

# 2024 Annual Report

Bracebridge Fire Department



## MESSAGE FROM THE BRACEBRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mayor Maloney and Members of Bracebridge Council,

On behalf of the Firefighters and staff of the Bracebridge Fire Department (BFD), I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report.

This overview provides a summary of the Fire Department's activities and achievements for 2024, highlighting key developments in service delivery and operational improvements. The Department remains committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community through enhanced emergency response capabilities and proactive fire prevention strategies.

In 2024, the Fire Department focused on enhancing our response capabilities, improving community engagement, and ensuring that Firefighters and staff had the training and resources required to excel in a wide range of emergency scenarios. From responding to fires to conducting fire prevention inspections and educational outreach, the Department played a vital role in safeguarding the town. Our commitment to providing exceptional service remains unwavering, as we work to address both immediate needs and long-term goals for the community.

This year, we continued to build upon the strategic direction set out in the Fire Master Plan, which has guided our operational improvements and resource allocation. With the support of the Town of Bracebridge and its leadership, we successfully implemented several key initiatives, including fleet upgrades, advanced training programs, and initiatives aimed at enhancing Firefighter safety and efficiency. These efforts are helping to ensure that the Department is prepared for the challenges ahead while maintaining a high standard of service.

Looking forward, the BFD remains focused on fostering strong relationships with the community and other emergency services. In 2025, we will continue to innovate, adapt, and improve to ensure we are providing the best possible protection to those who live, work, and visit in Bracebridge. This report provides a detailed account of our achievements in 2024 and highlights our ongoing commitment to service excellence and community safety.

I hope you find this Annual Report to be informative. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or a member of the team with any questions or concerns or if you require additional information.

Sincerely,



**Michael Peake**  
Deputy Fire Chief

# Primary goals and mission of the Bracebridge Fire Department

The goals and mission of the Bracebridge Fire Department are to provide fire protection services through a range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of residents and visitors from the adverse effects of fires or exposure to dangerous conditions created by man or nature;

- To the municipality,
- To those municipalities requiring assistance through authorized emergency fire service plans and programs (mutual aid) activities; and
- To those municipalities that are provided fire protection by the Fire Department via authorized agreement.





# Three lines of defence

Overall, the Department operates under the methodology of the “Three Lines of Defence” to promote public safety:



Public Fire and Life Safety Education



Fire Safety Standards and Code Enforcement



Emergency Response



# Organization of the department.

**Emergency  
Response**

**Fire Prevention  
and Public  
Education**

**Emergency  
Planning**

**Administration**

**Logistics  
Communications**

**Physical Assets**

**Training and  
Education**

# General Department Information

The Bracebridge Fire Department has a current roster of 54 staff members, as of December 31, 2024. This includes:

- Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief (vacant);
- Deputy Fire Chief;
- Fire Prevention Officer;
- Training Officer;
- Fire Inspection and Compliance Officer;
- Administrative Coordinator; and
- 48 Volunteer Firefighters.

In 2024, the Bracebridge Fire Department had the privilege of hosting three secondary school co-op students, Abigail Soeherman, Kayden Brown and Nolan Harbridge, as part of the Department's commitment to fostering the next generation of emergency services professionals.

