



Port Colborne Community Safety & Enforcement

2021 Year in Review

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http://portcolborne.ca/page/fire_and_emergency_services



PortColborneFire



@Port_Fire

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Message from Chief Lawson

On behalf of Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services and By-law Services, it is my pleasure to present the 2021 Community Safety & Enforcement Annual Report.

This year brought change with the merging of Port Colborne's Fire Service with By-law Enforcement. The new department was ably named Community Safety & Enforcement. Despite the challenges of providing emergency and enforcement services during a pandemic, our team remains committed to our philosophy of continuous improvement. Ensuring not only



the safety of our residents; the safety of our Fire & Emergency Services and By-law staff during the pandemic which required the department to amend some of our traditional service delivery approaches to adapt to this new public hazard.

Emergency Management was once again a major focus in 2021 with not just our involvement in managing the City's response to the pandemic but also an increase in weather events. The City saw events of damaging winds on multiple occasions in 2021. While these events are challenging to all departments in the City, a coordinated effort signified a skilled and resilient City workforce.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, our fire personnel remained flexible and adjusted when needed by embracing the world of virtual learning and modifying training schedules. Our staff worked with senior staff to continue working on improving our skills and abilities to reach our goals. We look forward to being a part of our community as it grows. The growth will present new and exciting challenges for the department as we see vertical growth coming to our City.

By-law staff experienced another busy summer in a City that is being recognized as a premier summer destination. The increased pressures seen on our roadway, beaches, lake access and parks proved challenging at times. Through these challenges, staff remained professional and courteous while providing enforcement to the City's by-laws.

I am exceptionally proud of our career and volunteer men and women that serve in all areas of Community Safety & Enforcement. They are skilled, dedicated professionals who are pushed to their physical, mental, and emotional limits on a regular basis.

Lastly, I would like to thank past Fire Chief, Thomas B. Cartwright for leaving a fire department that was well run, equipped, and trained. His vision for the department will be reflected in the department's success in the years to come.

Chief Cartwright started his fire service career on September 13th, 1972 for the Town of Markham. During Tom's career, he served as the Deputy Chief in Georgina, Fire Chief in Fort Erie until coming to Port Colborne in 2001. Tom served as the Fire Chief of our City for 20 years.

Tom was a big believer that prevention was key to an effective fire service. Some of the innovative programs that brought Provincial recognition to the department were the in-service inspection and smoke alarm program. This led to Tom being named Fire Chief of the Year in 2018 by the Ontario Municipal Fire Prevention Officers Association.



Who We Are – What We Do (Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services)

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services provides City of Port Colborne's residents, visitors, and businesses with protection against loss of life, property, and the environment from the effects of fire, illness, accidents, and all other hazards. We do this through preparedness, prevention, public education and emergency response, with an emphasis on quality services, efficiency, effectiveness, and safety. Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is comprised of 15 full-time staff and approximately 32 volunteer fire fighters operating from one strategically located fire station.

Emergency calls are received by the St. Catharines Fire Dispatch Centre, who then dispatch crews. Depending on the call, only the duty crew responds. These calls include medicals, vehicle fires, burning complaints and assistance calls to name a few. For incidents larger in nature, the volunteers will be paged out for labor and to transport specialized apparatus on scene. Upon receiving a general alarm, the volunteer fire fighters respond to the station, don their personal protective equipment and then respond to the incident. These calls include motor vehicle accidents, structure fires and alarm systems to name a few.

In addition to providing an all-hazards response within the City of Port Colborne, Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services responds to hazardous material incidents in the Niagara Region to supply decontamination services. We also will respond to mutual aid calls in neighboring municipalities as part of an automatic aid/mutual aid agreement.



Who We Are – What We Do (By-law Services)

Port Colborne By-law Services is responsible for a multitude of by-laws created by Council to help facilitate the enjoyment of our City by its residents and visitors. The department helps guide the residents of Port Colborne in how to be compliant with the by-laws. By-laws include, but are not limited to parking, lot maintenance, nuisance, property standards, and snow/ice. If a contravention of a by-law is found, education, orders to remedy and/or fines are means the department uses to get compliance.



The By-law Department is comprised of 4 full-time staff and augmented with students for the busy summer months. The department did welcome 3 students in 2021 to assist in controlling parking and grass issues throughout the municipality. The department was relocated this year from City hall to the fire hall located at 3 Killaly Street West.

Calls for assistance are received at the front desk and dispursed to an Officer. A hazard index was created this year to help determine how quickly the complaint has to be dealt with. If public safety is in question, the file takes priority and immediate action is taken.

With the pandemics continued grip on public health, By-law has seen multiple changes in priorities. With the increase in traffic coming to our City to enjoy our beaches and parks, parking has become a major focus. With all the competing priorities of our community, the department has still found the time to add proactive enforcement as a staple. Identifying and fixing problems before they become severe has been an added feature this year.

Mandate

To provides the high-quality emergency services for the residents and visitors of our City.

Vision Statement

To be valued by not only our community but by the people that serve here.

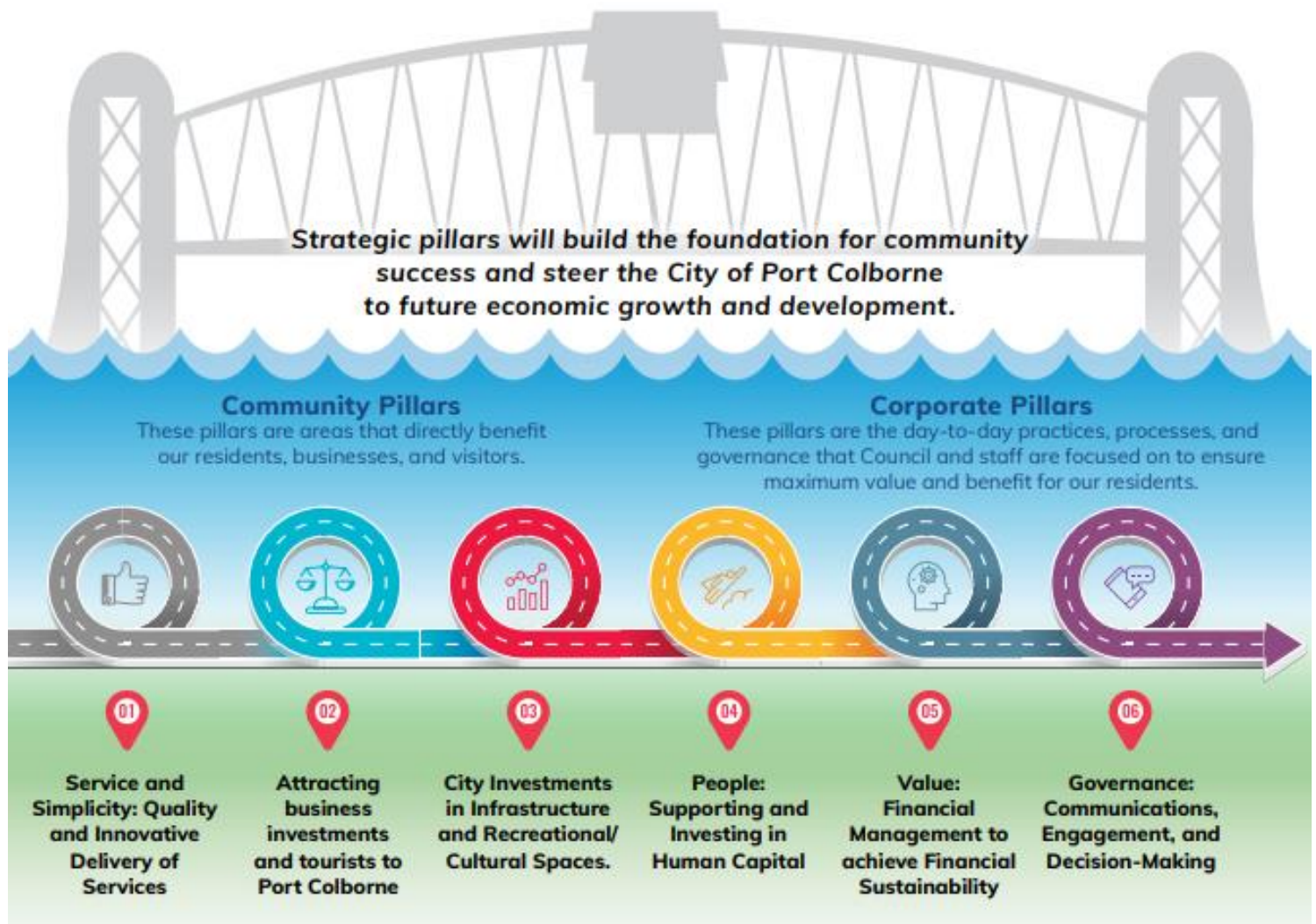
Mission Statement

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is committed to being an organization recognized and respected by the community for making a difference in the lives of our citizens and visitors when called upon by providing superior service through prevention and emergency response.

