officer 3, Fire Officer 4, Health and Safety Officer, Incident Safety Officer, Fire Instructor 1, and Fire Instructor 2.

The full-time employees also attended a night time seminar sponsored by the Middletown Township Fire Marshal’s Office on “Tower Ladder” operations. We felt this would be extremely advantageous, since at the time the apparatus committee was leaning towards recommending a mid-mount aerial platform for purchase. The class was well received and very informative.

In the fall of 2020 our new hydraulic strut system was delivered. This system allows us to stabilize heavy equipment in the event they are involved in an accident or roll over. We received training from the dealer which spanned over three days on the proper use and safety concerns with using this equipment.

## **Fire Service Study**

In the spring of 2019 Warrington Township contracted with the DCED to conduct a study of the services provided in the area of fire protection to the residents and business owners of Warrington Township.

During the summer of 2020 the study was returned. There were 11 “considerations” offered as a result of the study. As a result, a committee was formed by the Board of Supervisors to look at these considerations. That effort is still ongoing with progress being made.

## **In Closing**

This report is a “snap shot” of the year 2020 by the Department of Emergency Services. It was a busy year, mostly due to the pandemic. We expect 2021 to be a year of transition from the

pandemic to the “new normal.” We look forward to continuing our fire prevention efforts consisting of pre-fire inspections, pre-fire planning and school visits. We hope to conduct even more training and improve on our skill sets to better serve the community of Warrington.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Overview**

The Code Enforcement Department is comprised of the Director, Chief Permit Administrator, the Emergency Services Administrative Assistant, Fire Marshal, 2 part-time code enforcement inspectors, the zoning inspector (?), the Residential Building Inspector, and the Commercial building Inspector (Building Code Official). They work together to make the code enforcement process seamless for the residents and business owners in Warrington Township. The goal is to make the process trouble free, and time conscious.

### **Statistics**

2020 was a busy year for Code Enforcement even in the middle of a pandemic. 1,092 permits were issues which is up from 2019 when 1,056 permits were issued. The staff conducted 2,295 inspections on the issued permits. These inspections included: construction permits, fire permits for alarm and fire sprinkler construction, use and occupancy (both residential and commercial), and rental inspections. In addition, there were an abundance of code enforcement inspections addressing complaints through the township complaint system.

### **Property Maintenance Complaints**

Each year the township receives an abundance of complaints regarding property maintenance. It is important to understand that although, each complaint is investigated, and sometimes there is nothing for the township to do. The complaint may be a neighbor dispute, or weather related, the problem could be easily rectified with a conversation, or granting time to address the issue, rather than an official notice of violation. There are many laws and local ordinances that play a role in code enforcement.

### **Training**

Due to the pandemic all in person training was cancelled. Online training took place when applicable.

## **In Closing**

Each year, the code enforcement department spends countless hours working with residents and business owners to make their projects a success. We strive to make every contact a positive one, as customer service is a priority.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Greenberg  
Director Emergency Services  
And Code Enforcement