

TB(S) TA, AA, Clerk.
public

Fire Report
February 2023

Dear Town Board and administration,

As most of you are or have been aware, I've been on an excused absence from most duties as fire chief for the bulk of January and beginning of February. Joan has been enduring a long journey to what, in turn, became a miracle for her. To respect her privacy, I will try not to be the one giving out the details. When all is done and said, she will absolutely be sharing the gift she received, and there's talk she will want to educate others. I have, of course, been her caregiver throughout this with lots of help.

This week Thursday we will be returning to the island and I will resume full duties as chief, even though I haven't missed much thanks to all this technology we have.

This report not being shared with the Gazette.

Be safe.

Respectfully yours,
Rick Reichkitzer
Fire chief/Town of La Pointe



Fire Department
March 2023

I'm back from my excused absence in time to wish Captain Eldred a happy retirement. As with his retirement from the museum, he also has to say bon voyage to the fire department. We are hoping to get him to rejoin some day but, until then, we will be filling some big boots for the time being. He left us in great shape as far as his role as acquisitions officer. I'll never witness the ordering process for rebuilding an entire fire department again, but Captain Eldred did this without much complaint. 4 years out from the fire hall tragedy and we still stumble over items we lost and need to replace but that has slowed way down.

Jamie Murry at town hall will be helping a lot with the spreadsheets Red created to track our calls, runs, special tasks. That had its moments but it's a great tool for tracking our points for pay and our retirement plans. This has definitely saved a ton of paperwork that was generated for years. I will be working with Jaime on the process to get the needed run reports and such to her to keep the spreadsheet current.

Training officer Tyler Andreas has been keeping the troops occupied with very creative monthly training that he definitely puts some time and thought into. He's created almost games out of challenging the members to get acquainted with every apparatus and what's stored in them. This type of training/knowledge is priceless when on the many varieties of calls we are asked to respond to.

Assistant Chief Wiltz has a few hats with emergency services: he is our liaison with the EMTs as well as heading up ice rescue training and windsled activities involving rescue. He is a certified trainer of new members in ice rescue, whereas we used to have to hire trainers to get certified into ice rescue. He has certified two new members this winter, Kye Castillo and Nick Montanto hopefully I didn't butcher their names too bad. If you run into these guys, thank them for their commitment -- as ice rescue training is rewarded but the actual calls are generally very hard.

Next report, I'll give an exact update where we are at with the building process of the new pumper. Until then, be safe and enjoy the big snow melt.

Chief Reichkitzer

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MAR 10 2023

Initial: dg

Fire Chief's Report April 2023

Recent calls: downed powerlines. We had two calls for powerlines that were a result of the fine spring weather we've been enduring.

The first was on Schoolhouse Road in between Chippewa Trail and Kron/Dahlin Road. Called to my attention by the roads foreman, Pete Wiggins. Upon arrival I saw a large tree branch had taken out the neutral line and had the primary line pinned to the mountain of snow in the ditch, causing a lot of smoke and some flaming. I contacted Ashland dispatch to tone out the fire department and contact Xcel Energy. Due to limited ferry service, I was asked quite a few questions as what the power company needed for equipment and eventually sent pictures to they could come with the proper apparatus. The fire department closed a section of road and awaited their arrival. This section of line supplies 58 residents and carries 7,900v. Very dangerous, very live powerline in the snow.

Next morning, recieved a call for a downed powerline at Nebraska Row and Big Bay Road. I was responding from the north end of the island but was getting Intel the entire trip. This line left many people and businesses without power. The fire department blocked the area at 5 locations as we awaited Xcel Energy, with again compromised ferry service due to extreme conditions. This broken line was part of a 3-phase system and the dangling wire actually started the road (asphalt) on fire. The power company made it to the island and restored power again.