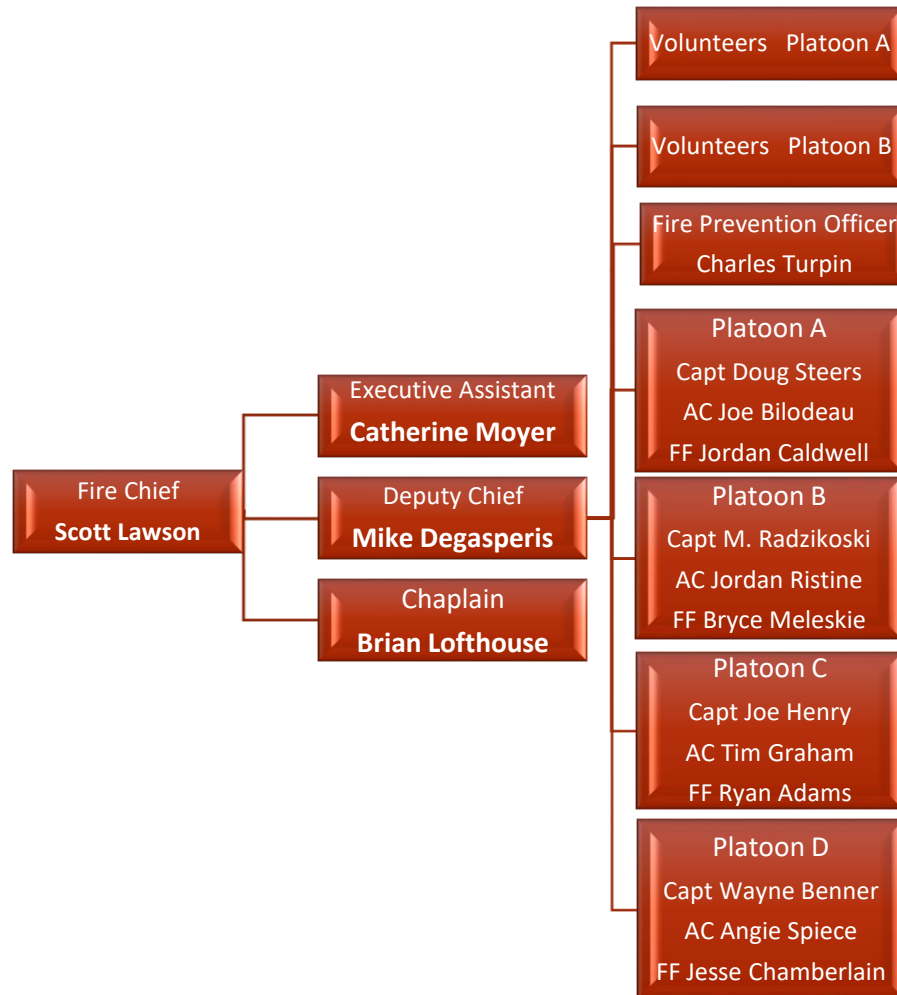


Aligning with the City's Pillars

The City of Port Colborne strategic pillars are based on the key themes that emerge from roundtable discussions with Council and Staff. They were developed to support the City's Vision and Mission Statement. These pillars were used in the creation of the Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services and By-law tactical plans to align Community Safety and Enforcement with the City's strategic plan. The 2021 – 2025 tactical plan will provide road maps for the departments to follow to help guarantee continued success and superior service.



PORT COLBORNE FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES 2021 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

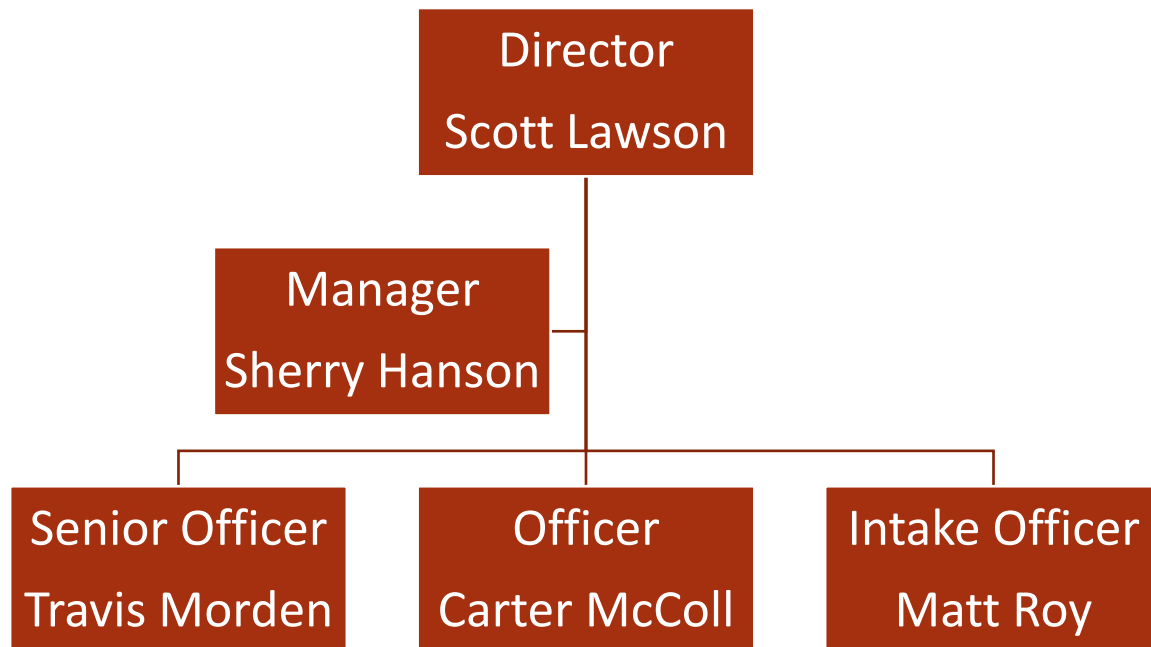


Active Volunteer Fire Fighters are as follows:

Mike Radzikoski
Joe Henry
Jordan Ristine
Bryce Meleskie
Angie Spiece
Michael Dezenosky
Matt Lannan
Beau Sutherland
Derek McCabe
Rick Smith
Justin Bonds
Alissa Lobbezoo
Sarah Kolbuc
Kevin Stivorc
Chris Huneault

Wayne Benner
Doug Steer
Tim Graham
Ryan Adams
Jordan Caldwell
Jesse Chamberlain
Curtis Wilcox
Kaylah Benner
Colin Graat
Shaun Senyk
Jeremy Worrall
Glen Gamble
Kyle Roy
Darrell Thompson

PORT COLBORNE BY-LAW SERVICES 2021 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





Focused on Community – Giving Back (Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services)

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has a proud history of giving back to the community. Given our current environmental circumstances, the need in the community has increased. Community events like the Easter boot drive, safety day and the open house continue to be canceled to protect the health

of not only our members but our generous community. In 2021, the department continued to find innovative ways to assist those in our community that needed help. Community engagement was a focus in 2021.

Christmas Toy Drive

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has been holding the annual toy drive for the past six years. It fills the void in the community when Santa's Helpers closed their doors.

The 2021 toy drive continued with the addition of a drive-through toy drop-off at the Fire Hall. The department did have a slower start than seen in past years. One small article in the newspaper and the department was flooded with toys from the community. The reverse parade was also a successful community event that served as a drop-off point for toys too. Thanks go out to the community; a bunch of familiar faces and a few new ones. Your continued support is appreciated.

Community Dinner

Starting with the 2016 Christmas dinner, Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has helped



sponsor and serve the Christmas dinner at the Port Cares Reach Out Centre. This event is a staple to our Safe Community Initiative. While complicated by the pandemic, the need is still there and the department once again stepped up to help. This year staff delivered meals directly to those that could not attend Port Cares to pick-up their meal.

Vaccine Clinic Support



Being part of the vaccine clinic was not just gratifying, we used it as an educational piece to our never ending pursuit of community safety. With the help of a generous donor, the department handed out hand sanitizer and masks to the residents and visitors to our City. The clinic was well

received in the Region as one of the premier locations.

Food Delivery

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services personnel is again volunteering their time to deliver food to the mobility-challenged residents of our community, for Port Cares.

Every other Friday, staff take time out of their busy lives to deliver much-needed boxes of supplies around our City in support of Port Cares.



Engagement



With schools going to on-line, lockdowns, and other COVID restrictions, Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services recognized the need to engage our community and provide something to do. With an underlying fire safety message, we created contests that not only stimulated the mind but promoted fire safety. Between a poster contest, building a fire truck, and sidewalk art contests, our fire service engaged the community in the hopes of

bringing a smile to a few faces.

Charity Golf Tournament

Sherry Hanson, Manager of By-law Services volunteers her time on the Pet Adoptions Matter (PAM) Committee. The Committee started in 2017 along with a golf tournament which helped raise \$2000.00 in the inaugural year. Last year, SkyScene TV Niagara attended and donated their time to prepare a video to help promote the tournament. In 2020 they raised \$6,612.00. Sherry is looking forward to our 5th Annual tournament this fall.



