

# Wausau Fire Department Monthly Report

## April 2022



(4/28/2022 – Bring your son/daughter to work day)

## **Fire Chief Report by Robert Barteck**

Welcome new Council Members! I hope you find the Fire Department's monthly report educational and informational. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or want more details on any data or topics.

The April monthly report highlights some exciting topics. EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson highlights paramedic training related to pediatric patients and an interesting EMS call. Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp shares a story of how crews recently successfully saved pets from a house fire. Training Division Chief Dave Briggs shares how we use lessons learned from a line of duty death to be better firefighters. He also shares experiences attending the largest firefighter's conference in the world. And Fire Marshal Brian Stahl discusses fire prevention education efforts and the dangers of smoke in the home.

For my Fire Chief report, I would like to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) fund requests that I submitted to the Finance Committee and were addressed in the April 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. The city has received 15.6 million dollars from ARPA. It is in determining the best way for the city to spend the money to have the most significant positive impact on the community, which is no easy task. I submitted two requests to use these funds on behalf of the fire department.

### **Additional Firefighter/Paramedics:**

In November of 2021, I made a presentation to the Common Council that highlighted the difficulties the department is experiencing related to 50 years of stagnant staffing levels and increasing call volume. Here are a few quick bullet points on the topic:

- 1970 was the last time the fire department increased staffing.
- 1970 to 2022, call volume has tripled.
- 1970 to 2022, the department has added many services, including Paramedic level EMS transport coverage which is now 90% of the department's workload.
- November 8, 2021, I presented the staffing problems the department is facing to the Common Council.
- November 15, 2021, the Public Health and Safety Committee unanimously approved hiring at least nine additional firefighter/paramedics.
- December 13, 2021, the Human Resources examined the deployment models and unanimously approved hiring 12 additional Firefighter/Paramedics
- January 11, 2022, the Finance Committee took up the funding of the firefighter/paramedics. The committee unanimously approved the Fire Chief to apply for a Staffing for Effective Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant for 9 of the 12 positions. The committee tabled the discussion on funding the remaining three positions until a later date.
- February 3, 2022, I submitted the SAFER Grant to FEMA.
- April 26, 2022, I submitted a request to the Finance Committee for \$700,000 of ARPA funding to pay for 3 of the additional firefighter/paramedic positions for the first 2.5 years. The Committee will now rank and consider the request at future meetings.

The future of the additional firefighter/paramedic positions will require funding allocation from the Finance Committee before the topic can move to the Common Council. If the SAFER Grant funding request is unsuccessful, the Finance Committee will need to create a contingency plan for funding all 12 of the positions.

### **Station One Replacement Land Acquisition:**

On April 26, 2022, I proposed to the Finance Committee to use \$815,000 of ARPA funds to purchase the property located at 811 & 813 Grand Ave, on Floral Ln and Grand Ave. Commonly referred to as the Flower Shop Property because Wausau Floral conducted business there for 40+ years. This 2.19-acre lot has long been identified as the best option to move Fire Station One to eventually.

During the 2015 assessment of all three fire stations, Station Two and Station One were identified as needing to be replaced. Being the higher priority, Station Two was replaced with a small outlying station on land the city already owned with no room for administrative offices. Station One has received some repairs to keep the station functional for a few more years but has reached the end of its life span as a fire station. It needs to receive a complete remodel and rebuild or be replaced. With eh Wausau Police Department busting at the seams for space, it makes the best sense for the city to begin planning to replace Fire Station One. This project will take several years to accomplish. The planning and land acquisition need to start immediately to be prepared for the future.

The 2015 response time studies completed determined that Station One is near the perfect location for a timely response within its response district. Station One needs to be along the Grand Avenue corridor with access to the Thomas Street bridge to ensure equally fast response times to all the neighborhoods within its district. Unfortunately, there is only one parcel of vacant property within that area, the flower shop property. The purchase of the property will be long-range cost savings for the community because it will not have to pay for properties that have homes or businesses on it and then tear down those structures to build the fire station.