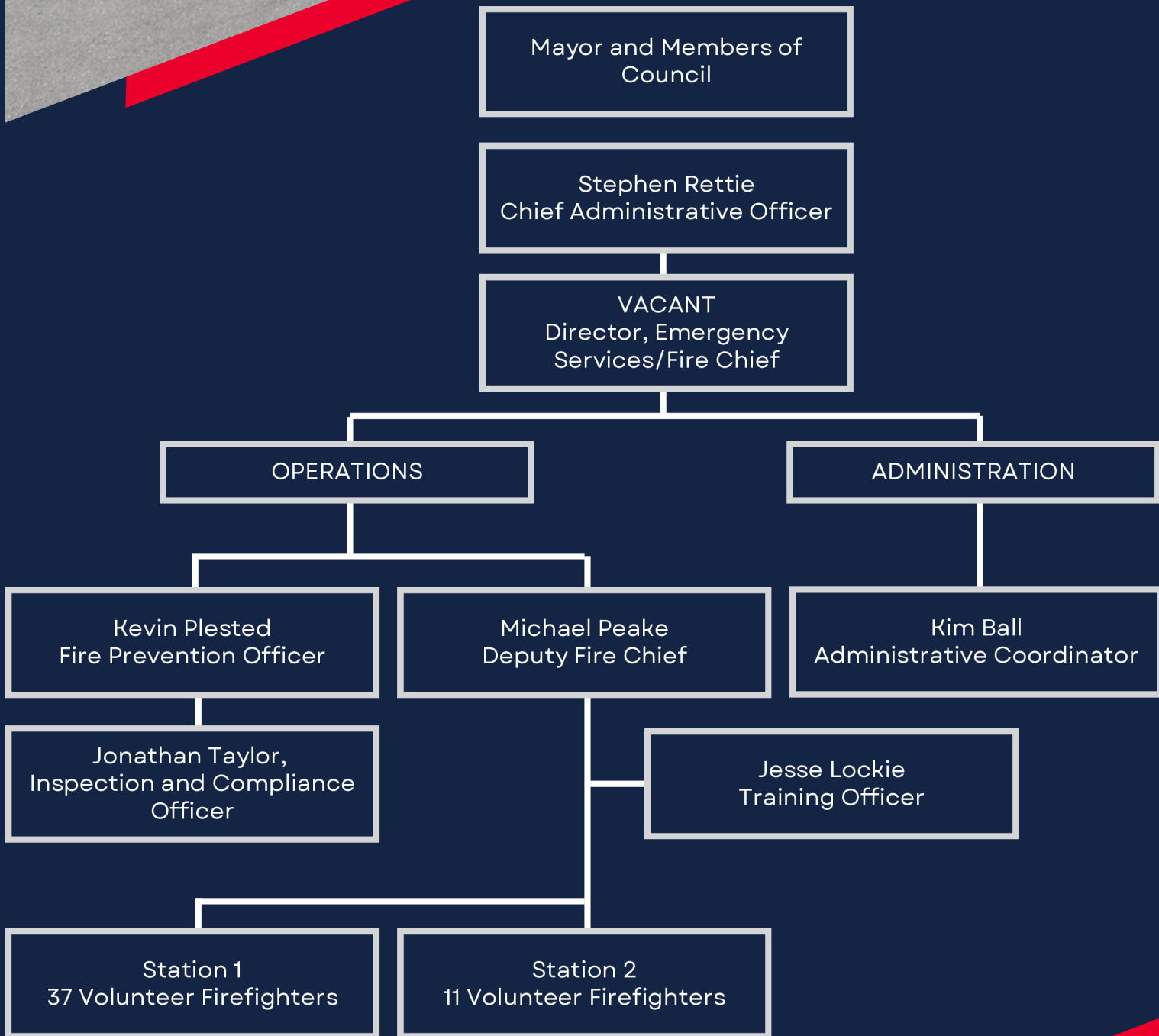
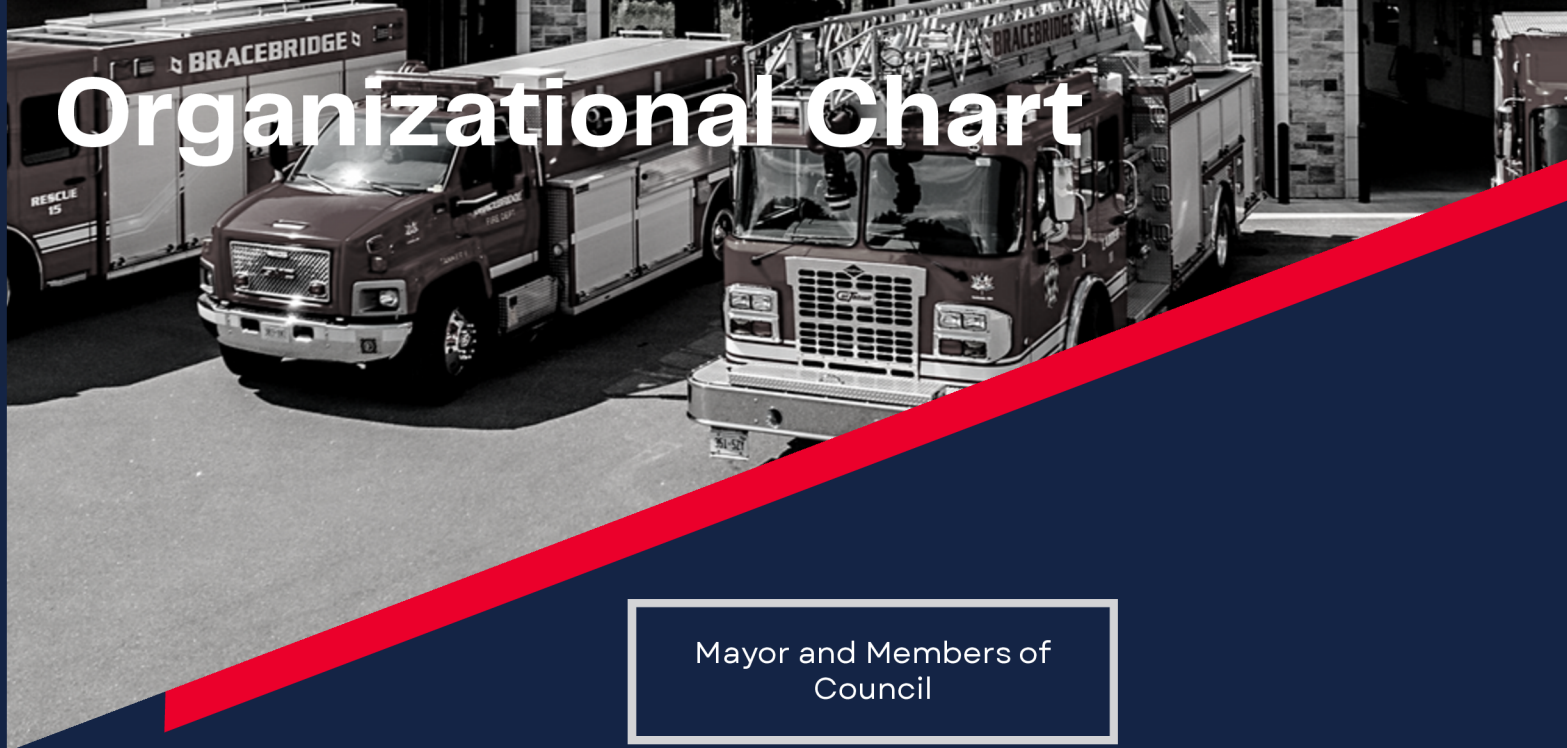
Abigail served her semester with the Department in many capacities, learning all aspects of what it takes to make the Fire Department function from administration to fire calls.

Nolan has successfully completed his placement and moved on to the next stage of his education and career.

Kayden will be returning for another semester in 2025, continuing his hands-on learning experience with the team.



# Organizational Chart



## Station 1

### Platoon 1

Rose Jackson (Acting Captain)  
Don Giroux (Acting Captain)  
Dwight Brown  
Jason Campbell  
Michael Cartwright  
Devin Garon  
James Heslinga  
Brad Jackson  
Alfie Napper  
Ryan Patenaude

### Platoon 3

Frank Mazzuca (Captain)  
Jesse Lockie (Captain)  
Matt Balfe  
Paul Beaton  
Max Davis  
Shayne Dowling  
Kate Kennedy  
Scott Kinsman  
Steve Larsen  
Matt Planeta

## Station 2

### Platoon 5

Jeremy O'Brien (Station Captain)  
Aaron Robbins (Acting Captain)  
Kyle Bartlett  
Emerson Blackman  
Mike Kelly  
Josh Kuehni

### Platoon 2

Steve Saunders (Captain)  
Adam Goodale (Acting Captain)  
Kelsie Austin  
Nathan Austin  
Dan Carty  
Amanda Flynn  
Kyle Kuzmyk  
Matt Lynett  
Marty Pomerleau