Fire Service Model – (Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services)

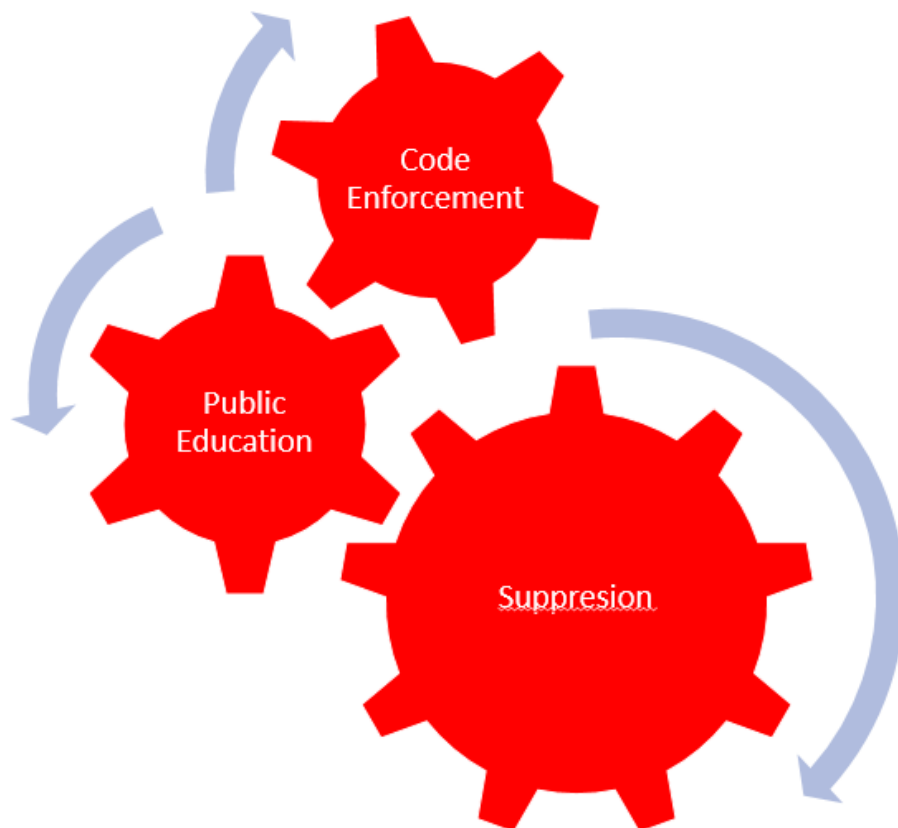
Within the Province of Ontario, the delivery of fire protection services is guided by the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, including the strategic optimization of the three lines of defence, which include:

Line one: Public fire safety education;

Line two: Fire safety standards and enforcement, and;

Line three: Emergency response.

Balance in the delivery of all three lines is key to effective fire service model. Integrating the lines into our fire service allows for suppression activities and findings from code inspections to helping direct public education events.



PREVENTION

There is no glory in fighting a fire that could have been prevented. Fires are damaging to property, cause injury or death, and can even eliminate jobs since many buildings destroyed by fire are not rebuilt. Ontario law does mandate fire prevention inspections, education, and training. Many of the activities that Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is involved in is to ensure the municipality is compliant with the applicable legislation that dictate our actions.

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has a proud history of being a leader in prevention not only in Niagara but in the Province. Through our Safety Community Initiative, activities that promote safe practices are encouraged by all members of the department. The Fire Prevention Division is overseen by the Fire Chief, the Fire Prevention Officer, and assisted by full-time and volunteer fire fighters who dedicate their time to assisting with fire prevention and public fire safety education programs. Fire Prevention is responsible for the following:

- Conducting fire safety inspections to ensure compliance with the Ontario Fire Code
- Initiating the prosecution of Ontario Fire Code offenses
- Reviewing fire safety plans
- Reviewing and commenting on planning & development applications/plans
- Reviewing and approving special events
- Providing public fire safety education
- Conducting investigations into the cause & origin of fires

Ontario saw its second consecutive year of increased fires across the Province. With people spending more time at home, complacency has reared its head. Cooking fires continue to lead the Province in preventable fires in our homes. Unattended cooking being the largest contributor to this trend.

The First Line – Public Education

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services prides itself on being highly visible in the community and takes every opportunity to engage and educate the public on fire safety. Advocating for fire safety in our community is about taking action; and through innovative ideas and programming, our fire service strives to provide the highest service delivery every day. As our first line of defense, there has been an increased focus on fire prevention outreach to prevent fires before they occur.

Fire Prevention Week 2021

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services once again hosted the CHCH morning show with all 12 municipalities from the Region taping four segments and aired during fire safety tips during Fire



Prevention Week. The CHCH morning show is enjoyed by over 3.9 million Canadians each week. Port Colborne has been the home of Fire Prevention Week filming for four years running for CHCH.

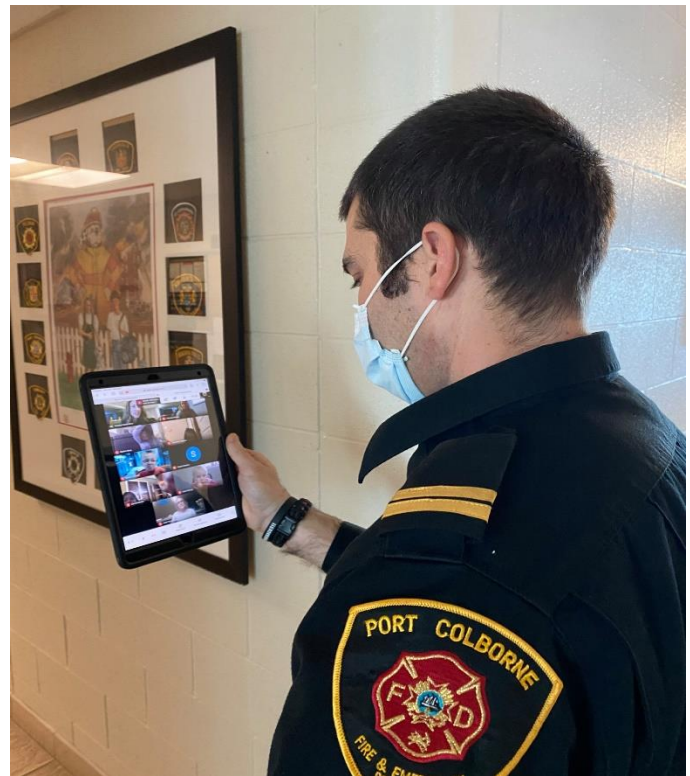
91.7 Giant FM Partnership

The partnership that started in 2016 with Giant FM is as strong as ever. The #1 radio station in Niagara continues to support our fire-safe messaging over the holiday season through the 12 days of holiday safety contest and daily spots.



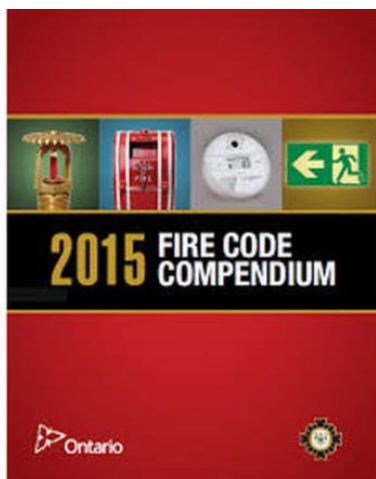
Virtual Public Education

With the barriers created by COVID, the Department had to get creative on how we continue to educate the public, specifically school-aged children in regards to fire safety. The Department has embraced the virtual world. Duty crews are now performing virtual tours and public education events, to assist our community partners. While not ideal, and we miss interacting with the people we protect, it helps us meet our provincial mandates and continue as a fire safety first community.



The Second Line – Code Enforcement

The Ontario Fire Code is a regulation made under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 consisting of a set of minimum requirements respecting fire safety within and around existing buildings and facilities. The owner is responsible for complying with the Fire Code, and a



