

# Putney Fire Department



Interim Strategic Model Plan  
Fire Service Reactivation

5.24.2024

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## Introduction:

The Putney Fire Department has experienced an evolutionary change with the retirement of Tom Goddard. An operations analysis was completed by AP Triton which outlines areas of deficiencies that can be corrected to ensure safety from risk and liability. The town is at a crossroad in determining how to move forward with the Putney Fire Department in the short term and long-term process.

Customer demands continue to increase, while dollars and adequate staff time continue to shrink. This trend places more pressure on the modern fire service and policy makers to come up with ways to be more efficient and effective. The Putney community is accustomed to certain standards of service from the Putney Fire Department.

The Putney Fire Department is an on-call, per diem volunteer fire department with fire and first responders. The Putney Fire Department is a “town” department with an operating budget supported by property tax revenue.

The Selectboard, in a public meeting on April 3, 2024, voted to suspend all Putney Fire Department emergency services. The Putney EMS employees are currently working under Rescue’s license and providing EMS services in and from Putney.

The Selectboard requested the Town Manager and the Interim Fire Chief, Brian Harlow develop a model plan to reactivate the “fire service” in the department. The goal is to provide the challenges and initiatives for the Selectboard to make a decision to reactivate fire service within the department. This plan explains the immediate challenges and the initiatives to achieve reactivation. We also understand this plan may need realignment for unforeseen changes.

The focus for the Interim Fire Chief is to achieve basic firefighting, reduce the burden on mutual aid departments, effectively train and recruit members by establishing clear goals, create a level of trust within the system structure and allow people to be welcomed into the department.

## Mission:

THE ESSENTIAL MISSION OF THE PUTNEY FIRE DEPARTMENT IS:

### **SERVING AND PROTECTING WITH INTEGRITY**

The Putney Fire Department will function as a TEAM, with members who are efficient, effective, dedicated, and invested in our community and our mission. Together, we will accomplish our mission with a physically fit, psychologically fit, and healthy group of members, who are well trained in the functions and specialized skills needed to fulfill that mission. Our equipment will be dependable, capable, and will meet the needs of our community. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Putney Fire Department Member Operational Manual

## Vermont Fire Fighter Training Requirements:

### **Challenges:**

One concern prior to suspending operations is whether or not the current employees are trained properly and what type of training is required.

### Vermont Minimum Required Firefighter Certification:

Minimum basic firefighter certification requirements for volunteer and call firefighters who work less than 32 hours per week are set by the local authority having jurisdiction, which in most cases is the local fire chief. *While many volunteer and paid on-call fire departments require Firefighter I or II certification, there is currently no statutory requirement that sets a minimum level of training.*

The minimum basic certification for a **full-time firefighter** in accordance with [20 V.S.A. § 3153\(a\)\(1\)\(A\)](#) is Firefighter I. This certification shall be obtained within 12 months of a firefighter meeting the definition of full-time by working greater than 32 hours per week. Upon written request from a chief of a fire department, the Chief Fire Service Training Officer may waive the time required to receive certification up to 24 months. Refer to the [Vermont Fire Service Training Council Rules](#), Reference Section 5.2 for additional information.-<sup>2</sup>

<https://firesafety.vermont.gov/academy/certification>

### Firefighter I Classification:

Firefighter I introduce firefighting concepts, practices and techniques necessary for safe operation and success within the fire service. Based on the Firefighter I objectives from NFPA Standard 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, this program develops knowledge, skills and abilities for the following topics: firefighter safety, personal protective equipment, self-contained breathing apparatus, communications, incident command system, traffic incident management, fire behavior, building construction, fire extinguishers, tools and equipment, ropes and knots, forcible entry, ladders, search and rescue, ventilation, water supply, fire attack and foam, firefighter survival, salvage and overhaul, wildland fires, fire suppression, and CPR and first aid. This program also includes knowledge and skills based on the objectives of NFPA 1072, *Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials* and student will gain Hazardous Materials Operations certification.