### Platoon 4

Mike Holotuk (Acting Captain)  
Rod Elliott (Acting Captain)  
Jeff Attwell  
Mike Baldwin  
Justin Corbett  
Steve Hooper  
Dan Kearns  
Ryan Kennedy  
Emma Taylor  
Jonathan Taylor

### Platoon 6

Kevin Lambert (Acting Captain)  
Adam Dubreuil  
Mike Ducharme  
Billy Mann  
Jackson Schmidt

## Retirements

Joe Hemmings	46 years of service
Jim Jackson	32 years of service
Kevin Ellis	18 years of service
Steve Traves	17 years of service
Steve Clarke	16 years of service



## Moving On

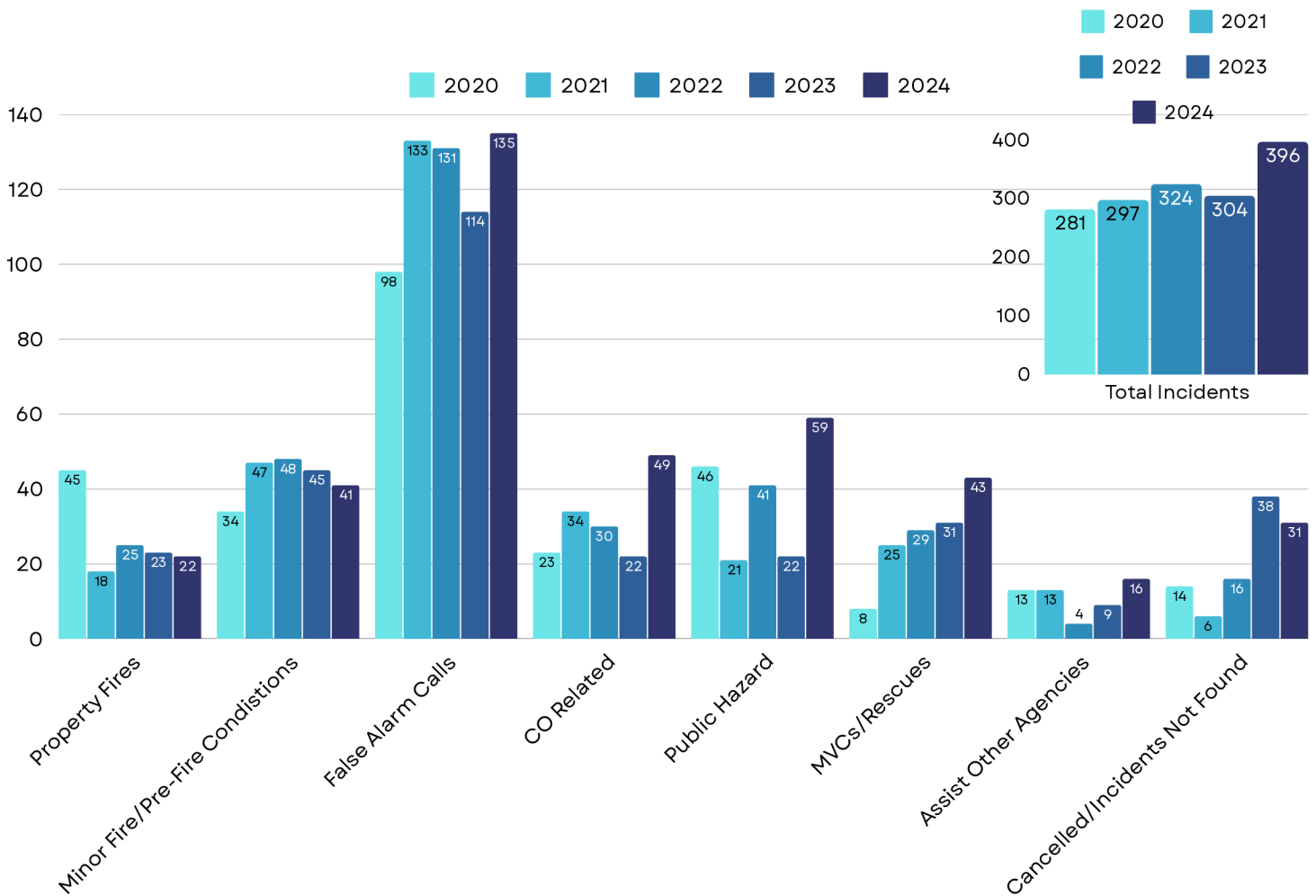
Thank you to Chris Tellier, Tristan Dunnett, and Ramtin Moulayi-Bazneh for their dedication and years of service.

# Emergency Response

The Bracebridge Fire Department responded to a total of 396 fire calls in 2024, marking a significant increase from the 304 calls in 2023. This 30% rise in call volume reflects the significant weather-related incidents in 2024 which resulted in increased response to issues with power lines and carbon monoxide (CO). False alarm calls returned to previously consistent levels after a drop in 2023. In addition, a temporary change to MVC response protocols had the Department responding to additional incidents where services may not have been required.

The Department continues to adapt to these increased needs by enhancing response capabilities, investing in staff training, and ensuring that our equipment is prepared to handle a diverse range of emergencies.

The chart below shows a five-year comparison of the Department's responses:



- **Property Fires:** residential, commercial and industrial structures, vehicle, and wildland fires.
- **Minor Fire/Pre-Fire Conditions:** minor cooking incidents, open air burning, garbage bin fires.
- **False Alarm Calls:** fire alarm equipment malfunctions, accidental activations, malicious or perceived emergencies.
- **Carbon Monoxide (CO) Related:** actual incidents with CO readings, as well as false alarm.
- **Public Hazard:** natural gas and propane leaks, hydro lines down on trees or across roadways.
- **MVCs/Rescues:** vehicle accidents, including those requiring extrication, water/ice, elevator and similar rescues.
- **Assist Other Agencies:** assistance to Muskoka Paramedics or OPP with gaining entry to residences or welfare checks in residences where breathing apparatus may be required. Mutual aid involves sending resources to assist a neighbouring community's fire department.
- **Cancelled/Incidents not found** calls cancelled by other agencies or incidents not located.