Consequences of the last call: When calling dispatch to inform them we were back in service, we had nothing but radio silence. Four tries later and a call to dispatch confirmed a bad situation. When the power came back online, it fried out something in our repeater station/antenna located on Miller Farm Road. Three firefighters spent a bit of time chiseling ice away from the entrance to the station and attempted to reset it with no luck. Many ideas later, we came up with an alternative tower on the mainland we could get dispatching from until DSC Communications in Superior could get a technician to the island. Long story short, they were here less than 24 hours later with a replacement repeater unit. These temporary barrowed parts come with little warranty,so we are awaiting a price for a replacement repeater/labor. Unfortunately, this cost will have to be endured by both the fire department/emergency services/Town of La Pointe. Probably the single most important piece of equipment for communication. I'll keep everyone posted on this. BTW, helmets off to DSC Communications for getting here and taking care of a huge problem immediately.

New pumper update -- Chassis is being delivered to our builder May 23rd. Our next payment will also be due on this date, I believe. The tank and pump will arrive there soon as well. Mid-June, it will be approximately 75% complete and a group of us will be visiting our new baby. Delivery pending for the end of July, and that will prompt our final payment.

Problems with new emergency services building –

1. Clean air system in equipment bay not functioning and needs attention immediately. We have to at some point quit relying on the builders and take care of problems ourselves.
2. Backup generator during the last power outage sounded horrible and that the only way to describe it. Needs attention immediately.

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APR 10 2023

Initial: cg

3. This year (like last) the ice from the roof destroyed the gutter system replaced last year with a new twist....This time it ripped off the snow retention systems over the entry doors and I'll guarantee as a builder we now have many holes in the roof. Hence a leaking roof that needs attention immediately. We need to install an engineered snow retention system before next winter. When the little section above the doors gave way, I don't need to say what would have happened if it came down as the door closed with someone leaving the building. Fairly large liability indeed.

Let's embrace the upcoming melting snow and be safe.

Chief Reichkitzer

TB(S), CLERK, ACCOUNTING, CLERICAL, TA, PUBLIC

**Fire Department Report
April 2023**

Fairly uneventful April except for the weather. The roads department did a good job of letting the fire department know of road conditions and closures. This information was spread to the department and we kept an ever-changing plan of how to respond to any property effectively, considering road and culvert conditions.

Big Water Apparatus has wrapped up work on the Husky wind sled. He installed a new battery maintainer and power system to keep our communication headsets always ready. He handed me some very melted wiring he removed from a previous attempt at adding equipment, another reason we hire professionals to keep our equipment safe and in running order.

We assembled our fire hose testing equipment and started testing our miles of hose lines. This is expected of every department, and we have a good start on completing this fairly large in-house task that should be done every 2 years.

Washburn DNR came to the island for our yearly wildfire refresher. As wet as it's been, a couple days of wind will dry up the vegetation from last year fairly quick. Springtime fire danger subsides as everything greens up again.

La Pointe Fire had a fine group of firefighters pay respect to Washburn's fallen fire chief, Mike Patterson, at a beautiful service at their fire hall.

That was April.

BE SAFE,
Chief Reichkitzer

Fire Department June 2023

Well spring has sprung. The fire department was more than ready for the wildfire season as normal. We have many tools at our disposal. Two trucks with "slide in" tank/pumps with many accessories. We always get a DNR tuneup/refreshers before the season begins. Crazy for how much snow and how wet it's been that we are actually in an elevated fire danger as we speak.

I give credit to the 90% of islanders who follow the safety guidelines put forth by the state concerning burning on your property. Anything bigger than 3'x3'x3' recreational fire in a fire ring needs a permit. These are easy to get online or at Town Hall. The yearly permit clearly states to call in for current conditions and daily burning guidelines. This permit is for a 6'x6'x6' fire and nothing more. Special permits for anything bigger can be issued from the DNR in Washburn.

As for the other 10% who don't care about these simple-to-obtain permits and calling the fire department to give us a heads up, there's an expensive DNR ticket that comes with a call from us. The first ticket is a slap on the wrist in my mind. But if the same property owner violates again, the next ticket is a trip to court with possible jail time. If our department has to respond to a non-permitted fire or if a permitted fire gets out of control, it costs the town a considerable amount of money. The ONLY exception to these rules is when we have 100% snow cover.

