



## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Council Meeting  
**From:** Al Beer, Fire Chief  
**Date:** 2020-05-14  
**Report:** 2020-01  
**Subject:** Fire Department April Update

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### **Recommendation:**

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Al Beer, Fire Chief re: Fire Department April Update for information purposes.

### **Purpose:**

Monthly Fire Department report for April 2020

### **Discussion:**

1. Recent alarms and inspections: While we have been relatively quiet since January the rest of Ontario has not. Ontario has seen 51 fire fatalities between Jan. 1 and May 4, 2020. This is a 65% increase from the same time last year, with 17 deaths in March alone. These sobering numbers were released by Fire Marshall Jon Pegg.
2. January saw an average number of alarms. Training was carried out as scheduled. District Chief Campbell attended Grimsby regional training center for Part 4 of the Fire Code. This was his last course needed for certification for Fire Inspector II.
3. In February again we saw an average number of alarms, training again was carried out as scheduled. The first of 3 first aid courses were held on February 15-16 at Station 1. We had firefighter Conway and VanDyk complete their DZ driving test portion, as well as well firefighter Thompson and Vergee took the weekend DZ course starting February 21, 2020. They will finish the testing portion as soon as we can get the mandatory hours of driver training in. All SCBA in West Elgin was serviced and tested on February 20<sup>th</sup> with no major issues.
4. March started out like any other month. Training was proceeding as scheduled, along with the 2 dates for the first aid training. District Chief Campbell attended the OFC the week of March 2<sup>nd</sup> for the Fire Officer II course. Then March 17, 2020 a state of emergency was declared by the Ontario government. This was followed by the Municipality of West Elgin declaring on Friday March 20, 2020. As everyone knows these declarations essentially put a halt to operations. The fire service continues to provide emergency response but training has been put on hold. The fire halls were locked down to all fire fighters other than response activities and cleaning. During this difficult time dedicated members performed needed truck and equipment check to ensure we were in a ready state. The fire halls both had an initial cleaning and subsequent cleanings to this date. District Chief Campbell collaborated with the

officers to implement a COVID process for responses. This was approved by myself and implemented immediately. The Fire Marshal's Office has requested a weekly inventory of PPE. Myself and DC Campbell have been working through the many updated forms that they want submitted.

5. April saw continuing changes. The fire safety plan at the municipals only vulnerable occupancy residence was updated to protect all responding firefighters. This message was relayed via email to all members as they had a Covid-19 positive case. A burn ban was implemented for the safety of our responders. The community as a whole was very receptive to this. Myself and DC Kauzen responded to 4 residences and multiple phone calls for burn complaints. DC Campbell and FF Maniacco responded to 14 burn complaints. These interactions were done with safe distancing practices in place. The home owners were very accommodating and respectful of the ban. Education goes a long way in these instances. Pumper and ladder testing was completed on April 2<sup>nd</sup> by a third party company. Rescue 2 had its annual safety inspection done as well. The office of the Fire Marshal has now asked for a workforce inventory to be submitted weekly as well.
6. May has seen a below average number of calls, I believe this is in part to the burn ban being in effect and the wet weather. The OFC had postponed all courses. They are currently working on setting up NFPA 1001 FF 1 online. We have 2 members enrolled they are just awaiting the information from the college. They will have to attend the college at some point to complete the practical portion when it is safe to do so. These spots are extremely hard to get and very sought after so we don't want to lose them. The application process started last year and is very time sensitive. The burn ban will be lifted on Friday March 15 2020. It is my hope that people respect the by-law that's in place or we may have a busy weekend. The duty books have been received and as soon as they are numbered they will be distributed. These books are important for the fire fighters to make notes in as they can be used for reference materials if the individual is involved in a legal proceeding. Although the budget has been passed, I have held back from much needed orders to see where money may need to be reallocated as the Covid-19 pandemic situation evolves.