# Fire Prevention and Public Education

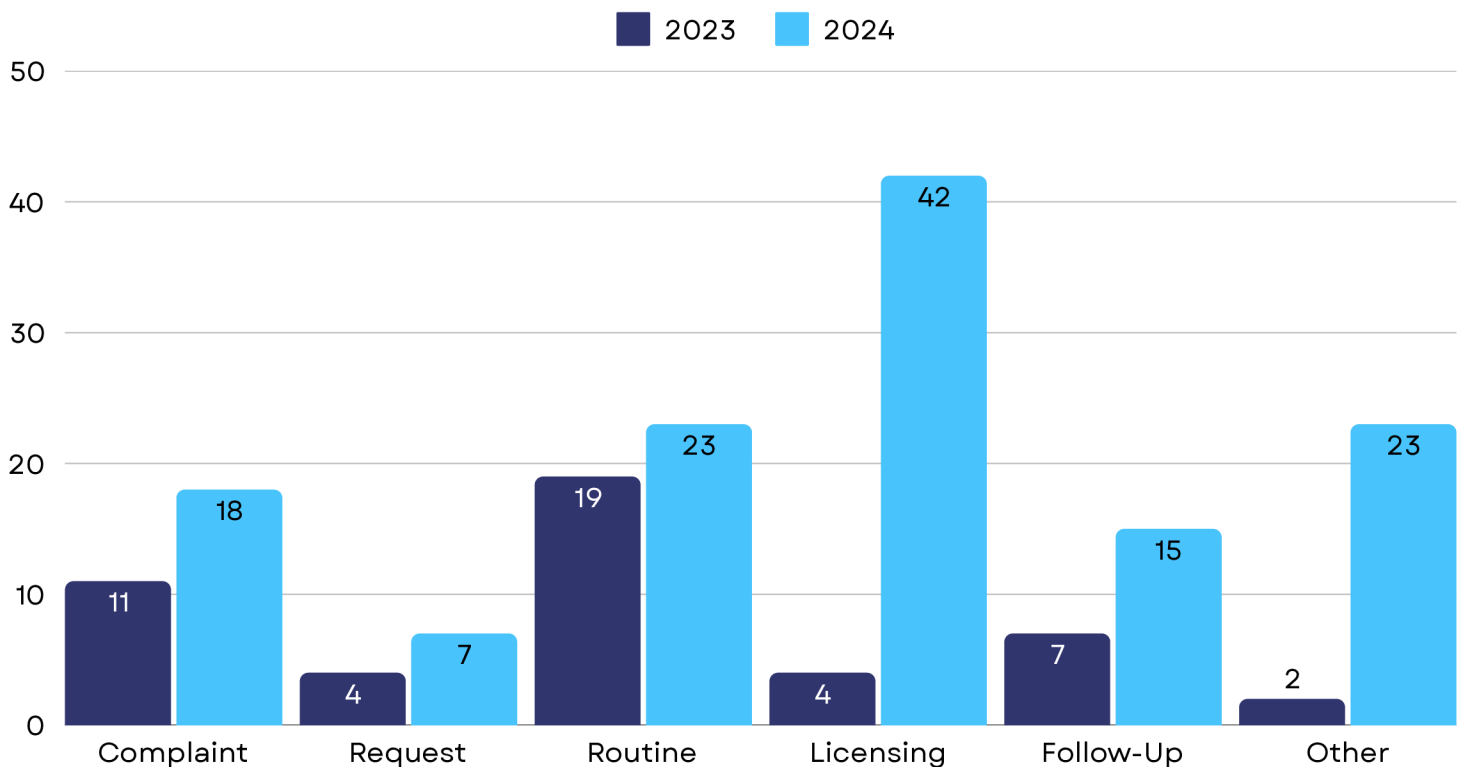
The Fire Prevention and Public Education team continues to build on the momentum of last year's increase in the number of inspections and the hours staff devoted to community engagement. This was accomplished with the addition of Jonathan Taylor into the Fire Inspection and Compliance Officer position mid-way through the year. Jonathan's current focus is on Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) inspections, smoke and CO alarm assistance and compliance as well as coordinating public education initiatives.



## Fire and Life Safety Inspections

The Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, and Ontario Regulation 365/13 (O. Reg. 365/13) requires that fire safety assessments and inspections, if necessary, be undertaken as directed by the Fire Marshal for: (1) every building for which a fire safety complaint is received; and (2) every building for which a request for assistance to comply with the Fire Code is received and the involvement of the Chief Fire Official is required.

In 2024, 128 inspections were conducted, resulting in a 172% increase over the previous year. Much of the increase was related to STRA inspections but included more increases in follow-ups and complaints received.



## Introduction of Short-Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) Inspections

With the introduction of the required STRA inspections and the approach to requiring an on-site inspection, deficiencies were discovered that were quickly corrected by 100% of the applicants. 71% of the properties had an issue with their fire extinguishers, not a requirement in a normal residence or cottage but required by the STRA by-law. Fire extinguishers were either the wrong size, not properly mounted or required maintenance. Staff also discovered issues with smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, with 32% of smoke alarms and 25% of carbon monoxide alarms either not installed to Fire Code requirements, requiring replacement batteries, or did not perform as expected when tested. While the focus of this year's inspection was ensuring devices were installed correctly, staff took the opportunity to educate STRA operators about their obligations for documentation. This was to ensure the required checks, tests and inspections are documented properly and will be one of the main items reviewed by staff during their required annual inspections in 2025.

With the new Fire Prevention Policy now in place, updated by the Establishing and Regulating By-law, staff worked on an approach to coordinate the added proactive inspections. Staff continue to make education the priority to ensure building owners understand their responsibilities found in the Ontario Fire Code and the department has received positive feedback from those building owners. The understanding of why those responsibilities are important for the safety of occupants; the consequences if those responsibilities are ignored; and the understanding that they can contact the department at anytime to ask questions without fear of discipline. The Department continued to benefit from existing and newly formed relationships with many community support agencies that assist vulnerable residents. Residents that may have disabilities, mobility issues, mental impairments, medication changes or sub-standard housing need the most attention. Staff will continue to build on these relationships and work towards programs to help these residents as much as possible.



### **Complaint Inspections**

A complaint may be received from several sources including: the public, outside agencies or government ministries. Complaint inspections are focused on the fire safety concern that has been raised to determine if the complaint is justified. This type of inspection may not address every hazard on the property.

