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To: Town Manager Jamie Justice, Mayor Rusty Knox, TOD Board of Commissioners  
Date: February 16, 2022  
Subject: 2021 Davidson Fire Department Annual Report

On behalf of the members of the Davidson Fire Department, I am pleased to present the 2021 Annual Report. This report outlines the operations, training, accomplishments, and opportunities that the fire department addressed for the 2021 calendar year. The department has continued to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response which is now approaching two years. The response to the pandemic has shown that more than ever, public safety agencies must continue to assess their response capabilities and risk assessment to ensure maximum safety of staff members and the citizens we serve. Although COVID-19 still presents some challenges in everyday operations, we are in a much better position than a year. Although many challenges are still present, I feel comfortable in saying the fire department is more than capable of responding to these challenges moving forward. Even with these challenges faced, the Davidson Fire Department was still able to effectively meet the mission of the department and the town, which is to serve the citizens.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff members of the fire department for their level of professionalism and dedication over the last year. Each member of our organization plays a key role in helping to provide emergency service delivery to the citizens of Davidson. These members continue to show up to work each day to ensure that the mission statements of the fire department and the town are being met. Without their diligence, professionalism, and dedication, the fire department would not be able to successfully meet the emergency service delivery demands within the town. I am proud of our staff and proud to be able to lead these men and women as they work every day to ensure a better quality of life for our citizens.

Should you have any questions about this report, please feel free to reach out.

Respectfully,

*J. Ryan Monteith*



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## **COVID-19 Response**

The department continues to respond effectively to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past year the department has focused on implementing protocols that help protect our employees. Since March of 2020, the department has responded as needed to COVID related emergencies within our community. The department is still operating aggressively regarding proper personal protective equipment (PPE) usage when dealing with medical emergencies. The medical protocols for Emergency Medical Technicians in Mecklenburg County have not changed since the beginning stages of the pandemic so that is why fire department first responders are continuing to wear the N95 masks when conducting patient care. Fire department personnel are also wearing more robust garments when dealing with medical calls requiring advanced life support skills such as cardiac arrests.

The fire department was aggressive in the early stages of the pandemic in identifying suppliers that could fulfill PPE requests. Having those relationships already established was instrumental in ensuring that no PPE shortages have been encountered to date. Specifically, the stock supply for the N95 masks is robust in that the department has not had to order more supply. Supply chains for appropriate PPE over the last two years has stabilized and allowed the department to maintain normal operations for EMS delivery.

The department helped assist town efforts in planning and facilitating (2) major vaccination clinics in early 2021. Both clinics were a great success in that outreach efforts with these clinics helped to target a diverse population. This was beneficial in ensuring marginalized members of our town and community had the ability and resources to receive the much anticipated and needed COVID-19 vaccine. All town departments worked “hand in hand” to ensure these clinics were successful and that the needs of our citizens were met.

As we move into the second year of the pandemic, I do feel that as a community we are in much better shape for 2022 than we were for 2021. The development of the vaccines along with multiple therapeutic drugs has allowed society to get back to some form of normalcy. Although we have seen new variants emerge, I feel confident that we are better prepared to address these new variants and to ensure the safety and well-being of our community members.



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## **Emergency Management**

The Davidson Fire Department helps to facilitate the town’s Emergency Management function through planning, preparation, response, and command and control. The town of Davidson has always remained proactive in managing emergencies through the “Emergency Management” lens. The town takes a “global” or holistic approach within the Emergency management function by incorporating multiple town departments and staff members to help facilitate this role. Staff members across all town departments work well together to ensure this function is being addressed and managed accordingly.

For 2021, the town activated the Emergency Operations Center on (4) separate occasions to address events that were occurring within town. These events included (2) town sponsored vaccine clinics, Christmas in Davidson (3 Nights), and the 2021 North Mecklenburg Holiday Parade. These events were facilitated and managed accordingly based on plans established through the Emergency Management function. These events were considered “successes” based on the preparation and planning work by town staff. No major inclement weather or natural disaster events occurred in 2021 where the town’s Emergency Operations Center had to be staffed. 2021 did allow for careful training and implementation of new technology upgrades within the EOC that will help to further enhance the town’s ability to effectively manage and respond large events and significant incidents.