While the \$815,000 price for the flower shop property sounds high, the City Assessor Rick Rubow has informed me that property in this city area sells for \$7 to \$9 per sq foot. The \$815,000 equates to \$8.67 per sq foot, which falls within the fair market price. The property is on the open market and could be sold before the city can acquire the parcel, forcing the city to purchase homes or businesses in the Grand Ave/Thomas St area. The topic will be discussed again at the May 10 Finance Committee meeting.

To assist us with good data about why the station needs to be replaced, I have asked Five Bugles Design to refresh their analysis of Station One in 2015 and conduct a complete evaluation of the station. They will have their team of engineers conduct inspections of the station's infrastructure and conduct a long-term usage study of the station. The report from Five Bugles Design is expected in late June.

Thank you for reading our monthly operations report. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions or would like to see other topics pulled into future reports.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Barteck". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Robert Barteck – Fire Chief

## EMS Division by EMS Division Chief Jared Thompson

April was an action and rewarding packed month for the EMS Division:

### Training

The EMS Division was able to send 4 of our firefighter/paramedics to the American Heart Association Instructor classes for Pediatric Advanced Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, and Basic Life Support at Northcentral Technical College. All three of these classes were eight hours in length and are designed to prepare the participant to teach the class. Having additional instructors in our department helps us to meet the certifications that are required to stay current with our EMT and Paramedic licensures. This is the first time in department history that we will have a strong American Heart Association Instructor certification presence.

For the month of April, the EMS Division focused its monthly training on the pediatric population. The crews were presented with a 6-year-old male patient suffering from a severe asthma attack that did not respond to our advanced life support medications. The crews were expected to identify the medical emergency and treat the patient per our EMS protocols. There were a lot of good teaching moments and crew bonding as well. All paramedics and EMTs did an outstanding job and are ready to treat our pediatric population in the Wausau area.



## Grant

The EMS Division is happy to report that it received a \$3,000.00 grant from the North Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition. The mission of the North Central Wisconsin Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition (NCW HERC) is to increase collaboration, communication, and readiness across our region's public and private health care providers and their community partners for emergencies, events, and unplanned incidents. This grant money is designed to assist and offset the increase in personal protective equipment (PPE) costs. We were very happy to receive this grant because on every medical emergency that our crew members respond to, PPE is utilized.

## Call of the Month

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, crews from Station 1 responded to a local business on Grand Avenue. Information from our dispatch was that a worker had collapsed, and that CPR was in progress. Upon our crew's arrival, they immediately initiated our cardiac arrest treatment protocols. The crew defibrillated their patient once and then assessed that a pulse was present. The crews quickly performed a 12-lead ECG and transmitted it to Aspirus Wausau Hospital. With the ECG that was transmitted, the hospital was able to activate the catheterization lab (cath lab) team and cardiologists. As the crew arrived at the hospital, they were able to take their patient directly to the cath lab so the cardiologist could open the occluded heart vessel. This patient was a truck driver from Iowa who was delivering building supplies. The patient is expected to make a full recovery.

## Responses by Municipality (EMS Patient Care Reports):

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs – YTD
City of Merrill	0	0.00%	1
City of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City of Schofield	0	0.00%	0
City of Wausau	423	94.42%	1,834
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Other	0	0.00%	0
Town of Berlin	2	0.45%	7
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	1
Town of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
Town of Franzen	1	0.22%	1
Town of Hewitt	3	0.67%	8
Town of Marathon	0	0.00%	1
Town of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	2
Town of Rib Mountain	1	0.22%	6
Town of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town of Texas	3	0.67%	22
Town of Wausau	6	1.34%	31
Town of Wien	0	0.00%	0
Village of Athens	0	0.00%	1
Village of Edgar	0	0.00%	0
Village of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village of Maine	9	2.01%	25
Village of Marathon City	0	0.00%	0
Village of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0

Village of Weston	0	0.00%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1,942</b>

## Fire Training Division by Training Division Chief David Briggs

Let us face it, we train a lot. Local, State, and National guidelines help us to form our training plan for the given year. However, what we do to meet those standards varies greatly. In April, we started the month off with a firefighter Line of Duty Death (LODD) case study to honor the memory of the fallen and learn from the root cause of his death. We then work on knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) to prepare for the rigors of the profession.