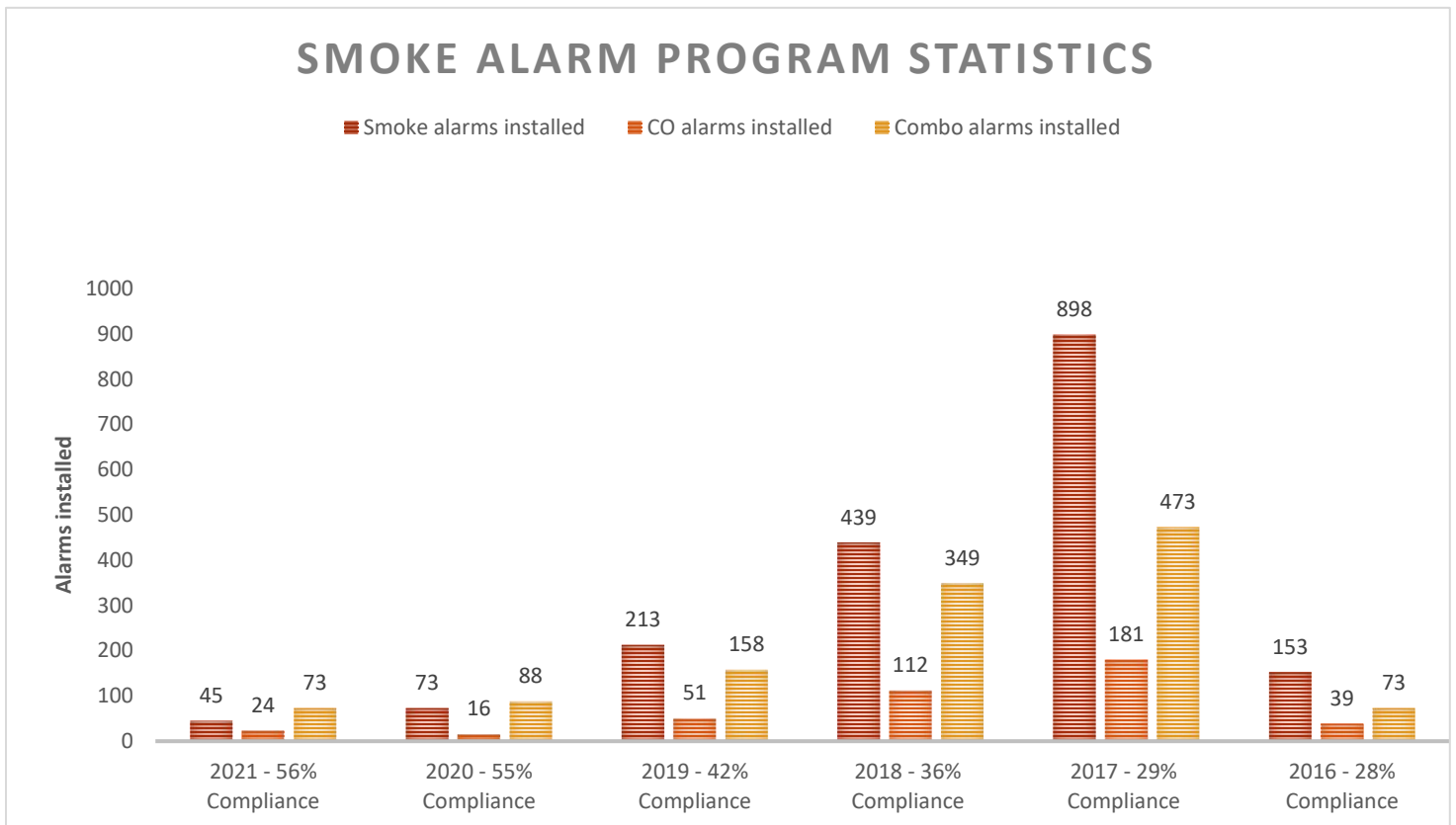
municipal fire department enforces the Fire Code. Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services understands the importance of compliance with our codes and the effects on our community when they are not met.

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is widely recognized for its progressive smoke alarm program. The Fire Protection & Prevention Act under Part II mandates the following:

2 (1) Every municipality shall,

(a) establish a program in the municipality which must include public education with respect to fire safety and certain components of fire prevention.

Home visits completed by the in-service fire fighters to ensure compliance in single-family homes help the City of Port Colborne meet the required regulation. A glimpse into the program statistics are:



A smoke alarm is critical for the early detection of a fire in your home and could mean the difference between life and death. In a fire, smoke and deadly gases tend to spread farther and faster than heat. That is one reason why most fire victims die from inhalation of smoke and toxic gases, not from burns. Our regulatory inspection program continues to make our community safer.

While COVID restrictions did limit the proactive portion of Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services provincially recognized program, the Department did enter 274 homes. This is an increase from the 208 homes the previous year. A positive takeaway from this year's statistics is another small increase in smoke and carbon monoxide alarm compliance rates in Port Colborne.

The Third Line – Response

The third line of defense is response. A response can be broken down in a multitude of ways; from the level of service, equipment, training, and of course, call response. Each is reliant on the other to ensure not only the effectiveness of the response but the safety of the firefighters themselves.

Level of Service

The level of service offered by Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is set by Council with the enactment of By-law 6745/109/19. A list of services offered to the community are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Interior Structural Fire Fighting | - Public Assistance Calls |
| - Grass/Brush Fires | - Carbon Monoxide Investigations |
| - Burn Complaints | - Natural Gas Emergencies |
| - Water/Ice Rescue | - Technical Rescue (rope) |
| - Elevator Rescue | - Vehicle Fires |
| - Motor Vehicle Accidents/extrication | - Medical Assistance Calls |

The level of service is the framework for the fire department. Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services uses the levels to assess current and future training needs along with the equipment to meet these needs. The department continually strives to meet and then exceed the standards that regulate the fire service to provide the best service and results to our citizens.

Equipment



Engine 1 - **2015 Spartan Metrostar**

Engine No. 2 - **2000 E-1 - Superior**

Tanker 1 - **2015 Freightliner**

Rescue 1 - **2012 Spartan Metro Star Custom Built**

Ladder 1 – **2006 Pierce – 75' Ladder**

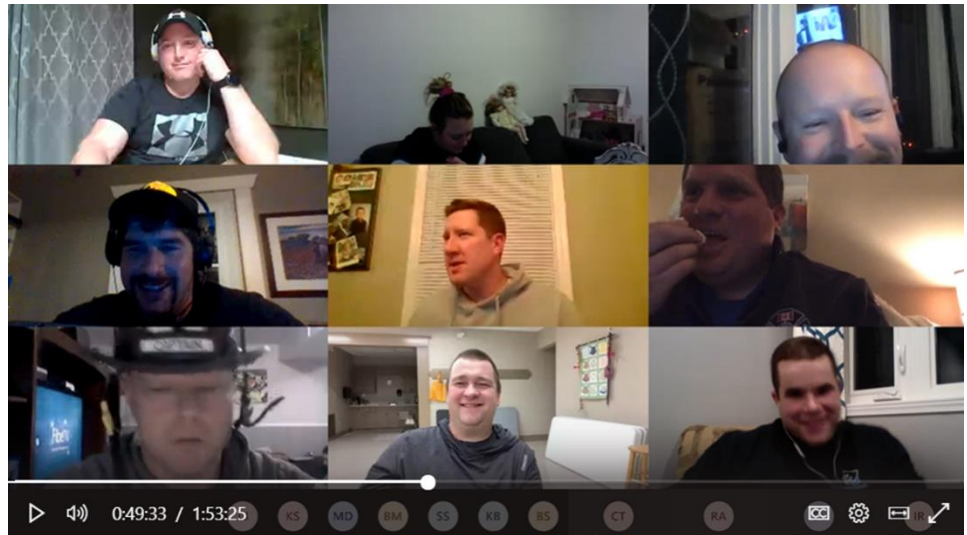
Training

Training is the backbone of a fire department. It produces a well-prepared force that through repetition increases the speed of an operation and enhances proper execution while reducing injuries. A fire fighter who arrives at an emergency unprepared can be faced with life-and-death situations and will find themselves under extreme stress to perform their duties

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services is proud of the fact that all personnel is National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) certified. With the Province once again bringing mandatory certification forward, our fire service has positioned itself well for the future. To that, we must continue to be proactive and not only maintain our acquired skills but expand on them.

Restrictions bring Creativity in Training

COVID-19 restrictions did take a toll on our training program. Taking into account the health of our people and protecting our ability to respond, training moved to an online format to start the year. Three courses were offered



and as a result our fire fighters certified as Public Educator, Incident Safety Officer and Fire Officer I. More importantly, staff had a chance to interact with one other. The fire service is about comradery and being part of the team. While not ideal, the virtual training brought us together.

Recruits 2021



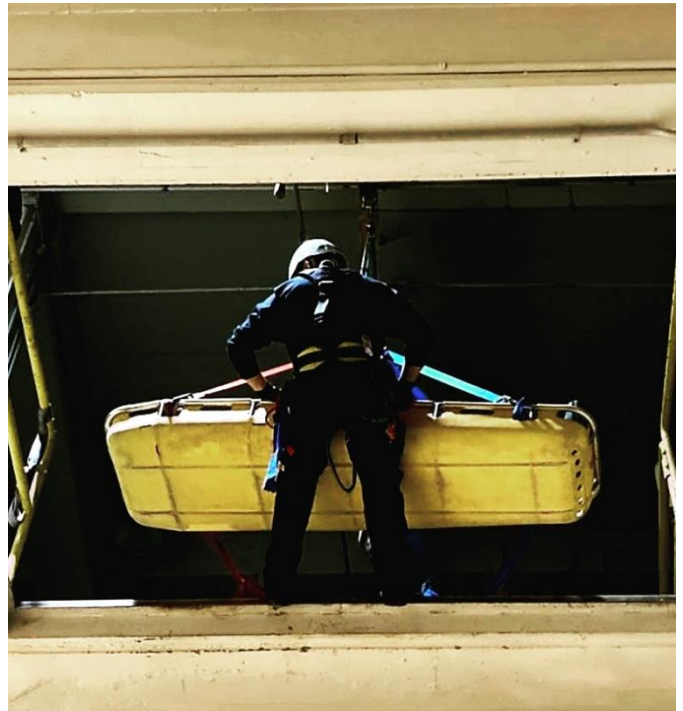
Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services started the recruitment process in late 2020. This recruitment was to boost the volunteer complement due to retirements and other vacancies. Multiple alterations were made to the recruit training process to once again, keep our people safe. Live fire training, the recruits went to Niagara Falls. NFPA testing was completed in October.