### **2022 Goals:**

- Continue to enhance technology capabilities within the town’s Emergency Management function
- Continue to utilize online platform of Basecamp to help manage smaller incidents and events where in-person requirements are not needed
- Focus on more direct and position specific training for town staff members where integration within the Emergency Management function is seamless



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## **Fire Prevention & Public Education**

Late 2021 brought a smaller “return to normal” for the fire department regarding Fire Prevention & Public Education. Once the state lifted Covid-19 restrictions in late May, this allowed the fire department to get back to interacting with our public in a non-emergency setting. The department was able to safely “open the doors” to the public at both fire stations again which allowed for some much-needed interaction between our staff members and our community members. The core mission of the Davidson Fire Department is to protect lives and save property. A good fire prevention and public education program is instrumental in ensuring that the core mission is met. The fire department relies on these types of events to engage with our community members in a non-emergency setting while also providing fire and safety tips. The fire department partners with the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal’s Office to provide annual fire prevention and safety classes for elementary school aged students within the town. The department also spends a great deal of time delivering fire prevention classes at local day care facilities as well. Over the years the department has delivered fire prevention classes to every age group within the town limits including students at Davidson College and residents at Williams Place and The Pines at Davidson. These types of interactions with our residents are important because it allows interaction in a “non” emergency setting so that our community members are more comfortable with the names and faces of our staff members.

One of the highlights in 2021 was the smoke detector canvass that occurred in the West Davidson area in October. The department canvassed our traditional African American neighborhood to ensure these residents were protected with a working smoke detector. This event was a success as both stations spent a Saturday Morning in October to ensure our residents were protected. Over (27) smoke detectors were installed in over a three-hour time-period in residences that did not have working smoke detectors.

The upcoming year will provide more opportunities for the fire department to expand on our Fire Prevention and Public Education Program. The department will be applying for a state sponsored “Smoke Detector Grant” that will allow for more canvassing opportunities in identified areas where there may be a need. The department will also be implementing a new program to include “Home Safety Surveys” where residents can request this safety survey. Members of the department will perform these surveys to identify any hazards associated within the homes of our citizens. This is not considered a code enforcement tool but an educational tool where department members can identify critical safety hazards within the



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homes so that homeowners can address them immediately. Combining this new program along with our smoke detector program will help to enhance the departments fire prevention efforts while also identifying critical safety needs for our citizens.

## **Training**

Training is the “back bone” of every fire department across the country. A department must ensure that the members are highly trained to accomplish the core mission of the organization. Davidson Fire Department is no different in that our training division does a tremendous job in providing quality training to our members. Annual training topics include EMS, incident command, fire ground strategy and tactics, officer training, rescue training, and driver operator training. The training division also administers the required annual OSHA training which is required by federal law.

The department is fortunate to employ dedicated members that are qualified as instructors through the North Carolina Department of Insurance / Office of State Fire Marshal. These department instructors are well versed in facilitating training sessions that test the limitations of our members while also ensuring that the department is applying “best practices” when transitioning from the training setting to the operations world. The training sessions are designed to challenge the members while also improving on their skill sets that they utilize daily.

This past year saw the department focus on more firefighter “safety and survival” training as well as critical fire ground task functions. The department was able to conduct (1) live structural burn within an acquired structure. Live fire applications in acquired structures provides the most realistic conditions that firefighters can encounter during an actual structure fire. These training burns are beneficial as it allows members to keep their skills sharp while applying new techniques that have been taught under the training umbrella.

For 2021, the Davidson Fire Department conducted a total of **10,272.30** training hours. This equated to an average of 171.20 annual training hours per department member.