### LODD Brian Carey



In the case of Brian Carey, a firefighter from Illinois, many issues were identified in the independent investigation surrounding the circumstances of his death. The report outlines issues such as a lack of a complete "scene size-up," poor communications, lack of incident command, and lack of orientation contributed to his demise. To honor him and ensure his death was not in vain, we trained on concepts related to these findings.

Nearly every drill we perform includes aspects of fire-ground communication. Hose drills, scene size-ups, and building/room orientation drills, all include communication on what we see, where we are, and what we need. Without practicing these concepts, we will not be able to perform to a high degree on a scene.

### Building/Room Orientation





In the photos above, the crew performed a scene size-up of a building with “smoke showing,” created an initial action plan, and implemented their plan to mitigate an incident and rescue a victim. The drill included orienting to the structure from the exterior by looking at the construction type, the door and window locations, and any outcroppings or additions readily visible. Upon entry, the crew can move as fast or as slow as the scene dictates.

Many buildings are well sealed for energy efficiency. These types of structures hold in heat and smoke until the fire progresses so severely that it burns through or breaks the windows. Until the fire is vented, the smoke may be so thick and disorienting, that flashlights are of little to no help, and we must physically orient ourselves to the structure by feel while searching for victims. Some fires “self-vent” through the roof, doors, or windows and the smoke begins to “lift” and visibility improves. These fires grow exponentially and require us to move even faster to put the fire out and conduct a search.

#### NFPA 1410 #2



Throughout the year, we perform NFPA 1410 drills. These assessment style drills are outlined by the National Fire Protection Association to measure our performance to a timed national standard. Above, the crew had to hook a hydrant, lay a supply line from the hydrant, and deploy specific hose lines in a specific time. As you can see, these activities are very labor intensive, and they require enough personnel to perform them. If the ambulance is on an EMS call, we are unable to effectively complete the drill in the standard time. The scary thing about this is that these drills and assessments are directly based on fireground suppression activities like at a house fire.

#### Hose Testing

While testing fire hose to ensure it does not pop when we pressurize it is more of an activity, we train on the proper methods and equipment every year before and during the time-consuming task. With thousands of feet of hose in the Wausau Fire Department, we must ensure we test is properly to ensure it is safe and it performs when we need it to. Another opportunity hose testing creates for us is the function of deploying and

re-loading hose on the apparatus. Each evolution of performing a hose lay and repacking improves our skill and efficiency.

#### Fire Department Instructor's Conference (FDIC)



April 24-29 was a long week for Training Division Chief Briggs. He attended the largest firefighter conference and tradeshow in the world, in Indianapolis, Indiana. To begin the week, he attended "RIT Under Fire" hosted and taught by the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI). This truly grueling class started at 5:45 AM with a 2-hour bus ride that included lectures, videos, and equipment displays on the way. Once at IFSI, the pace never slowed from the moment of arrival to the moment the bus boarded to drive back to Indianapolis.

IFSI on-skills included: lifting concrete slabs and "debris" off collapse victims, Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) pack deployment to supply breathing air, forcible entry, search and rescue, victim drags and movement, ladder rescues, breaching through cinder block walls with hand tools, and more.

Over half of the day's training was conducted with actual fires in training structures with heavy smoke conditions. The "heavy" smoke conditions were so thick during the drills, that TDC Briggs and his crew had to crawl so low that their helmet eye shields were nearly scraping the floors just to search below the smoke for



victims. Ultimately, there was no better feeling for these participants than to hear from their instructors that they were the only group to successfully rescue all victims in the scenario.