Recruitment for the 2022 class started in September of this year. We received a strong applicant pool this year compared to past years. The 2022 class starts training in January.

Rope Rescue

With the NFPA certification training complete for suppression activities, our attention turned to technical rescue. Our level of service includes rope and water/ice rescue. A technical rescue has been best described as a low-frequency, high-risk activity.

Under the direct supervision of the Deputy Chief we updated not only our equipment but our program and corresponding Operational Guidelines. The department has been very fortunate to have the use of Robin Hood for training. The facility provides multiple scenarios for our fire fighters to hone their skills.



Robin Hood Partnership

One of the strengths of our department is the continued support and partnerships we have in the community. Robin Hood is a prime example of that. Armed with a training grant from the Province, we were able to

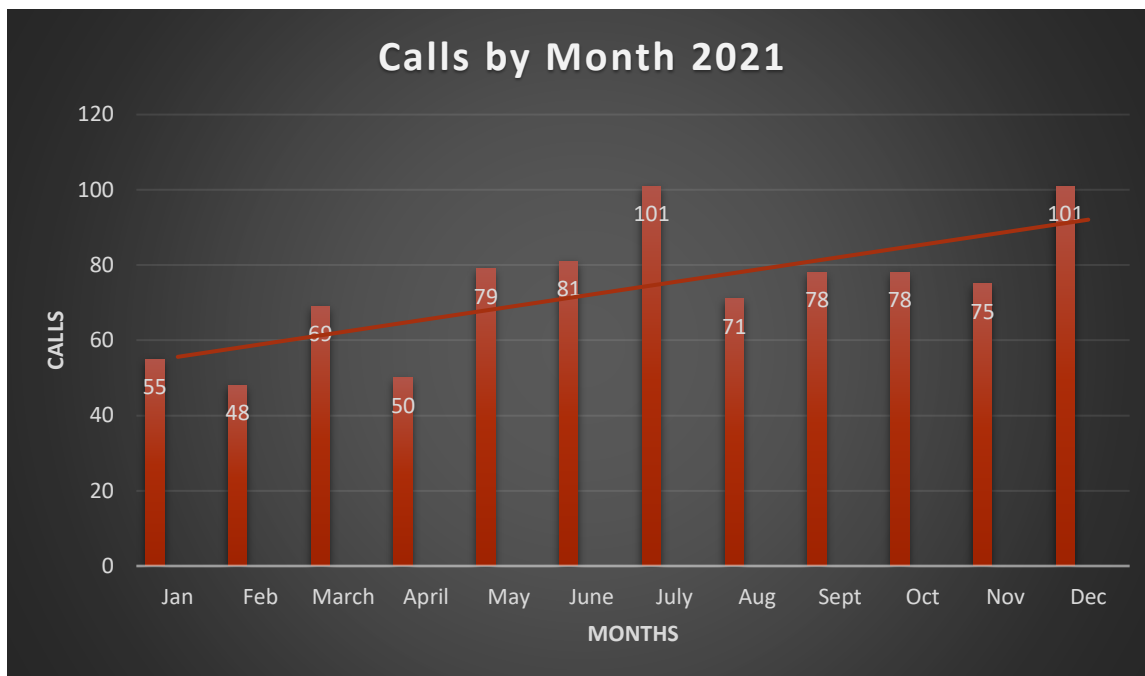


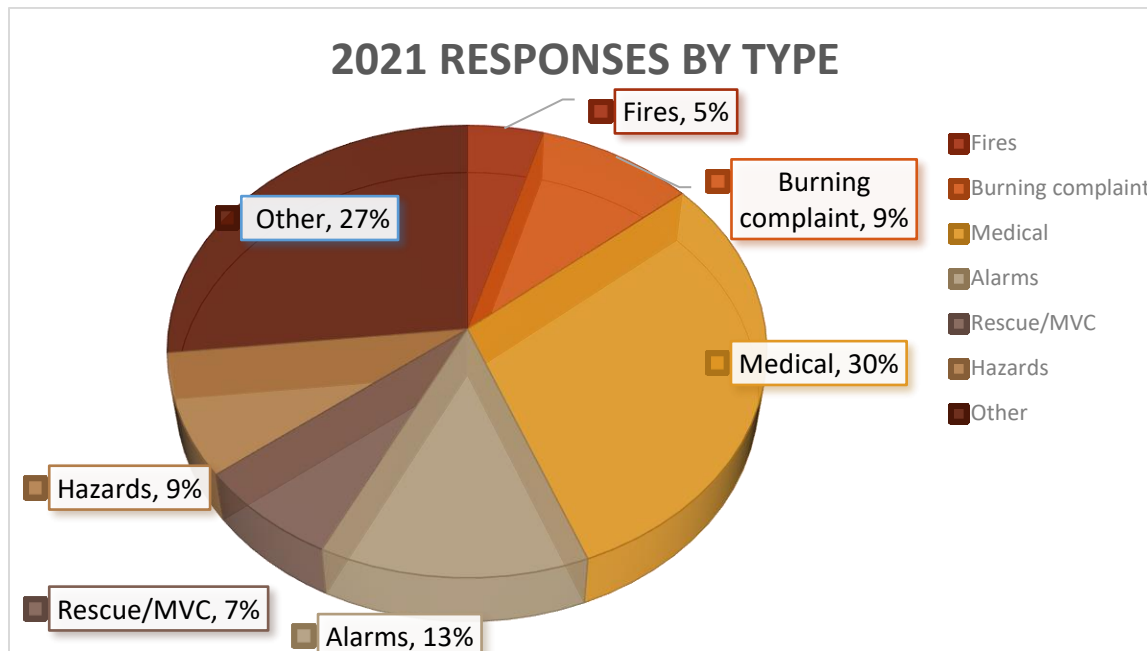
buy and build a structure inside of Robin Hood to facilitate training. Fire fighter survival, along with search and rescue training was completed inside a controlled atmosphere. Movable walls give us the ability to change the look which changes the training.

Emergency Response

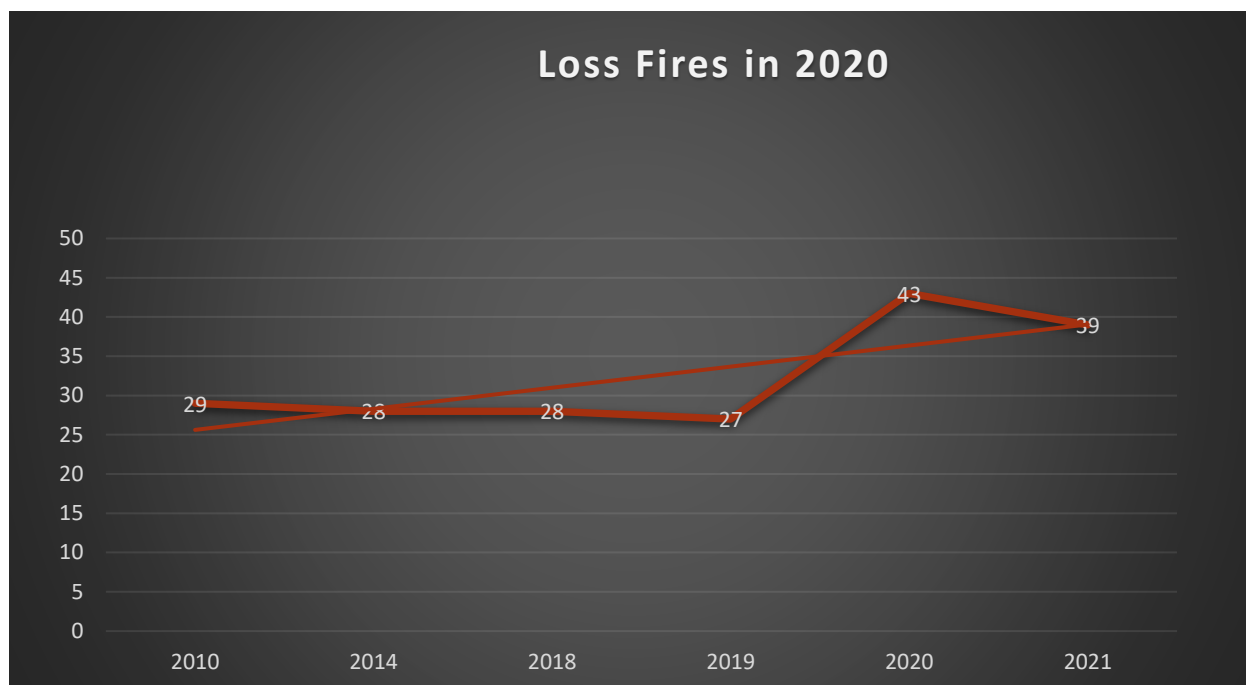
The department provides a wide range of emergency and non-emergency services to the citizens of Port Colborne. The following data provides a brief overview of these activities. 2021 started off with a common trend of reduced calls primarily due to shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE). Niagara Emergency Medical Service (NEMS) continued with the reduced medical response to conserve PPE and ultimately reduce unnecessary risk.