Recently I was made aware of a large construction fire near town that violated one of the main rules: You cannot leave a fire unattended period! We will contact the DNR for any questionable fires and they will definitely follow up with the person who started said fires.

I've had people reach out to me about what to do to lower the chance of wildfires on their property. The answer is simple: You take care of your own property to lower the risk to your buildings and acreage by cleaning up brush and dead trees and underbrush. Unfortunately, you have no control over your neighboring properties. So, once again, our fire department appreciates a call when you have your permit and are thinking of starting a fire (715-747-6913 or 715-209-1524). Many fires are called in by the ferry line and it takes a lot of resources to locate and deal with fires, whether they are permitted or not.

Be safe,
Chief Reichkitzer

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JUN 12 2023

Initial: dg

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**Fire Department Report
June-July 2023**

Well, the biggest thing on everybody's minds is the #1 pumper/engine replacement. Last month, a group of us went down to Osceola to visit the builder and new apparatus. Quite an experience, and it was good to see the inner workings of this fine machine.

Now the apparatus has made its way to the island and will slowly be put into commission. We have a 2-day tutorial by the builders coming up.

We only have 1 available position left to fill on our roster, and that is an amazing thing for any department.

We have sent our planning meeting minutes that lays out everything on our plates. These should be shared with the Town Board.

Be safe,
Chief Reichkitzer



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AUG 3 2023

Initial: _____

Fire Department Report
June-July 2023

Planning Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 19, 2023

Present: Andrew, Red, William, Alan, Lucas, Zach, Chris, Jeff, Jay, Rick, Nick, Marty

- 1. Prospective members.** Lucas still working on paperwork for Kevin Crawford. Lucas introduces Jack Nelson as another prospective member he is sponsoring. William Hagen introduces Lilah Guertin as a prospective member he is sponsoring. Jack and Lilah given the necessary paperwork. Both are advised that they are not members and cannot participate in any training or responses until the paperwork is complete and a vote of the members taken. Chief has met with Jack and will schedule a meeting with Lilah to get things going.
- 2. Training.** Tyler not present. New engine 1 expected to be delivered by next training meeting. There will be two days of 6 hours each training for all members to be provided by the builder; this will probably take the place of the regular training meeting for August. Details will be forthcoming. Future training needed for new radios and new MSA SCBA.
- 3. Fourth of July.** Rick okays sign-up sheet for truck cleaning/maintenance on July 3. Members who were present need to sign the sheet.
- 4. Apparatus.**
 - a.** E-1 to be delivered on Monday, July 31. It will not be put in service until the required training from the builder sometime in the following two weeks. Tyler to arrange for housing of truck at airport if available.
 - b.** Tracks are still on the UTV. No Action.
- 5. Safety Officer.**
 - a.** Chris will work with Tyler to get training in new MSA breathing apparatus.
 - b.** Tyler was to contact XCEL regarding power line training. No Action.
- 6. I.D. cards.** Red will follow up on with Maria Renz at Bayfield County EG about WICAMS info sent to her in March. No Action.
- 7. Drone program.** Alan still working on getting new pilots on-board. Chief emphasizes importance of drone program and pilots.
- 8. Rescue.**
 - a.** Ice Rescue: Jay will meet with ice rescue personnel this coming Sunday, August 23 at 10am to organize gear.
 - b.** Dive Rescue. Zach waiting on rest of new equipment; orientation to follow. Future training in shore-based helpers. Hydrotesting of cylinders: Zach to get info on cylinders needing hydro to Red.
- 9. Hose testing.** Notes from the hose testing already completed need to be given to Red for record keeping.
- 10. NIFRS reports:** Alan wants debriefing of every call at the following regular training meeting so that he can complete the reporting at that time. Major calls may be debriefed at a special meeting.
- 11. Fundraising.** Marty reports on planning for ES Ball. Be prepared to volunteer for one of the many jobs getting the ball set-up, running, and taken down.
- 12. 66.06 Fund.** Motion by A. Eldred to expend up to \$7,000 from the 66.06 fund for the change order for Engine 1. Seconded by M. Curry. Motion carries.