RIT Under Fire concluded with a 2-hour bus ride back to Indianapolis from IFSI. On the bus, members of the instructor cadre debriefed the participants on the lessons learned, methods to “tighten up” tactics, and other collaboration on best practices.

The rest of the week included lectures from leading fire-service experts on search and rescue, performing live-fire training, fire scene tactical priorities, aerial operations, and more. TDC Briggs returned with nearly 2 dozen pages of notes and numerous contact cards with the intent to weave in lessons learned into upcoming training for the WFD.

Each lesson learned was paired with the consideration of how we operate in central Wisconsin. While we are very good at what we do, there are always tidbits of information gained, and skills to add to our mental toolbox.

Not every moment of the conference was spent in the classroom. The end of the conference includes one of the largest fire/rescue/EMS tradeshow in North America. Some time was spent learning about new equipment, technology, and methodology pertaining to everything from small hand tools to multi-million-dollar apparatus and equipment. Conferences in Wisconsin provide the opportunity to speak with vendors about new and emerging technology in the profession; however, they are not even comparable to what is available at FDIC.

Gaining new perspective in hands on training, classroom sessions, and the trade show is essential to learning and growing in any profession. FDIC simply provides one of the best platforms for fire and EMS educators to soak it up in a very short period and prepare to disseminate the information upon return to their home organizations.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Company Training	714.74	82.94%	2,681.82
Officer Training	86.5	10.04%	497.30
Driver/Operator Training	25.75	2.99%	116.75
Hazardous Materials Training	8.5	0.99%	209.75
Specialty Training	10.25	1.19%	809.75
Facilities Training	14	1.62%	47
Misc Training	2	0.23%	51.33
Total	861.74	100.00%	4,413.70

Training Categories:

Company Training – General firefighting training

Officer Training – Included leadership, management, supervision, and tactical considerations

Driver/Operator Training – Operation of fire apparatus

Hazardous Materials Training – How to mitigate the leak or spill of hazardous substances

Specialty Training – Rope, confined space, trench, collapse, ice, water, and other special rescues.

Facilities Training – Training at a live-burn facility (may include off-duty time)

Misc Training – Any other training category such as software, administrative, etc.

Type of Training	# of Hours	% of Hours	# of Hours -YTD
Admin Training	14.5	3.79%	68.75
Fire Instructor Training	63.5	16.60%	325.25
Fire Prevention Training	0	0.00%	0
Investigation Training	0	0.00%	0
EMS Training	304.5	79.61%	1,024
Total	382.5	100.00%	1,418