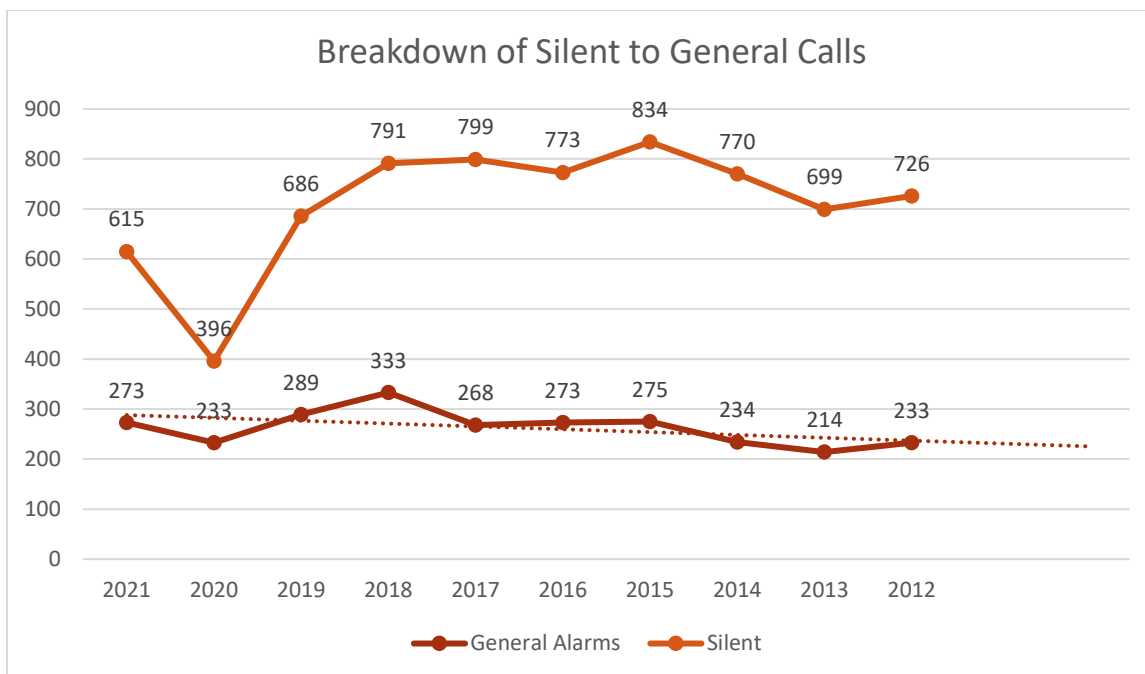
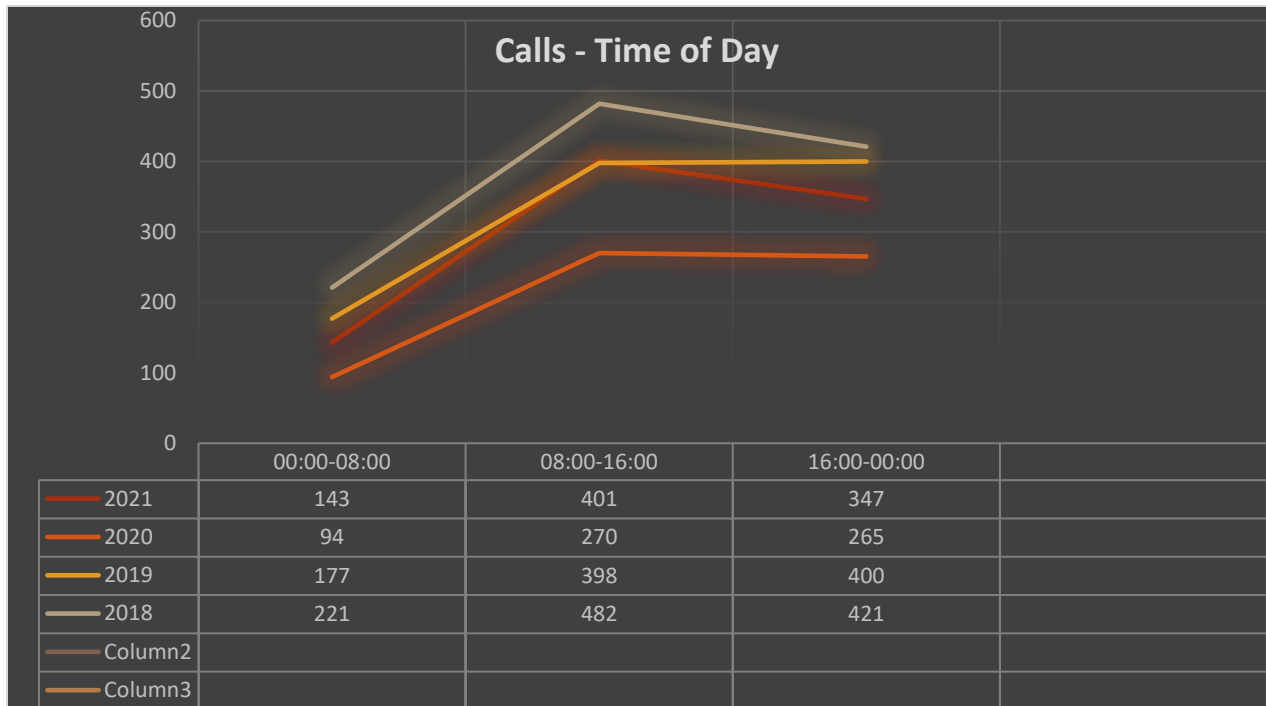
With an ever-increasing medical workload on NEMS and an increased supply of PPE, medical response went back to pre-pandemic tiering in May, 2021. This change brought back an increase in service levels that the community expects and benefits from.

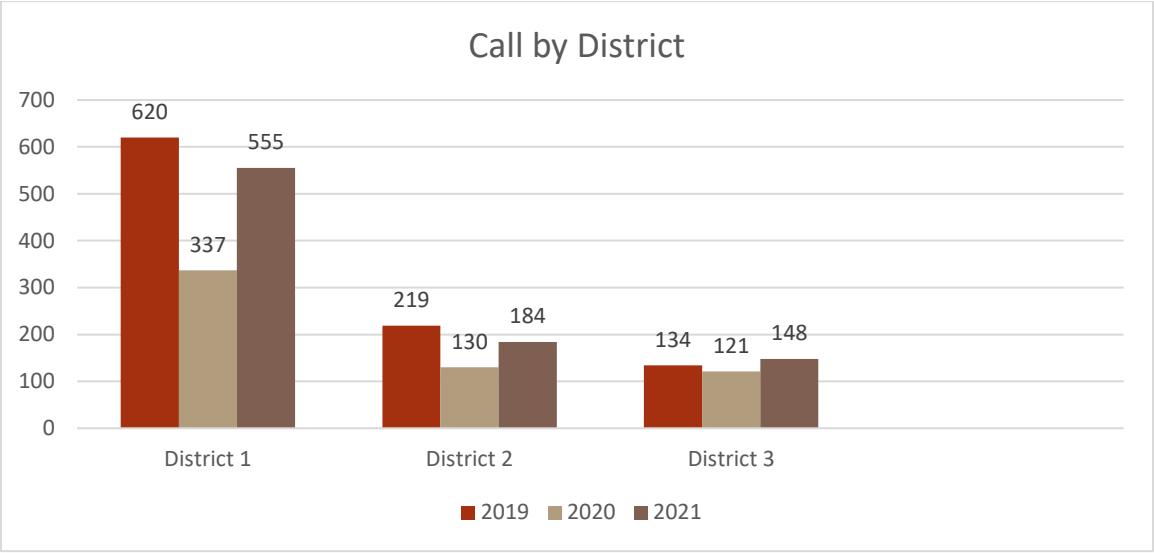




Loss fires remained higher than normal in 2021; an increase of 30% over the five-year average. This remains a common trend across the Province.







By-law Service Model – (By-law Division)

The Municipal Act, 2001 permits municipalities to pass by-laws that can enhance and protect the safety of the community. These by-laws allow the municipality appointed staff to enter onto lands at any reasonable time without a warrant for the purposes of investigating alleged by-law infractions or determining compliance with orders.

In the execution of these duties Officers have the ability to educate, place orders, and in some cases fine. The ultimate goal is compliance with the by-law which results in greater public safety and enjoyment of our City. Much like the fire service, a balanced approach is needed to get the best results. A first-time offender may just need to be educated on what can and cannot be done in the City.

When compliance may be an issue or the gravity of the work required is significant, orders with timelines are placed on the property. These orders allow staff to fix the issue if the owner is not willing to comply. A frequent offender of our City's by-laws will see charges in the way of the Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) or a part 3 charge under provincial offenses.