TB(S), CLERK, ACCT, CLERICAL, TA, PUBLIC

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT
August-September 2023

Calls update

7/28: Dispatching toned the fire department out @ 11:30 p.m. for a tree on fire just off the road to Grant's Point. Most of the crew thought automatically we were responding to a tree/powerline call. Nope, it was a tree a hundred yards into the woods that was struck by lightning and burning pretty good. Brian Nelson sprung into action with a trusty chainsaw and dropped a very sizable dead pine tree with the top on fire roughly 60' up. With a bit of effort and a bunch of tools, water, and manpower, we extinguished the fire and headed home well after midnight.

8/12: Another late-night brush fire out of control. Call came out as a structure fire on the lakeside of Sunny Slope Road. Shortly after, the same caller reported to dispatching that the people who started the "brush fire" had a permit and this was a "controlled burn" and we could stand down. We did not, as it looked like half of the woods was on fire. Chief ordered it to be extinguished. The permit was for a 6x6x6 fire. The people involved had 5 different fires going that added up to 1/4 acre of so. DNR was briefed of this, as it involved a repeat offender who has cost the town a lot of money over the years. Another call that got everyone home well after midnight. No matter how we discourage these "illegal fires," it still comes down to the same situations where they can't wait for 100% snow cover to clear property. Side note: This was 2 days after the Maui wildfires, so that was on everybody's minds as well.

8/16: Why not yet another late night "trees on powerlines" call after a storm rolled through. Chief was given a heads up from a couple of concerned towns folk via text. Upon arrival, Chief had dispatch tone out the fire department for traffic control/powerline safety protocol. Roads were closed, town text sent to public, and we prepared to wait for Xcel Energy. As this scene was being secured, we got another call for another tree/powerline on Hagen Road. Amazingly, Xcel got a truck over to relieve us. Last fire department crews back in service at 2:30 am. I like to follow up with Xcel; we were guarding very "live" electrical lines.

8/22: Dispatched to a remote location past the Town Park on lake side of Big Bay Road. The call came over as an area the "size of 2 bodies" was smoldering and smoking. The unusual terminology to describe this fire also prompted an impressive turnout by fire/EMS/law enforcement. Small area was indeed smoldering and was the remnants of a poorly extinguished campfire. The campers had been there for a few days, judging by the garbage left and the numerous "bathrooms" we dug up a large area that was mainly peat moss and pine tree needles to deal with the smoldering mess.

8/27: Guess what??? Another call to a remote location just past the Town Park for a smoldering area. And, yes, it was the exact location as the call on 8/22. Peat moss is sneaky when it comes to poorly extinguished campfires. This time we ran hose lines through the woods and dumped a bunch of water on an area the size of 2 bodies. We also used our thermal imaging technology to ensure we had indeed got to the root of the fire. There's a pun in there because there was a certain amount of roots/peat moss/pine needles.

9/2: Dispatch toned out two personnel and our drone pilot to Big Bay Town Park for a missing person. Drone was deployed and search also began on foot. Shortly after, subject was found via cellphone.

9/14: Dispatching toned out for tree/powerline near Equaysayway. Dispatch added that firefighter on scene made the 911 call. Protocol: Close roads to traffic and wait for Xcel Energy to relieve us.

9/17: This late night call involved a boat leaving the Beach Club restaurant's dock struck a parked ferry and ultimately became lodged under two parked ferries. It was obvious they were at a fairly high speed at the time of collision. People who witnessed the crash immediately went to the scene to help the driver and passenger. One of these good Samaritans was a probationary firefighter with assistance from bystanders and a few more Beach Club patrons. Emergency services arrived to an interesting situation. There was alcohol involved, but we waited for the Coast Guard's assistance. The Coast Guard, with help of ferry line crew members, dislodged the boat and tied it off at the nearest safe location. After 90 minutes of figuring out whose jurisdiction it was to deal with the driver of the boat, the Coast Guard assumed incident command. The driver was given field sobriety tests and a Breathalyzer by the Coast Guard. These tests were passed, and the driver and passenger were left to deal with their basically destroyed vessel. Chief Reichkitzer remained on scene mainly to assist the Coast Guard, as everything was thrown in their laps. The Wisconsin DNR were contacted early on by law enforcement but felt they didn't need to respond. Sort of a strange call with many jurisdictional issues but, in the end, nobody was seriously injured.