Approximate Program Length: 184 hours

Prerequisites: Students must be 18 years of age by the start of the course in order to enroll.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Safety; <https://firesafety.vermont.gov/academy/certification>

## Firefighter II Classification:

Firefighter II introduces firefighting concepts, practices and techniques necessary for safe operation and success within the fire service. Based on the Firefighter II objectives from NFPA Standard 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, this program builds upon the knowledge and skills obtained during Firefighter I. In addition to expanding upon the Firefighter I skill set, students will develop knowledge, skills and abilities for the following: incident reporting, foam and flammable liquids fires, pre-incident planning, fire prevention and public education, vehicle rescue and extrication, assisting special rescue teams, fire protection systems, fire cause determination awareness, and coordinated fire attack. Students will participate in live fire exercises focusing on flammable liquid fire suppression, flammable gas fire suppression, and coordinated structure fire attack.

Prerequisites: Current Firefighter I and Hazardous Materials Operations Certification

Approximate Program Length: 92 hours

Reference: <https://firesafety.vermont.gov/academy/certificationprograms>

## **Initiatives:**

Minimum basic firefighter certification requirements for volunteer and call firefighters who work less than 32 hours per week are set by the local authority having jurisdiction, which in most cases is the local fire chief. *While many volunteer and paid on-call fire departments require Firefighter I or II certification, there is currently no statutory requirement that sets a minimum level of training.*

The current policy “The Putney Fire Department Member Operational Manual” that exists states “The Putney Fire Department does not require new members to obtain Pro-Board Firefighter certifications, as we clearly recognize the time constraints all members are faced with. With this said, we clearly expect that non-certified firefighters to obtain, at a minimum, Firefighter Level I certification as soon as they are able to dedicate the required time. In accordance with requirements set forth by the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Emergency Medical Services, members who engage in the provision of emergency medical treatment shall be certified by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, and licensed by the Vermont Department of Health”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Putney Fire Department Member Operational Manual](#), page 21; Department Training & Education

## Putney Fire Department Employees Status:

### Challenges:

Staffing and recruiting have been a challenge within the department. The Selectboard suspended services with the Putney Fire Department due to training, risk and liability. This section outlines current, resigned and potential recruitment for the “fire service” with level of training.

### **Current Employees on Roster (10):**

NAME	Certification	Expiration
Brian Harlow	FF I	6.30.2024
Lenny Howard	FF II	6.30.2024
Frank Harlow	FF I	6.30.2024
Richard Dubbs	FF I/EMS	6.30.2024
Charles Stromberg	FF II	6.30.2024

### **SHOULD ENTERTAIN FF 1 CERTIFICATIONS**

Anthony LeFevour	Probationary	
Jordan Mialkowski	Senior FF	
Jeff Kernan-Dufresne	FF	
Colby Wark	Senior FF	
Zach Hann	Landmark	Graduate in Fall
Mason Hampers	Landmark	Graduate in Fall
Tanner Harris	Landmark	Graduate in Fall

### Initiatives:

- Fast track training for certifications.
- Encourage current fire fighters to register for Fire Fighter I certifications.
- Retain current list and recruit new fire fighter candidates.
- Reconnect and communicate with the resigned people to ask what their intent is and expectation.
- Schedule an open house with a recruiting push to the public.
- See recruitment plan below for additional interested recruits.

## Recruit for Fire Fighters:

### Challenges:

Recruiting and retention has been difficult over the years. People have busy lives and some may not be able to commit 100%.

Nationwide recruiting and retention are a concern and challenge.

### Initiatives:

A meeting was held on May 14, 2024. New employment applications were received.

Plan an open house and a one-day recruitment event. Target people who have expressed interest if they have not submitted an application.