Lot Maintenance

Lot maintenance is perhaps the by-law that keeps staff the busiest. It requires owners or occupants of the land to clean and clear the land. Notwithstanding the visual aspect of poor lot maintenance, vermin thrive in these conditions causing health concerns. All properties are required to keep clean and free of:



- Rubbish, debris, objects, or conditions that might create a health, fire, or accident hazard
- Wrecked, dismantled, discarded, or abandoned machinery, vehicles, trailers, or boats

- Vehicles unlicensed for the current year and not properly enclosed and protected
- Long grass, bush, undergrowth, and noxious weeds as defined in the Weed Control Act as amended
- Dead, decayed, or damaged trees or other natural growth
- All garbage shall be placed in containers with covers

Parking

Parking issues have come to the forefront over the past few years. With the City becoming a go to location within the Region, staff anticipate ongoing enforcement issues. Prohibited and permit parking are identified by



municipal signage, particularly when it comes to disabled parking. However, some parking prohibitions do not require signage. Vehicles cannot park so they are obstructing driveways, fire routes, fire hydrants or sidewalks. In the case of temporary parking restrictions, including parking interfering with snow removal.

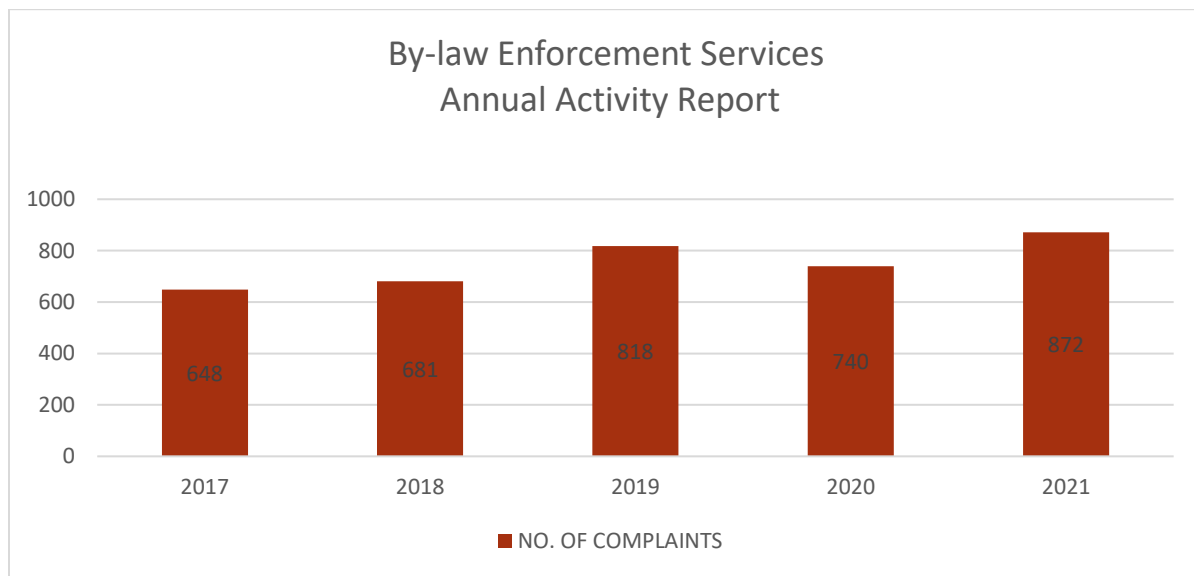
Property Standards

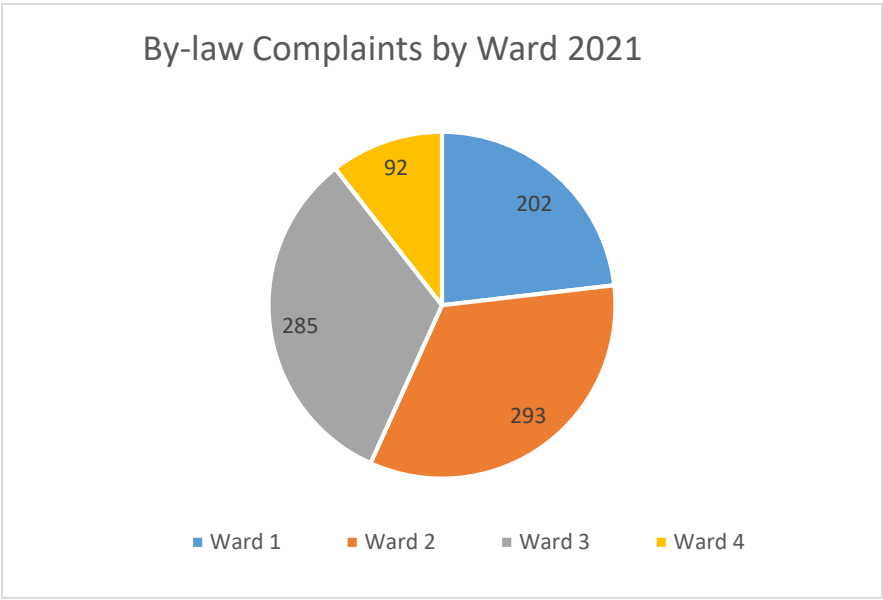
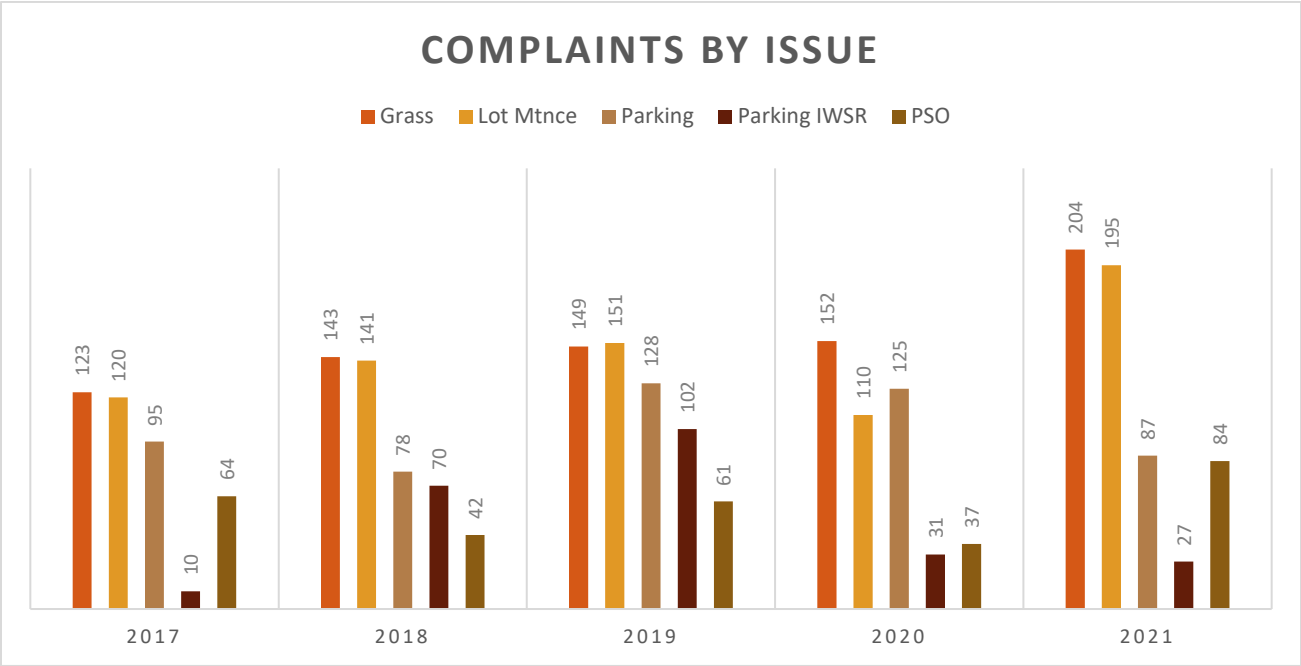