### **Request Inspections**

Requests for inspections are to assist owners to comply with fire safety legislation, including when certain provisions of the Fire Code require the approval of the Chief Fire Official. This type of activity assists in improving the fire safety of properties in the community and allows the property owner to propose alternate means for compliance for certain Fire Code requirements.

### **Routine Inspections**

Routine inspections are usually performed annually as required by the Fire Code or other legislation. Current routine inspections include vulnerable occupancies (nursing homes, retirement homes or other care facilities), schools and recreational camps.

### **Licensing Inspections**

Licensing inspections are performed upon request, primarily for acquiring liquor or daycare licenses to ensure those businesses are meeting their Fire Code obligations.

### **Follow-up Inspections**

These inspections are completed because of our fire suppression crews being dispatched to an address for an incident and they determine that further follow-up by the Fire Prevention division is required to address any fire safety issues. These inspections may not require a site visit and may not address every hazard on the property.

### **Other**

The remainder of the inspection types include consultations with the building department on new construction, public consultations, safety concerns brought forward by care provider agencies and smoke/CO alarm checks performed by the Fire Prevention division.

# Public Education

Public Education initiatives continued to expand in 2024. The Department spread fire safety messaging through new and conventional methods, totaling 599.75 documented staff/Volunteer Firefighter hours allotted to these activities. The program strives to educate as many diverse groups as possible, while also attempting to improve on rural and identified at-risk properties or populations. Bracebridge Firefighters had the opportunity to attend several on-site public events in 2024 to connect with community members of all ages one-on-one about fire and life safety. These events included but were not limited to:

- Vankoughnet Family Day Event;
- Muskoka Pioneer Power Annual Show;
- Santa's Village Hero Days (summer and fall);
- Wood Lake Regatta;
- Bracebridge Fall Fair and Horse Show;
- Canada Day Celebration;
- Festival of Lights;
- Santa Claus Parade;
- Annual Bracebridge Famers Markets ;
- Bonnie Lake Resort Family Safety Day;
- See Muskoka Through Our Eyes Annual Powwow;
- Muskoka Arts and Crafts Show;
- EarlyON Touch a Truck; and
- Multiple school events.



## Smoke/CO Alarm Door-to-Door Campaign

This year's campaign continued to focus on quality interactions with the public over quantity and members were still able to increase the number of doors knocked on to 274 from 202 in 2023. The campaign ran a trial to measure the effectiveness of going door-to-door in our rural areas. 32 homes were visited in the Vankoughnet area, less than can be accomplished in more densely populated areas, but proved to be a success to be able to expand on the program in 2025.

Firefighters were encouraged to spend more time speaking to residents, involving children whenever possible, and not limiting their conversation to just smoke/CO alarms. There was continued geographical focus on the older areas of town where many houses were built before smoke alarms were required by law. Some newer homes areas were also included in the campaign that may be up for their 10-year recommended replacement. During the campaign, firefighters made contact at 144 residences (up from 110 in 2023) and left fire safety information with all.



## Test Your Smoke Alarm Day & Fire Prevention Week

On September 28, the Bracebridge Fire Department took part in Saved By The Beep formally known as Test Your Smoke Alarm Day, a vital initiative that encourages residents to test and maintain their smoke alarms, educate themselves on alarm safety and home fire escape planning. Members of the Fire Prevention Team joined forces with the Moose FM and provided facts, common misconceptions and a few stories over the course of two hours.

This year's Fire Prevention week followed shortly after with the theme, Smoke Alarms: Make them work for you! Information focused on the importance of installing, testing and replacing smoke alarms in the home. Members of the Fire Prevention team collaborated with Moose FM to provide facts, stories and some fun trivia to members of the community. On the last day of Fire Prevention Week, members of the Prevention Team were invited to the Muskoka Bears Junior C hockey game, where they dropped the ceremonial smoke alarm puck.

Both initiatives were promoted on social media via the Town of Bracebridge and Bracebridge Fire channels, with media and radio interviews, fire safety displays in Town facilities and community mailboxes in the rural areas and some in-person events.



# Emergency Planning

In November, the Bracebridge Fire Department participated in an important emergency planning exercise designed by The Loomex Group. This two-hour simulation allowed members of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) to review and discuss their roles, as outlined in the Town's Emergency Response Plan (ERP), in the context of a cyberattack incident. The exercise provided a valuable opportunity for participants to collaborate, share concerns, and explore potential solutions in response to a simulated escalating emergency scenario. The discussion was further enhanced by the support of the District of Muskoka Information Technology Services team, ensuring a well-rounded and informed dialogue on managing a cyber-related crisis.

In addition to the annual provincial compliance activities, several Town of Bracebridge staff members took the initiative to further educate themselves in Emergency Management through the following courses:

- Incident Management System 100, two attendees
- Incident Management System 200, three attendees
- Basic Emergency Management EM 200, five attendees
- Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC), three attendees