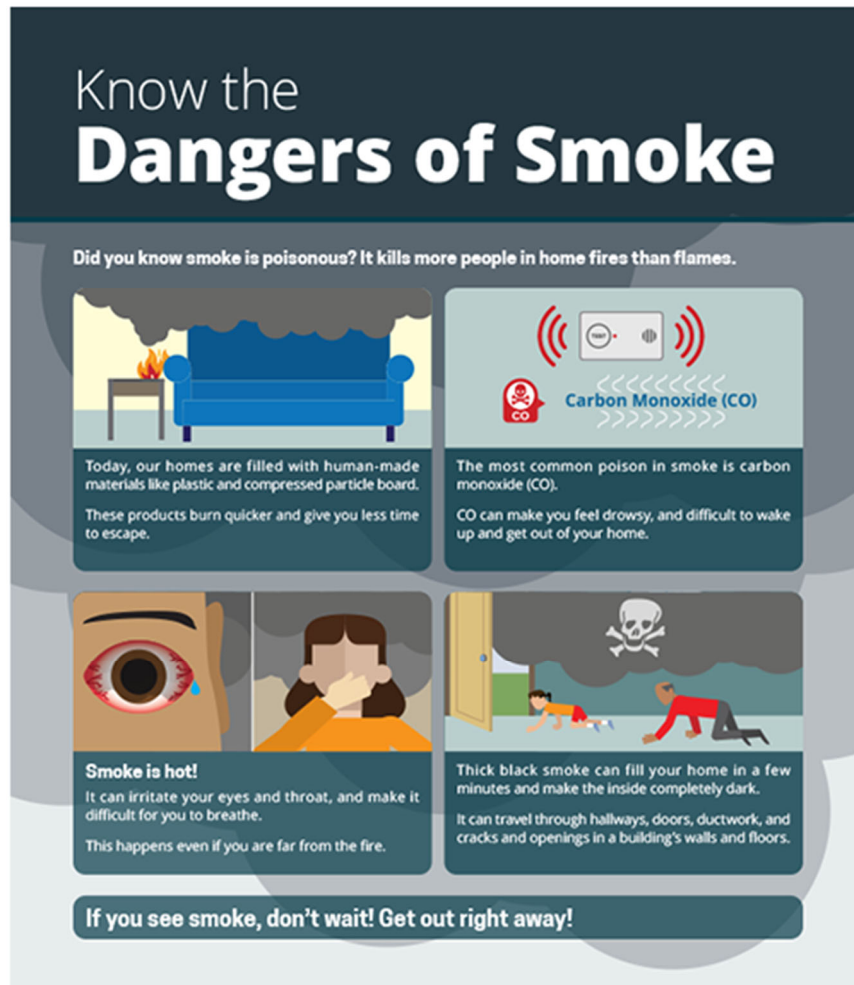
# Fire Prevention Division by Fire Marshal Brian Stahl

**Inspections:** Within the City of Wausau for the month of April, we performed 505 total inspections. We had 62 properties that had Fire Code Violations. These properties will require follow up inspections to confirm compliance. We conducted 2 consultation inspections on new construction sites. One was for a final Occupancy Inspection and Alarm system testing; the other was for a new sprinkler system.

**Investigations:** The prevention Division conducted a total of one Fire Investigation throughout April. This was a residential duplex rental property.

**Public Outreach:** Our Public outreach programs for April consisted of two Smoke Detector and CO detector installations. We installed a total of three smoke detectors and two CO alarms.

**Education:** During the Covid pandemic, there was a joint decision between the Wausau Fire Dept. and the Wausau School District. This decision was to suspend the “in-school” department participation for the annual Fire Safety programs. This has always been scheduled for the month of October when Fire Prevention Week is scheduled nationally. Over the last two years we have provided Flash drives to every school (15 schools) in our district that we would have attended. The Flash drives contain educational resources like videos and interactive websites to the schools that could be distributed to the classes. With the severest Covid restrictions now being lifted, we are in the beginning stages of revamping our Fire Safety School programs for this October. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade content had been re-done in 2018, what we will need to look at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade content. We are hoping to design a streamlined class that would still educate these two demographics with the applicable knowledge required.



## Prevention Division Activities:

Inspections Completed	Monthly	Year to Date
Routine Fire Inspections	464	861
Re-inspections	40	52
All other Inspections	1	17
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>930</b>
Fire Investigations	1	5
<b>Inspection Department Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Public Engagement Activities	12	33

## Fire Operations Division by Deputy Chief Jeremy Kopp

April is supposed to bring spring, but it seems to have tricked us and felt more like winter to most of us. We did see some rain and a lot of melt off which caused high water in the area and some dangerous conditions. Crews were on high alert and fortunately we were able to see water conditions go back to normal without any life-threatening situations.

**Significant calls:** WFD responded to 3 building fires, 3 cooking fires, and one grass fire in the month of April. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April A crew was recognized for putting out a building fire and rescuing multiple pets. A-Crew did an outstanding job on a fire with 4 dogs and 2 cats trapped inside. The crew saved all the pets and some pets had to be resuscitated. We received this note on Facebook Messenger from a neighbor that witness the crew work and took the dogs into her home after they were rescued.