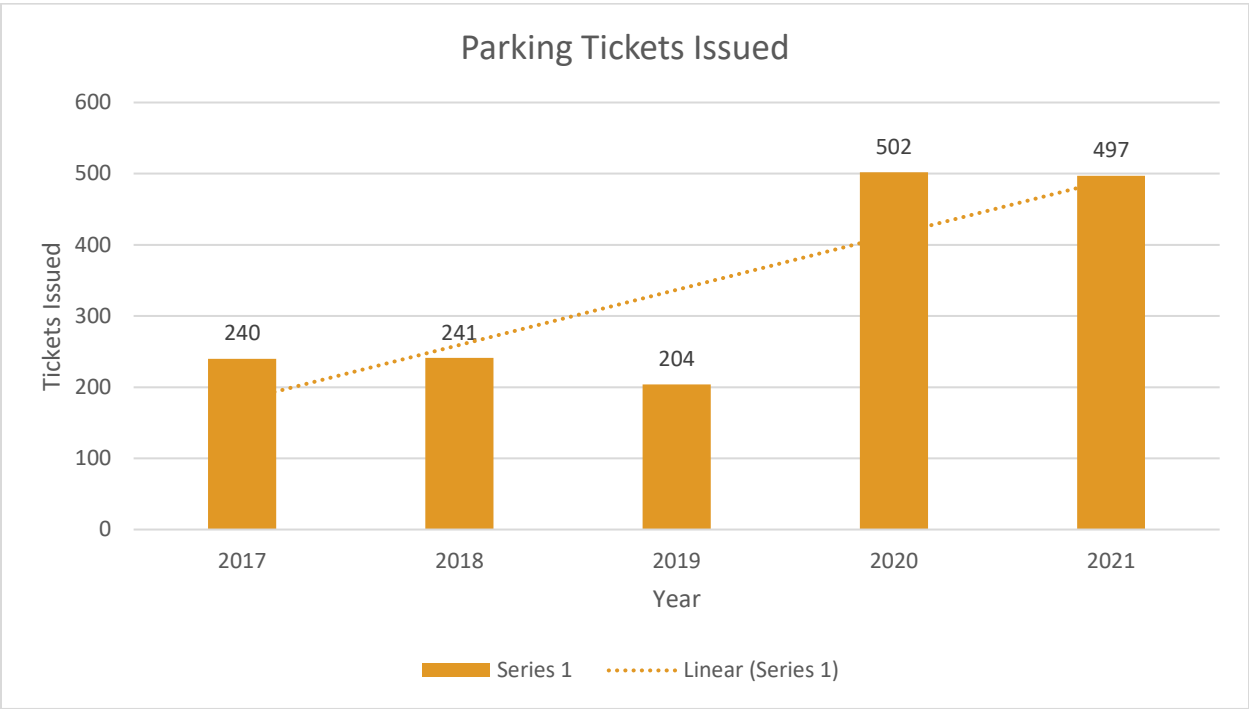
The property standards by-law prescribes the minimum standards for the maintenance and occupancy of property within the municipality. Buildings are required to be structurally sound and their

components are required to be in good repair and protected against deterioration. This particular by-law helps protect tenants' rights that have unsafe conditions in their rental unit.

While not an all-encompassing list of the work the by-law department does for the City, it provides a glimpse into the day of a By-law Officer. If I have learned anything about by-law enforcement in 2021, it is that we will not and cannot make everyone happy. Usually, two different parties are involved in a complaint. One will get self-proclaimed justice while the other will feel wronged.







Animal Control activities within the City of Port Colborne

Animal Calls Received	Totals	Shelter Admissions	Total
Stray Dogs	26	Stray Dogs	31
Stray Cats	24	Stray OTHER	2
Wildlife	152	Stray Cats	54
Bylaw Infractions	94	Owner surrendered	24
Farm	5	Wildlife	100
Exotic	1	Annual Total	211
SUEP	217	Adoptions	Total
Rescue	0	Dogs	5
Emergency Assistance	18	Cats	59
Ambulance	0		
Kennel Inspections	7	Annual Total	64
Other	215	Claimed	Total
Annual Total	759	Dogs	23
By-law Infractions	Total	Other	
Loose Dog/Cat	36	Cats	5
Licence	4		
Excrement	8	Annual Total	28
Barking Complaint	16	Euthanized	Total
Dog Bites	21	Dogs	1
Muzzle	5	Cats	3
Annual Total	90	Wildlife	83
		Annual Total	87

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to study the internal and external environments of a department, through the identification and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, and the opportunities and threats to which it is exposed. By completing the above SWOT, staff can position themselves to take full advantage of the strengths and opportunities of the document while mitigating the effects of weaknesses and threats. Some of the highlighted from the SWOT are:



The majority of Community Safety & Enforcements strengths come from human capital. Dedicated staff not only want to show up and do great work but assist in making the department better. Council's support and continued funding can also fit under this element.

- City growth

The City is bracing for substantial growth over the next 10 years. Growth will bring on addition change for the fire service , but it will also provide a larger pool of applicants for positions.

- Data Management System

The City currently uses an out-of-date system called Lotus Notes. While it there is an abundance of data for senior staff to use in its decision making, it is difficult to extract and must be compiled manually.

- Dedicated People

Like so many organizations, our people need to be the biggest strength. Our dedicated fire fighters and officers were flexible when needed with each adjustment made from our attempt to stay ahead of COVID.

- COVID-19

The Community Safety & Enforcement has seen multiple cases of COVID-19 which in turn limits in-service staffing levels. While the majority of the staff is vaccinated, the last wave has shown the vaccine has limited success in protecting people from the virus.

- Volunteer Spirit

Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services has noticed a decrease in applications to become a volunteer fire fighter. With that, the majority of community volunteer organizations have seen a downturn in people wanting to be involved in the community.

Successes & Challenges (Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services)

Any successful Department must take the time to reflect to see what went well and should continue. Just as important, we must take the time to see what isn't working and must be reworked or eliminated altogether. The following, while not an all-encompassing list of successes and challenges, is a sample of the ongoing items that are a focus of this Department.

Merging of Fire Department with By-law Services

The departments have a history of working closely with each other. Both departments are mandated to protect the safety of the community and enforce provincial and municipal laws. Benefits of the merge have been seen both internally and externally. Departmental silos have all but been removed and the flow of troubled property information is flowing between units. Community Safety and Enforcement is looking forward to the growth of our City and is prepared to deal with the benefits and challenges that will emerge.

COVID – 19

I am personally looking at our Departments response to COVID-19 as a success. All levels of the organization responded quickly and adopted control measures put in place. Both Associations were flexible and worked with Senior Management to protect our ability to respond. With multiple disruptions to the training calendar, our team adjusted when needed.

The pandemic continues to frustrate many of the departments normal activities. All the lines of defense have been altered from time to time to ensure our continued ability to have staff to respond. Our continued ability to predict and change to our environment will be critical to our continued success.

Recruitment

The department continues to see an issue in attracting and retaining paid-on-call volunteer fire fighters. This trend is not just a Port Colborne issue. Other municipal fire services struggle with the same issue of retaining paid-on-call volunteer fire fighters. This turnover in fire fighters may well be the reality of running a composite fire service that is continually advertising and training recruit fire fighters annually.

While multiple articles can be found during research on the topic, no one issue can be targeted to resolve the struggle. Changes in family dynamics, competing interests and the reality of the level of commitment needed to be a volunteer are often key factors. It is noted that not only do the fire service struggle to recruit and retain quality volunteers; many of the mainstay organizations in our community struggle to get quality help as well.

An example of the struggle to attract people; Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services started recruitment for volunteers in late November 2020 for a start date in 2021. The Department

received just 11 applications which are less than half of what was received in 2019. Of these six recruits, only 3 made it through recruitment.

Senior Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services staff did see an increase in the 2022 recruitment. Retention of trained staff will be a focus in the coming years.

Successes & Challenges (By-law Division)

Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS)

The Administrative Monetary Penalty System (AMPS) is a fast and efficient way of processing parking tickets in the City of Port Colborne. Since 2014, the City has been using the system for parking. In 2021, the addition to the AMPS ticketable offenses for lot maintenance, noise, snow removal, and trees will give added options for enforcement. This change also enables the City to resolve disputes in a less formal and costly setting of the Provincial Court system.

Enforcement Policy

The enforcement policy will help change the By-law Division from a complaint driven model to a modified proactive model. When matters pertained to public health and enforcement are now pursued on a proactive basis in terms of priority. A risk assessment tool is now in use to help staff prioritize complaints instead of a first come, first serve model.

What is next?

The workplace is dynamic and constantly changing and challenging us. While we are focused on our current needs to provide a quality service to the residents, we must look up from our current tasks to look at what the future may hold.

Apparatus Replacement

Engine No. 2 is currently up for replacement. A fire engines life span is 20 years as per NFPA standards.

Technical Rescue

With the changes to training to meet the NFPA standards complete for our more common disciplines like fire suppression and auto extrication, the Department's Technical Rescue Programs will be the next to be reviewed and updated as needed. Rope rescue has been successfully updated as previously mentioned. Water/ice rescue will be the main focus for 2022.

Pre-incident Planning

Pre-incident planning facilitates the transfer of critical information to first-responders that can guide their response to a fire incident and improve their response capabilities, which may ultimately save lives and reduce property damage and business interruption. Our fire departments in-service crews will be using new technology on the trucks to update and create pre-plans for City. The information will be available to responding crews as they respond to calls to assist in making decisions that can save lives and property.

The second benefit to a solid pre-incident program is in-service inspections can be completed at the same time. Identifying safety concerns and remedying the hazard fits with the Department's proactive approach to life safety. Crews will be able to issue orders on infractions to ensure compliance and continue our path to a fire-safe community.

Consolidated Dispatch

Currently, our fire service is dispatched by the St Catharines Fire Department. There is a movement to consolidate the four different dispatching services in the Niagara Region into one. The move would see Port Colborne Fire & Emergency Services move from the current analog radio system to a digital format P25. Many of these changes are being forced upon emergency services by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) mandating the replacement of the current 9-1-1 infrastructure across Canada. Full implementation is scheduled to be completed by March 2024.

The upgrade will improve public safety by allowing the use of new media and data for reporting emergencies and events. This could be streaming video from an emergency incident, sending photos of accident damage or of a fleeing suspect, or sending personal medical information that could greatly aid emergency responders and provide greater situational awareness.

Weather events

There has been a noticeable increase in weather events in the past few years. These events pose challenges to all of the City's departments. Adjustments have been made after each event as we learn and attempt to predict outcomes.