

TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT CHAPTER 1: ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

Part 1: History and Administration

Subject: History

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Effective Date: 01-01-90

Section: 1-1-2

Revised Date:

Township Fire Department, Inc. was organized on January 14, 1955 as a Wisconsin Corporation under Chapter 181 of the Wisconsin Statutes. It is a Corporation Without Stock and Not For Profit. Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State on January 20, 1955.

Prior to 1955, fire protection to rural areas around the City of Eau Claire was provided by the Eau Claire City Fire Department. A fee of \$150 an hour was charged to the surrounding townships by the City. When a fire developed, one truck with 150 gallons of water and three firefighters would respond.

On September 27, 1954, Dave Olson, the fire warden for the Town of Seymour bought a 1928 International Fire Truck from the Eau Claire Volunteer Fire Department of Fall Creek. It was kept at Mr. Olson's home and was maintained primarily by the Town of Seymour.

A rate hike to \$600 per hour by the City of Eau Claire for fire runs outside the City Limits was one of the reasons that many organizational meetings were held by the surrounding townships during December 1954. On December 31, 1954, the City of Eau Claire was notified that the towns of Seymour, Union and Washington had contracted with the Altoona Fire Department and the Eau Claire County Volunteer Fire Department for fire protection.

On January 14, 1955, a meeting was held to organize Township Fire Department, Inc. and to authorize the purchase of trucks and equipment. The townships in the organization were Seymour, Washington, Union and Brunswick. The 1928 International was purchased from Dave Olson and a new 750 GPM Pumper was purchased from W.S. Darley and Co. The officers for the newly formed Township Fire Department, Inc. were elected: Henry Graff, president; Charles Milward, secretary; Arthur Donaldson, treasurer and Board Members Robert Rossman and Herman Dahl. Dave Olson was named Chief of the Department.

Chief Olson and Mr. Graff went to Chicago to pick up the new truck. "It was everything" Mr. Olson said. "It carried 500 gallons of water and could pump 750 gallons per minute and it was the only truck in the area with heated cabinets for the booster lines." A tanker truck was purchased a week later and these three trucks and 145 volunteers were enough to get the Department started.

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On February 4, 1956, the Department opened a Central Fire Station in the Town of Washington (2504 London Road). The station was manned 24 hours by the Franklin Johnson Family. Volunteers were notified by telephone. On May 24, 1956, the Town of Pleasant Valley joined the Department. Station #1, in the Town of Seymour, opened January 8, 1957 and later that year the Town of Pleasant Valley opened Station #4. From that point, the Department continued growing and improving its equipment.

In 1958, the Department went to two-way communications with the purchase of two-way radios. All dispatching was done at the Central Fire Station as it still is today. Station #3 was built in 1960 in the Town of Union and Station #5 was built in 1973 in the Town of Brunswick.

Dave Olson retired as Chief in 1964 and Richard Dielke served as chief until 1976. Marshall Horlacher took over as Chief in 1976 and is presently the Chief in 1996.

The Central Station on London Road was built so that the fire trucks for Station #2 (Washington) were housed on the ground floor and the dispatchers living area and office of the corporation were on the second floor. In 1986, the Town of Washington built a new fire station on Horlacher Lane and a new Dispatch Center was built nearby at 4601 E. Hamilton Avenue. This new Dispatch Center was built as a duplex with one unit being used for the living quarters for the dispatcher and the other unit being used for the corporate office and meeting rooms. The Chief also has an office in the building.

In 1983, a "First Responder" unit was organized. About 35 volunteers took training and the unit was named "Emergicare". TFD supplied each Emergicare member with a portable radio and a medical kit.

As of this year, 1996, Township Fire Department, Inc. operates with five stations, 21 trucks (6 engines, 5 tankers, 5 brush trucks, 5 rescue trucks), two portable pumps and approximately 130 active volunteers. The first engine purchased by TFD in 1955 cost less than \$10,000 while the most recent engine purchased in 1994 cost approximately \$150,000. TFD has a plan for replacement of trucks; one truck will be replaced each year.