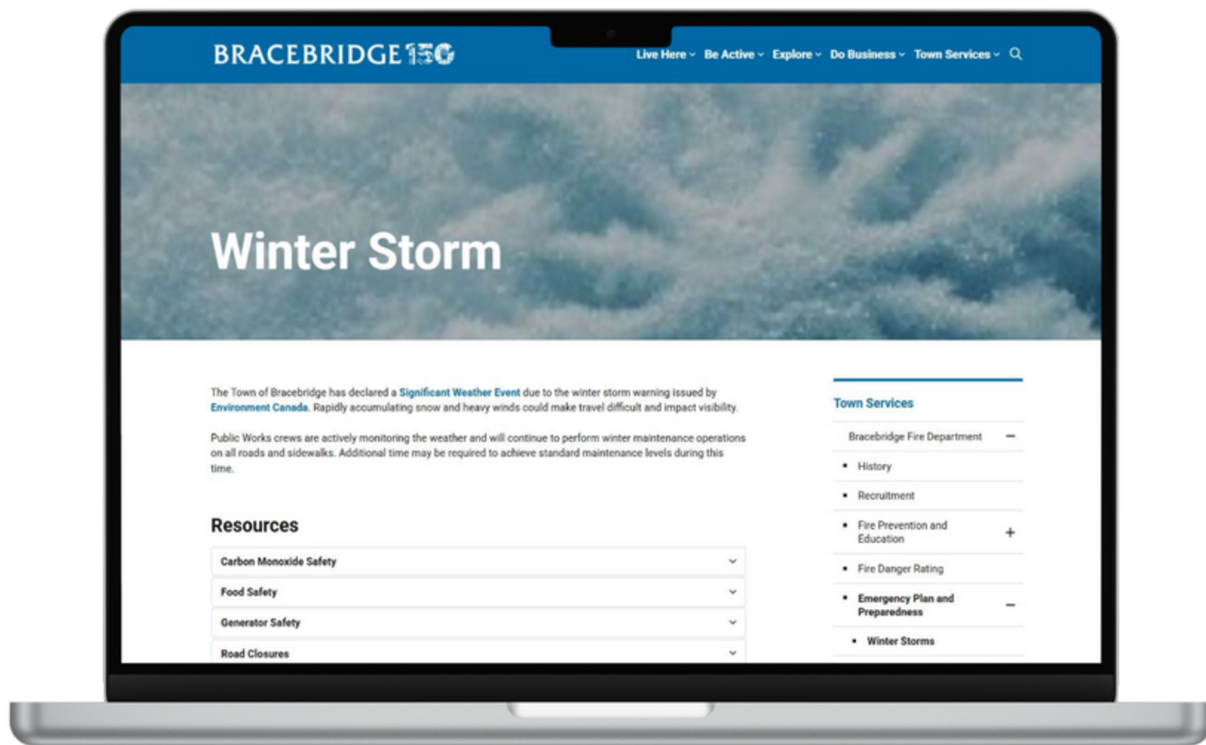
In November, the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) and the alternate CEMC met with staff from the Muskoka Lumber Community Centre to assess how the facility fit into the Town's Emergency Response Plan. The discussion focused on determining how the new space could be utilized, either as an alternate Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or as an evacuation centre, depending on the nature of the incident. This collaborative planning ensures that the community is well-prepared to respond to emergencies with appropriate facilities and resources in place.

Several important updates were made to the Appendices of the Town's Emergency Response Plan. Notably, there was a thorough review and update of the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA), ensuring that potential risks to the community are accurately identified. Additionally, the Critical Infrastructure (CI) list was carefully reviewed and updated. In addition, enhanced hazard specific Action Plans were developed in 2024, aligning with the municipality's HIRA. These updates play a crucial role in strengthening the Town's overall emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

## Emergency Preparedness Public Education Summary

Throughout the year, the Town of Bracebridge continued its focus on Emergency Preparedness Public Education in the areas that align with the Town's HIRA. Most public education was social media based, which included paid/sponsored ads along with regular posts. A radio campaign was also initiated for Emergency Preparedness Week and included a give-a-way of a 72-hour emergency kit.

In August, the Town launched a new website. The dedicated Emergency Preparedness Page highlights the Voyent Alert app, along with education around disasters aligned with Town's HIRA. One of the ongoing goals of the Emergency Information Officer (EIO) team is to develop "pop-up" webpages that can be utilized during specific emergencies. So far, the team has developed a focused flood page and a winter storm page that highlights important safety messages, resources and more. These pages sit dormant in the back end of the website but can be easily updated and published as the need arises, saving staff resources during an emergency. The winter storm page was used as a resource during the weather event experienced at the beginning of December 2024.



# Administration



Business Plan Projects

## 2024 Business Plan Projects

### Project FD-01: Complete station location analysis and site acquisition for Fire Station 2

Based on the recommendations contained in the Fire Master Plan and Motion 22-GC-079/080 (Internal Feasibility Study for the Replacement of Fire Station 2), complete additional location analysis and provide Council with recommendations regarding site acquisition.

Lead: Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief

2024 Budgetary impact – \$250,000 (funded from DC’s and reserve)  
Motion 24-GC-093/094 was ratified by Council on May 15, 2024.

COMPLETE

### Project FD-02: Develop a concept plan and community consultation plan for Station 2

Based on the recommendations contained in the Fire Master Plan and Motion 22-GC-079/080 (Internal Feasibility Study for the Replacement of Fire Station 2), complete additional location analysis and provide Council with recommendations regarding site acquisition.

Lead: Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief

2024 Budgetary impact – \$50,000 (funded from reserve)

COMPLETE

### Project FD-03: Develop a location and implementation plan for static water source fill sites

Work with internal and external partners to identify six sites, equipment types, maintenance plans and an implementation plan for static water fill sites. Purchase and install equipment at two sites.

Lead: Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief

2024 Budgetary impact – \$30,000  
Expected completion – 2025 as of 2024 Q3 update; subsequent update: project paused.

### Project FD-04: Review of Fire Department software and hardware short- and long-term needs

A review of current and future software and hardware needs for all fire service operations, including dispatching, will be conducted resulting in recommendations for the purchase and implementation of new systems in 2025.

Lead: Fire Prevention Officer

2024 Budgetary impact – Nil  
COMPLETE

# Station 2 Relocation

An important project for the Fire Department is the relocation and construction of the new Bracebridge Fire Station 2. This project is driven by the need to ensure the Department's operations remain efficient as the community continues to grow and develop and was identified as a major initiative in the 2021 Fire Master Plan.

At the May 7, 2024, General Committee Meeting, Terry Gervais from The Loomex Group presented the findings of the Fire Station 2 Relocation Report which included an in depth data analysis and business case supporting the recommendation to relocate Fire Station 2 to Uffington Park (1002 Uffington Road). Subsequently, General Committee (and later) Council approved the following motion (24-GC-093/094) providing direction to staff to move forward with the project as follows:

- That the property described as Lot 20, Concession 7, Draper Ward, Town of Bracebridge, known as Uffington Park (1002 Uffington Road), be selected as the future site for Fire Station 2.
- That the Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief, in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Finance/Treasurer, be authorized to conduct a pre-qualification process and Request for Proposals for a design-build contract for the design and construction of a new Fire Station 2 and related site servicing, based generally on the concept design as set out in Appendix "D".
- That the estimated cost of the design-build contract for a new Fire Station 2 be included in the draft 2025-2034 Long Term Capital Plan.
- That Staff be authorized to apply for any applicable capital equipment and infrastructure grants related to the project and that the Mayor and Director of Corporate Services/Clerk be authorized to execute such contracts, agreements or other documents required to receive grant proceeds.
- That public engagement, regarding functions and amenities of the 1002 Uffington Road site and facility, be undertaken prior to the final design receiving approval.
- That the Director of Emergency Services/Fire Chief report back to General Committee with recommendations for public consultation and potential future use or disposal of the existing Fire Station 2 property located at 3448 Highway 118 East.