2022 will see some more change for the department as new training will be focused on the new aerial apparatus that the department will be receiving. Driver/Operator training will take incorporate a lot of this new training but there will also be tactical operations training focused with the new apparatus as well.



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## **Operations**

Operations is the core service that the Davidson Fire Department delivers to Town of Davidson citizens. The department is charged with providing fast, effective, and efficient emergency service delivery. The goal of this department is to mitigate someone's problem when they are having the worst day of their life. The department accomplishes this by providing services in fire suppression, EMS first responder, hazardous materials mitigation, technical rescue, and many other critical areas. The department provides these services from two staffed engine companies that respond from Fire Station 1, which services the downtown and West Davidson area, and Fire Station 2 which services East Davidson to include River Run, West branch, and Summers Walk. The addition of Fire Station 2 has dramatically lowered response times to those areas. This has ensured that a fire truck with qualified personnel is arriving on scene within minutes of a citizen activating the 911 system.

### **Call Volume:**

This past year saw an increase in call volume for the Davidson Fire Department as opposed to 2020. Pandemic response protocols reduced the overall call volume in 2020 as the department was not responding to as many medical calls. This changed in 2021 as the overall call volume jumped dramatically and was more in line with 2019 response numbers.

<b>2021 CALL VOLUME</b>	<b>2020 CALL VOLUME</b>
1613	1370

**This represented an overall increase in 243 calls from 2020.**



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## **Call Volume for Response Zones:**

To better track response data within our incident reporting software system, the department divides the response jurisdiction into zones so that more definitive data can be tracked. These zones include all of Davidson but also include our mutual aid partners as well. Call volumes for the response zones for 2021 is listed below:

<b>ZONE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF CALLS</b>
Lake Norman FD	1
Mooresville FD	8
Mount Mourne FD	74
Cornelius FD	179
Huntersville FD	23
Odell FD	2
Bradford Park	11
CMC – Davidson Behavioral Health	35
Davidson - East	139
Davidson - West	631
Davidson College	84
Davidson Pointe	3
Interstate 77	53
River Run	85
Summers Walk	13
The Pines at Davidson	98
Williams Place	94
Abersham Park	2
Fisher Farm Park	9
ETJ	55
Westbranch	11



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**Call Types:**

The list for call types for 2021 are listed below. These calls reflect all calls for service that Davidson Fire Department responded to within 2021.

<b>MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE (2021)</b>	<b># INCIDENTS</b>	<b>% of TOTAL</b>
FIRES	44	2.73%
Overpressure, rupture, explosion, no heat	3	0.19%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	825	51.21%
Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	55	3.41%
Service Call	126	7.82%
Good Intent Call	321	19.93%
False Alarm & False Call	232	14.4%
Special Incident Type	5	0.31%

**Concurrent Calls:**

As the population of the area continues to grow, so does the number of emergency responses. The fire department deals with concurrent or overlapping calls annually. This is when there are two or more emergencies occurring at the same time. This is not new to the town and the addition of Fire Station 2 with additional staffing has proved beneficial in being able to mitigate multiple calls at once. Data for 2021 is listed below as compared to 2020:

<b># OVERLAPPING (2021)</b>	<b>% OVERLAPPING (2021)</b>
247	15.33%

<b># OVERLAPPING (2020)</b>	<b>% OVERLAPPING (2020)</b>
166	12.14%



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## **Response Times:**

Traditionally, the fire department has utilized “average response times” to paint a picture on how quickly apparatus are arriving on the scene. While these numbers may look good from a global perspective, they do not show how efficiently a fire department is responding to calls for service. The department has taken the approach of utilizing aggregate response times to show a true picture of where our response times are at. The goal of this organization has always been to have the first due apparatus on scene within 6:00 minutes, 80% of the time. Response times are determined by multiple factors:

- Call Taking (911 Center)
- Call Processing and Dispatch (911 Center)
- Turnout Time (Time it takes for apparatus to check enroute)
- Travel Time (Time it takes for apparatus to respond to the incident)

Unfortunately, Davidson Fire Department can only control the turnout time and response time as we rely on Mecklenburg County to control the 911 system. If a dispatcher is delayed in processing the call, that delays the response time. Conversely, if our members delay getting on the apparatus and out the door is delayed then that also affects the overall response time.

