



Putnam Township Fire Department

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Curt Ruf, Fire Chief

2023 Year End Report

Overview:

2023, was a busy year for the Putnam Township Fire Department with a new record in calls for service. In 2021, the fire department responded to 750 calls for service, making this the highest run total in the history of the department. 2023 saw that record met and broken with the department responding to 794 calls for service.

The men and women of the Putnam Township Fire Department were able to not only respond in this historic year, but the department hit or exceed many of its goals such as implementing Bravo 5 and the schooling that was required, moving from (MFR) Medical First Responders to (EMT) Emergency Medical Technician, further development of the staff from officers to new instructors and training new firefighters.

Emergency Calls:

The beginning of 2023 set the tone for the year, in the first quarter of 2023, with two major winter storms and a high number of calls in February with 77 calls. In the second quarter we had an influx of structure fires and mutual aid calls. In a three-week period from May 16th through June 5th we responded to an unprecedented number of calls, 68. During this time we responded to 10 structure fires, either in the Township/Village or first alarm mutual aid. The summer months were steady, but a large August Storm that brought hail to the area, assisted in August being the busiest month in the history of the department with 91 calls for service. The following is the break down of the type of calls for service we responded to in 2023:

- 504 Medical calls – 64% of total runs.
- 55 Fires (structure, car, and field) – 7% of total runs.
- 23 Car accidents (including extrications) – 3% of total runs.
- 198 Service Calls (power lines down, fire alarms, etc.) – 25% of total runs.
- 14 Station Stand-by at other fire departments – 1% of total runs

We rely on automatic mutual aid for various types of emergency calls, especially structure fires, and our neighboring communities count on us to provide the same. The following are the mutual aid numbers:

- 69 Mutual Aid requests given to neighboring departments.
- 25 Mutual Aid requests received from neighboring departments.

Department Training:

2023 brought a renewed effort to get back to basics, and more specifically put an emphasis on operational readiness and the first 10 minutes of the emergency scene. We spent a total of 4,000 hours on training. As well as department training, we had some of our officers start their officer development by obtaining their State Instructor and Fire Officer 1,2,3 Certifications. We participated in a county-wide training that put an emphasis on water supply and water sources as well as company operations with a review of all equipment.

We continued to put an emphasis on in house On-the-Job Training for new employees and started a program for training employees how to drive and run the pumps. The Cadet program continues to be a wonderful program and continues to grow and develop new cadets yearly.

Training hours and frequency of training will see a rise in 2024 with the increased demands from the State Fire Marshal and further requirements to maintain certifications. We will also continue to work on developing and looking into Electric Vehicle and Lithium-Ion battery issues within the fire service, how that will impact our community.

Fire Marshal Division:

We continue to move toward having a bigger footprint in collaborating with our business community to provide education on safety in and around our businesses. The following are some of the ways we influenced prevention within our community:

- 41 Inspections conducted.
- 37 Re-inspections.
- 8 Fire prevention class conducted.
- 46 smoke alarms were installed.
- 28 CO alarms were installed.

In May we had our Open House, to continue what we did in May 2022 with the Open House and dedication of the Community Center. The event saw hundreds of members of the community participate in several activities available at the Open House. Some of those activities included extrication demonstration, Livingston County Sheriff Department Bomb Squad, Michigan State Police Command Post, Michigan National Guard, Livingston County EMS, DTE, along with a smoke house and bounce house. The highlight of the event was Survival Flight Landing and giving a tour of their helicopter and capabilities.

In July we brought back Safety Camp. Safety Camp is a comprehensive 3-day safety program in July in which we hosted 35 kids ages 7 to 12 in areas of fire safety, bike safety, bus safety, stranger danger, and first aid, ending with the kids completing an obstacle course in which they had to perform some items they were taught during the 3 days.