To engage the community and gather feedback, the Department held two public consultation sessions in July 2024 where residents had the opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. Additionally, a stakeholder meeting was held in July with government representatives, key organizations and community partners to discuss the impact of the relocation and address any logistical or operational considerations.

In August 2024, a Firefighter focus group was convened to gather insights from the Department's personnel, ensuring the new location would meet operational needs and support Firefighter safety and effectiveness. The feedback from these discussions highlighted important factors such as equipment accessibility, station layout, and safety protocols. This collaborative approach ensured that all perspectives were considered in the final design and layout of the Station.

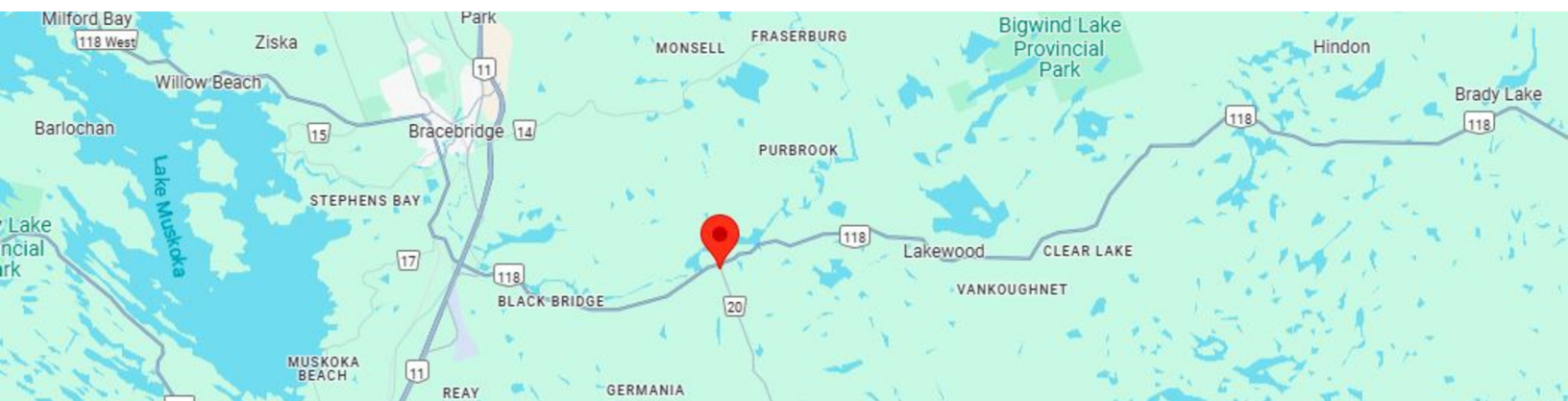
The 2025 – 2034 Long-Term Capital Plan was presented and approved (as amended) by Council in September 2024. The Capital expenses for the construction of Fire Station 2 were allocated to the years 2028/2029, along with the following update:

The Town is proceeding with the relocation of Bracebridge Fire Station 2 to a new facility to be constructed at 1002 Uffington Road, as approved by Council on May 15, 2024. Previously, staff had estimated the cost of the new Fire Station 2 to be approximately

\$3,050,000. This costing, which was included in the 2024-2033 Long Term Capital Plan, was preliminary in nature. Staff have updated and refined the estimated cost of the new Fire Station 2 to reflect movement in the construction industry in both supply chain and labour.

Updated square footage estimates indicate that the cost of construction would be approximately \$475 per square foot for the building, including site works. Based on an 8,000 square foot building, the estimated cost would be equal to \$3,800,000. Including the construction of a driveway and contingency, the all-in estimated cost for the project would increase to \$4,450,000. With the draft Long Term Capital Plan now in place, staff have better visibility regarding the anticipated capital spending needs across all Departments, and how the updated costing for Fire Station 2 fits into the Town's consolidated capital funding strategy. Based on current information, capital expenditures for Fire Station 2 are estimated to occur from 2028-2029. Staff will continue to work on preparing the pre-qualification documents and other planning tasks needed to get the project into a shovel ready state, allowing the Town to take advantage of any grant opportunities or unexpected changes to other projects that could be used to accelerate the timing of the work.

The 2025 Municipal Budget and Business Plan includes activities around preparing documents for the pre-qualification process.



# Logistics Communications

An area of focus on Logistics Communications was created late in 2023 with the updated Establishing and Regulating By-Law to oversee the dispatching and technology services for the Department.

As part of Staff Report FD008-24, a review of the Department's current radio system was performed which identified some improvements to enhance rural communication functionality and on-scene Firefighter communications. New radio equipment for some vehicles was purchased using existing 2024 funding while the full rollout is included in 2025 budget. Enhancements to interoperability are included for 2025 implementation to communicate more effectively with neighbouring fire department partners during mutual calls for assistance.



# Physical Assets



The Department responds out of two stations.

- Fire Station 1 at 225 Taylor Road is the primary station that houses the full-time staff and four Platoons; and
- Fire Station 2 at 3448 HWY 118 East that has two platoons.

The Department's fleet consists of:

- Two pumper trucks;
- Three water tankers;
- One rescue truck;
- One ladder truck;
- Four 4X4 rapid response units;
- One Command Vehicle (new in 2024); and
- One fire boat that is berthed on Lake Muskoka during the ice-out months.



## 2024 Highlight

In 2022, a new 2500-gallon tanker was pre-tendered. The tanker, known as Tank 8, arrived in July of 2024, and is a significant upgrade from the previous apparatus of 1,500-gallons. Due to the increased size and capacity, all Department drivers were properly trained and familiarized with the operation of the vehicle before it was put into service.