The department set an aggressive benchmark of improving the aggregate response times for the first due (arriving) and second due (arriving) apparatus. The benchmark goal for 2021 was:

- ***First due apparatus arriving on scene within 6:00 Minutes at 85% of the time***
- ***Second due apparatus arriving on scene within 8:00 Minutes at 80% of the time***

The department was able to improve the overall aggregate response times for both the first due and second due apparatus. While we exceeded our goal of the second due apparatus arriving at our desired benchmark, we did fall short with the first due apparatus:

- ***(2021) First due apparatus arrived on scene within 6:00 Minutes at 83% of the time***
- ***(2021) Second due apparatus arrived on scene within 8:00 Minutes at 81% of the time***

For comparison, in 2020, the first due arriving apparatus arrived on scene within 6:00 Minutes at 80% of the time and the second due apparatus arrived on scene within 8:00 Minutes at 76% of the time.



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Although the department did improve with our overall response metrics, there is more work to do to get to the desired outcome. This will be accomplished by additional training on our technology features as well as more personnel training. We always want to ensure that our personnel are responding to emergencies in the safest way possible, but also the most expedient and efficient. The number one goal is to have a Davidson Fire apparatus arriving at the scene of any emergency in a short amount of time. The goal for the organization is to have the first due arriving apparatus arrive on scene within 6:00 Minutes at 90% of the time while the second due apparatus is arriving within 8:00 Minutes at 85% of the time. These goals can be achieved with more in-depth training and commitment from fire department staff.

## **Administration**

The administration function of the fire department continues to work daily to manage the overall growth and direction of the organization. The members of the Command Staff, which include the Fire Chief and (3) Deputy Chief's, work daily with Town Administration and other town departments to ensure the mission statement of the town is being met. This includes overall management of the organization, planning for future growth, management of the annual department budget, employee recruitment and retention, and employee professional development.

The fire department did experience leadership changes in 2021. I was humbled and honored to accept the permanent Fire Chief's position in May 2021. I appreciate the Town Manager's trust and faith in me to lead this department into the future. It is a responsibility that I do not take lightly, and I am looking forward to the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead. The department promoted Kevin Goveia to the rank of Deputy Chief in June 2021. Chief Goveia has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Command Staff rank and has been a tremendous asset over the past few months.

## **Grants:**

The department received some good news in late August 2021 when we received a Fire Prevention & Safety Grant that is administered through FEMA. The amount awarded to the Davidson Fire Department was \$34,535.24 and is being utilized to help fund the implementation of the Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover.



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## **Community Risk Assessment & Standards of Cover:**

The department has hired AP Triton to help facilitate and develop the Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover for the department. These two items are major components of the Accreditation process that the department is working towards. The goal has been to complete these two items for a couple of years but there were other budget items that took priority. The implementation of these two items will help the department plan for better growth and direction moving forward. The final report should be completed by second quarter of 2022.

## **2022 Objectives:**

- Facilitation of comprehensive strategic plan (Third item in Accreditation process)
  - *Requested budget item for FY23*
- Facilitation and re-write of internal policy and procedures to include guidelines and tactical orders
  - *Requested budget item for FY23*

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Davidson Fire Department for their continued dedication to the department and the Town of Davidson. Their commitment to providing outstanding emergency response delivery to the citizens of Davidson does not go unnoticed. I am proud of the job that these men and women do every day for the citizens in this town. There are many items on the horizon in 2022 that bring excitement for the department. There is excitement surrounding the department as we continue to grow and improve our organization to ensure that our citizens are receiving the appropriate emergency service coverage.

If you have any questions or need further clarification about this report, please do not hesitate to reach out.



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