*"Today your angels responded to a house fire on Washington St. (my neighbors) and there were several dogs in the house. Your team as I watched waiting to help with the animals however we could, brought them out one by one, most were limp as they were brought out, and my heart sank dearly for I love animals and I know these ones. I watched your crew take off their own masks and give oxygen and take out oxygen and then on the dogs. At one point a younger St Bernard was brought out and laid on the ground, he took his mask off and gave it to the dog and worked with her a bit, and moments later there was her tail wagging against the ground.*

*You were all amazing at controlling the fire, saving these animals who will all be ok after some tlc , amazing at bringing them next door to my house somewhere safe for them temporarily while this all went on today. You were able to keep the neighborhood safe as well so others did not endure the same hell today. Prayers for you all as well as so much gratitude. Thank you again for treating their animals as family .. for they are .. Hugs and keep safe .."*

On April 29<sup>th</sup> B crew was dispatched to a building fire and grass fire at the same time. The crew split up to respond to both fires and assess the need for mutual aid. The building fire was small enough in nature and on the exterior of the building to be extinguished quickly. The grass fire took some more time and 500 gallons of water was used, but was controlled and extinguished by the responding units from WFD.

**Fleet:** Engine 2 has not been repaired yet, quotes have been submitted and CVMIC is in the process of determining where we will take the repairs.

Battalion Chief Kraig Kruzan, Fleet manager Solomon King, and myself flew to Ohio April 3<sup>rd</sup> to perform a mid-build inspection at the Sutphen plant where the new quint fire truck is being built. Some minor adjustments were made, and the build is right on track to be delivered in June.

April 1<sup>st</sup> we were able to bring our recently purchased and much needed Haz Mat rig home to Wausau from Madison. This rig was purchased from the Madison Fire Department to replace our Haz Mat rig. We will be working on outfitting this truck and trailer throughout April and May to have it ready to respond.

**Buildings and grounds:** All systems go at all three stations. We started asking for quotes this month to see

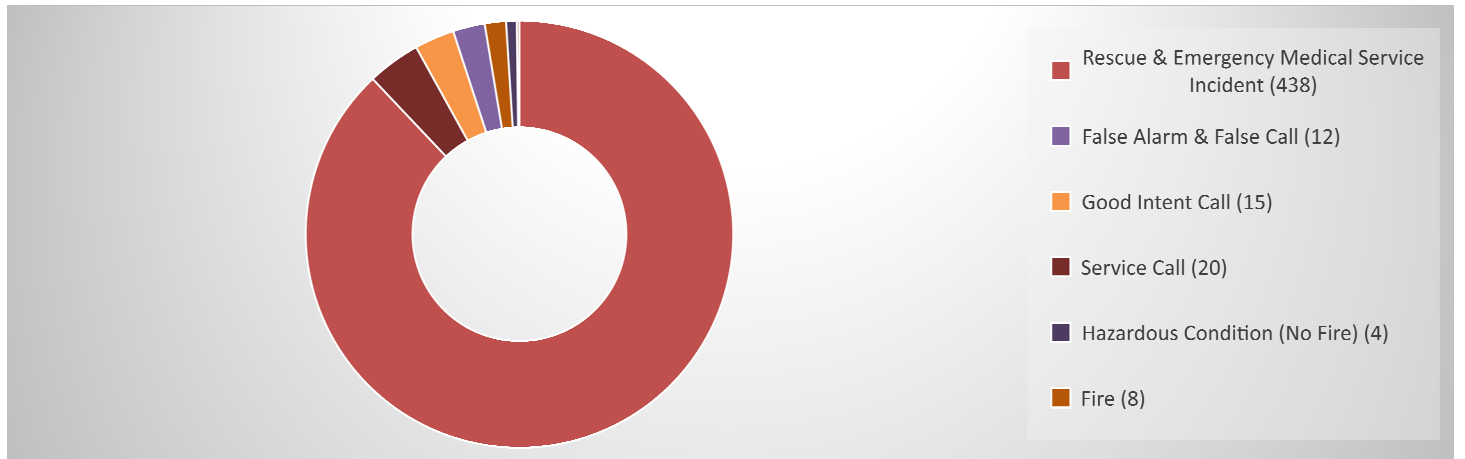
what it would cost to update the apparatus bay at station 3. This is much needed soon with the concrete floor deteriorating as well as the floor drains being in disrepair.