A big shout out to Marty Curry and his team that put on the best polka party ever. With the help of fire/EMS and many townspeople, we more than doubled our monetary goal of 15k that is earmarked by both the fire department and EMS for our repeater/communications issues. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU.

Our brand-new engine/pumper has been geared up and put into service. A small group has studied to become very proficient with the new apparatus and will pass the knowledge to the rest of the department. A large part of future training events, of course, will focus around our new apparatus.

Be safe,
Chief Reichkitzer

TB(S), CLERK, ACCT, OFFICE, TA, PUBLIC

**Fire Department Monthly Report
October 2023**

Continuing education with Engine 1. We drafted water direct from Lake Superior at the town dock ferry approach. We sprayed water from numerous hose lines and the deck-mount deluge "cannon"; we are super impressed with the performance of our new equipment. One outstanding feature is the communications headset radios that allow superior communication from the cab to pump panel to anywhere around the fire ground. We have these in the wind sleds as well but, on our main pumper, it is a truly amazing asset.

Most of the department (as well as the EMTs) took a 12-hour emergency vehicle operations class. This class started at 6:00 on a Friday night and went until 10 in the training room at the ESB. The following Saturday morning, a lot of us started at 7:00 helping the instructor set up 4 fairly hard obstacles courses. Everyone loves the forward and reverse serpentine where you weave in between cones that are placed rather close to each other. I witnessed a couple of our new prospects pretty much ace the courses, as well as the experienced drivers. It was a treat to train along with the EMTs, as we should. (Also saves the town money when we train together)

10/22: Fire department called out at 4 a.m. to assist the EMTs (lift assist). This went well.

10/25: Toned out for a chimney fire past Benjamin Blvd. on North Shore Road. Chief was first on scene for the fire department, with an EMT just ahead of me. I went in and gathered what information I needed from the homeowners. Next, I did a 360° of the house. Very tall, steep roofs are not a firefighter's best friend. I identified the absolute safest route for firefighters to get on the roof and near the chimney. It then seemed like a very long couple of minutes as the department arrived. (First active fire for Engine 1 and a few new prospects). It took 2 ladders to reach the top of the chimney. Ropes were used to get a hose line to the problem. In the end, it used less than 5 gallons of water -- and 7 or 8 fire extinguishers (most had been deployed by the smart homeowners). We debriefed the call last training session and, as always, had a few things we could have done differently with about the same results.

Daylight saving time is a good reminder to change batteries in your smoke detectors/alarms and also every home needs a carbon monoxide detector as well. These save lives.

Be safe, Chief Reichkitzer

**Fire Department
December 2024**

Quiet November except ongoing Engine #1 familiarization training that's been steady and ongoing since we received this beautiful piece of equipment. I noticed (for the record) smelling antifreeze fumes after running E1 and brought it to the attention of the apparatus head and lead engineer. They followed up by checking it over and contacting the builder. I am satisfied that it's not an issue but will continue monitoring, as it's in the line of duty.

We received notice that the Husky Windsled is 100%our responsibility when it comes to maintenance and storage of all equipment pertaining to the apparatus. We will still notify Arnie Nelson when we take it out of the hall for training purposes. We upgraded a number of issues last year and we feel it's ready to roll for this season. Jeff Hood will still be our "go to " mechanic for any issues.

We have replenished our chimney fire supplies for the next event.

It's been a good year of fairly intense training as usual, and helmets off to our training officer Tyler Andreas for making training intense and interesting at the same time.

Happy holidays and be safe.
Chief Reichkitzer

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DEC 7 2023

Initial: dg

**Fire Department
December 2023**

- **Calls: 0**
- **Training: SCBA confidence (basketball with air packs)**
 - **Member attendance: 19 members (3 excused absences, 7 non-excused)**
- **Planning meeting (non-mandatory): 4 members**

**Be safe.
Chief Reichkitzer**

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JAN 8 2024

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