2023 also saw the department participating in several public events in the Township and Village, as well as the County. Some of the events we participated in where; Art in the Park, Food Truck

Fridays, St. Patrick's Day, Memorial Day and Homecoming Parades, Art is Healing, Trunk or Treat at the Livingston County Sheriff's Department as well as Spooktacular at the Township Square. Further events we participated in included the Horses from Hell, Pinckney High School Graduation, Dances with Dirt, and medical stand-by for all Pinckney High School Football Games.

Personnel:

2023 saw the beginning of reorganizing of the department. The beginning of the year brought the department two new full-time staff. We were able to switch two paid-on call/part-time members to full-time; Ben Welch and Ashley LaPres. In February we initiated a duty tone that went along with putting all members on a 4-Platoon response during the evenings/early mornings. This allowed for members of the department to know which days they needed to respond to smaller incidents like medicals, fire alarms, trees down, and power lines down. This allowed for greater work/life balance. The platoon system has been highly successful in achieving better response and again giving staff better balance.

We started the year off with 20 and finished with 20, throughout the year we had four members leave and were able to bring on four employees. The reasons for personnel leaving include moving out of the area, and difficulty in meeting the further requirements of the job. Although the platoon system has worked in retaining most of the employees we have, it has still been difficult in getting new employees and community members to dedicate their time part-time to working at the fire department, due to the increase in hours it takes to get certified.

We had four members that achieved all of their certification in becoming a fully licensed firefighter/EMT; Joe Brookshire, Rick McDonald, Mason Allan, and Hayden Klenk. We had two promotions within the department. Ed Ruppel was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain and Ashley LaPres was promoted from Firefighter to Sergeant.

The Cadet programs continues to be hugely successful, we had three Cadets graduate to the senior departments, while we brought onboard three more during the year. We continue to have great success in recruiting Cadets, but our focus in 2024 is to find and hire paid-on call firefighters. Although we have had great success with the reorganization and platoon system, to sustain our model we need to hire community members that want to be a part of emergency services.

Capital Improvement:

We did not have any significant purchases in 2023 with Capital Improvement projects. We did put into service the new Chief 5 Command Vehicle, as well as finish some installation of our Apparatus Radios.

Most of our projects were maintenance items with purchasing new AED batteries and continuing the maintenance of our LUCAS CPR Devices. We did purchase (4) tactical vests to have for active shooter incidents. As part of our reorganization was to decrease the fleet and we accomplish this by selling Utility 51, which was the main medical response apparatus replaced by the purchase of Rescue 50 in 2021. We also sold Ladder 51 to a small department in Wisconsin. With the age of this apparatus and the cost of annual maintenance it made sense to depart with Ladder 51.

2023 Goals & Outlook 2024:

We were able to accomplish several of the goals we set out to meet in 2023. As stated earlier we were able to re-organize and respond better and more efficiently by instituting the duty tone and Platoon System. Most importantly in July we put Bravo 5 in service. Putnam Fire became the first Livingston County Fire Department to have the ability to transport patients in our community, with a partnership with Livingston County EMS. Staff started becoming EMT certified, if they weren't already in Fall of 2022, and Winter/Spring 2023 saw much of the remainder of the department becoming EMT's.

We continued to work on the recruitment and retention of employees by identifying further benefits and services we can offer our employees. 2024 will see us finalize a two-year project in moving the department to the next level of medical licensure. In March 2024 when we renew the department's State Medical License, we will be upgrading to become Officially an EMT – Basic fire department. With the completion of this project, we have had to revise, upgrade and update all of the Department Standard Operating Guidelines.

Further goals in 2024 will be as discussed, the recruiting of new members, beyond Cadets. We are going to utilize and upgrade the Department Website, through the Township's Website. We are also continuing to grow on the development of staff by making them further operational ready. We have also identified a need and will be installing Dry Hydrants around Hi-Land and Patterson Lakes.

In conclusion we have made a lot of significant changes in my four years as fire chief of the department. The staff is committed to its continued growth and be prepared as the growth of calls has grown 8% in the last year and 30% since becoming chief. We will continue to prepare for any and all the events that may come our way in 2024, with the dedicated men and women of Putnam Township Fire dedicated to being prepared and ready to respond.