**Overtime and scheduling:** The line crews continue to work exorbitant mandated overtime shifts. This is necessary because of staffing issues and FMLA usage.

**Recruitment and Retention:** Interviews and assessments were done on new applicants in April and three new recruits will be starting in May. Recruitment on social media is in full force and I have been talking with individuals on a regular basis who are interested in the field of firefighting, many of these are high school age.

**Significant Fire Events:**

Date	Address	City	Incident #	Type
4/5/2022	315 Elm Street	City of Wausau	F22000599	Cooking fire, confined to container
4/16/2022	902 Washington Street	City of Wausau	F22000655	Building fire
4/16/2022	902 Washington Street	City of Wausau	F22000657	Fire, other
4/16/2022	1010 East Wausau Avenue	City of Wausau	F22000659	Building fire
4/21/2022	1111 Kickbusch Street	City of Wausau	F22000679	Cooking fire, confined to container
4/23/2022	726 Franklin Street	City of Wausau	F22000687	Cooking fire, confined to container
4/29/2022	926 Jackson Street	City of Wausau	F22000728	Building fire
4/29/2022	22 North Hill Road	City of Wausau	F22000727	Forest, woods or wildland fire



**Responses by Municipality (All NFIRS Reports):**

City	# of Runs	% of Runs	# of Runs - YTD
City of Merrill	1	0.20%	2
City Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
City Of Schofield	0	0.00%	1
City Of Wausau	472	94.78%	2,024
Clark County	0	0.00%	0
Taylor County	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Berlin	2	0.40%	7
Town of Bevent	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Cassel	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Elderon	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Emmet	0	0.00%	0
<b>Town of Franzen</b>	1	0.20%	1

Town Of Hamburg	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Hewitt	3	0.60%	8
Town Of Marathon	0	0.00%	1
Town Of Mosinee	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Rib Falls	0	0.00%	2
Town Of Rib Mountain	1	0.20%	7
Town Of Rietbrock	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Stettin	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Texas	3	0.60%	22
Town Of Wausau	6	1.20%	31
Town Of Weston	0	0.00%	0
Town Of Wien	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Athens	0	0.00%	1
Village Of Brokaw	1	0.20%	2
Village Of Edgar	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Kronenwetter	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Maine	8	1.61%	24
Village Of Marathon City	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Rothschild	0	0.00%	1
Village of Stratford	0	0.00%	0
Village Of Weston	0	0.00%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>2,136</b>

## **Activity/Incident Hours Committed**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Time Committed</b>
NFIRS Incidents	112:49:00 Hours
EMS Incidents	692:15:18 Hours
Non-Incident Activities (Station Maintenance, Vehicle Check-off/Fire Pre-plan, Hazmat Outreach, Administration duties, Public Education, Committee and Staff Meetings)	879.75 Hours
Training (including Wellness)	1,244.24 Hours

## **Aid Responses:**

<b>Type of Aid</b>	<b># of Runs</b>
Mutual Aid Given – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Given – Fire	1
Automatic Aid Given – EMS	12
Automatic Aid Given – Fire	0
Mutual Aid Received – EMS	0
Mutual Aid Received – Fire	0
Automatic Aid Received – EMS	0
Automatic Aid Received – Fire	0
Other Aid Given – EMS	0
Request for EMS from Other Agencies (not Aid)	0
Total Non-Aid Incidents (outside City with no other agency response)	16