## 2024 Equipment Upgrades and Lifecycle Replacements

- **Five sets of structural bunker gear** were purchased to replace expired bunker gear. Bunker gear has a 10-year service life from the manufacture date.
- **One Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)** adding to the new total of 25 SCBA's.
- **73 SCBA cylinder sleeve covers** to protect cylinders from damage;
- **18 structural fire helmets** to replace expired helmets. Helmets have a 10-year service life from their manufacture date;
- **Two fire suppression tools** (Green Port FST), handheld devices used to extinguish a fire in the event no water is readily available;
- **30 SCBA Blast Masks**, devices used to simulate the regulators on SCBA's. Allows Firefighters to simulate they are using air from a cylinder and increases cardiovascular endurance through training;
- **One additional thermal imaging camera**, aids Firefighters when searching in low visibility environments.
- **One motor mount and 2.5 horsepower boat motor** for the rapid deployment craft used for water rescue;
- **Two 65 mm smooth bore nozzles** which allow Firefighters to apply a greater volume of water;
- **Six personal flotation devices** to add to the inventory of water rescue equipment;
- **One flotation kit** for the rescue basket to assist with water rescue operations;
- **Eight water rescue helmets**;
- **10 water rescue throw bags**;
- **Two additional ice commander suits** for water rescue;
- **10 SCBA Masks**. Additional masks for recruit Firefighters; and
- **One set of pulling chains** for the auto extrication spreader tool.



# Training and Education



# Regular Training

Regular Departmental training occurs on Monday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. In 2024, Fire Department personnel spent a total of **2,666 staff hours** training in over 93 sessions.

Subjects included:

- Ground ladders;
- Health and Safety Legislation training;
- Fire pre-planning;
- Surface water rescue;
- Ice water rescue;
- Flammable cylinder fires;
- Firefighter survival;
- Search and rescue operations - vent, enter, isolate, search;
- Map reading;
- Portable and wildfire pumps;
- Rescue tool proficiency;
- Hose testing;
- WHMIS;
- Power saws;
- Carbon monoxide awareness;
- Emergency vehicle driver training;
- First Aid/CPR/AED recertification;
- Hazardous materials/emergency response guide;
- Self-contained breathing apparatus;
- Proper protective gear decontamination;
- Rural water supply;
- Pumper operations;
- Radio communications;
- Vehicle extrication;
- Fire boat training;
- Water operations;
- Smoke alarm education;
- Rapid intervention teams (RIT);
- Fire hose deployment;
- Lithium-ion battery awareness;
- Wildland fire operations (SP103);
- Recruit live fire;
- Forcible entry;
- Fire Alarm and Detection Systems;
- Mock structure fire using an acquired structure;
- Fire origin and cause determination;
- Ropes, webbing and knots; and
- Multi-storey hose operations.



# Specialized Training

Additional fire certification courses that were completed in 2024 through fire Regional Training Centres and in-house training include:

- NFPA 1035 Fire and Life Safety Educator Level 1 (one member)
- NFPA 1035 Public Information Officer (two members)
- Courtroom Procedures (two members)
- NFPA 1031 Fire Inspector Level 1 (one member)
- NFPA 1006 Common Passenger Vehicle Operations/ Technician (three members)
- NFPA 1021 Fire Officer Level 1 (three members)
- NFPA 1041 Fire Instructor Level 1 (three members)
- NFPA 1521 Fire Safety Officer (one member)
- NFPA 1002 Pump Operator (eight members)
- Driver Certification Program. (three members)
- NFPA 1006 Water Rescue Awareness (50 members)
- DZ license through in house training (10 members)
- Mobile Live Fire Training Unit (24 members + Deputy Mayor Rhodes!)



# Mandatory Certification

As of July 1, 2022, the Office of the Fire Marshal has legislated mandatory certification for Ontario Fire Departments, with requirements that must be completed by 2026 and 2028.

For the level of service of the Bracebridge Fire Department, by 2026, Firefighters are required to have NFPA Firefighter 1001 Level 1 and 2; and Fire Officers are required to obtain NFPA Fire Officer Level 1 or 2 depending on rank. In addition, some members must be certified in other areas such as NFPA 1521 Incident Safety Officer and NFPA 1002 Pump Operator, NFPA 1035 Fire and Life Safety Educator based on their rank or function in the Department.

By 2028, any technical rescue certifications must be in place to comply with mandatory certification. For the Bracebridge Fire Department, the NFPA 1006 Surface Water/Ice Water Rescue will be an area of focus for the next few years in order to meet certification requirements.

The Bracebridge Fire Department hires certified or uncertified recruits who are trained to complete their NFPA 1001 Firefighter Level 1 and 2 by the end of their recruitment. This recruitment process takes approximately four to six months to complete with the combination of self-study, practical training, and testing, and is normally part of a Muskoka-wide recruit training process.

The Department held a full recruitment drive in the winter of 2024, and subsequently hired nine Firefighters for Station 1 and three Firefighters for Station 2. Ten of the twelve hired firefighters completed an in-house NFPA 1001 Level 1 and 2 Programs in 2024. Two of the recruits moved away during the recruitment. The Department hired five certified recruits for Station 1 in January 2024, who completed a “fast-tracked” training in early 2024 and started responding to emergencies by February.

The Department hired a total of seventeen recruit Firefighters in 2024.



# Happily Ever After

This year, there was more than smoke in the air. Station 1 played host to a truly special event. Two Volunteer Firefighters, Kelsie Marsh and Nathan Austin, set hearts ablaze as they celebrated their beautiful wedding surrounded by family, friends, and fellow Firefighters.

Station 1 was transformed into a stunning fire department-themed venue, creating a memorable and unique setting for the occasion. Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Austin, all the best on a lifetime of love and happiness.



# Conclusion

Looking forward, the Bracebridge Fire Department will continue to prioritize training, innovation, and collaboration to ensure that the Department is always prepared for the challenges ahead. In 2025, the Department will focus on further enhancing operational capabilities, updating key policies, and continuing to foster strong relationships within the community.

Thank you to Council, the community and to the dedicated Volunteer Firefighters who support the Bracebridge Fire Department every day.