NAME	Certification	
Eric McGowan	FF II	Application Approved
Ryan Struthers	FF II	Application Approved
John Shaughnessy	FF II	Application Approved
Brad King	Pump	Past Chief/Approved
Russ Ellis		Past Chief/Approved
Adam Fletcher	FF II	Application Approved
Marc Fellows		Past Assistant Chief/Application Approved
William Harlow		Application Approved
Robert Brownell	FF	Application Approved
Alex Fitch		Application Approved
Brett Castine		Application Approved
Brook Castine		Application Approved
Logan Sears		Application Approved
Nathaniel Barnes	FF	Interested (Experience)
Ed Martin	FF II	Interested (Experience)
Casey Darrow	FF I	Interested (Experience)
Burt Wilkins		Interested
Jason Newton		Interested
Adam Newton		Interested
Sean Donovan		Interested
Joel Porter		Interested (Experience)
Todd Harlow		Interested

## Implement Training:

### **Challenges:**

Training is not occurring and hasn't since the suspension of the Putney Fire Department. Five current employees will lose their certifications if they don't get training.

Access to ESO program was just granted the week of May 13, 2024 to the Interim Chief. The system shows most employees have expired, although the State of Vermont shows otherwise.

### **Initiatives:**

As of May 18, 2024 a six-month training schedule has been created to support the fire department, new recruits and those with certifications.

Focus on keeping current personnel certified. Target current personnel and new candidates for Fire Fighter I Certification if possible.

Focus on basic level training for new personnel without experience. Allow a fast-paced training schedule for recertifying and sending new recruits to training.

Train with local departments for training not on our Putney schedule.

Recommendation by AP Triton to establish a training program with focused, repetitive, and immersive training.

May 2024

Tuesday, May 21, 2024	Training: Vehicle Extraction
Monday, May 27, 2024	Training/Maintenance: Dry Hydrant flushing/testing

June 2024

Tuesday, June 4, 2024	Meeting
Tuesday, June 11, 2024	Training: Search and Rescue
Tuesday, June 18, 2024	work detail/truck checks
Tuesday, June 25, 2024	Training/Maintenance: Dry Hydrant flushing/testing

July 2024

Tuesday, July 2, 2024	Meeting
Tuesday, July 9, 2024	Training: Pumps/Car Fire
Tuesday, July 16, 2024	work detail/truck checks
Tuesday, July 23, 2024	Training/Maintenance: Dry Hydrant flushing/testing
Tuesday, July 30, 2024	Training:



## August 2024

Tuesday, August 6, 2024	Meeting
Tuesday, August 13, 2024	Training: Pumps/Arial/Ground Ladders
Tuesday, August 20, 2024	work detail/truck checks
Tuesday, August 27, 2024	Training/Maintenance: Dry Hydrant flushing/testing

## September 2024

Tuesday, September 3, 2024	Meeting
Tuesday, September 10, 2024	Training: Fire behavior/Line Fire
Tuesday, September 17, 2024	work detail/truck checks
Tuesday, September 24, 2024	Municipal Hydrant Flow Test

## October 2024

Tuesday, October 1, 2024	Meeting
Tuesday, October 8, 2024	Training: Chimney Fire/Arial
Tuesday, October 15, 2024	work detail/truck checks
Tuesday, October 22, 2024	Municipal Hydrant Flow Test
Tuesday, October 29, 2024	Clean up training land for winter

## Implement a Plan for Administrative Support:

### **Challenges:**

The lack of delegation and training on critical systems within the Fire Department has left the current personnel and town management in a situation where it may take time to come up to speed with the current systems in place.

### **Initiatives:**

First look internally within the personnel and delegate some tasks to others.

Hire at least one or two administrative personnel to assist with daily tasks that need to be completed. This person can be part-time.

Allow training on the platforms needed with the appropriate vendors (ESO).

Ensure the fire department is connected to the town IT infrastructure for protection and compliance.

## Implement a Plan on Response Performance Objectives:

### **Challenges:**

The town of Putney is relying on neighboring Mutual Aid companies from Dummerston, Westminster and Brattleboro. All departments have expressed they can support Putney for the time being.

### **Initiatives:**

Reactivate fire service of Putney Fire Department. Implement a plan for day coverage with the current roster.

Establish localized response performance benchmarks.

## Re-Evaluate in One Month:

### **Challenges:**

Evan Martin stated on Monday May 6, 2024 the agreement between Rescue and the Putney program under the license of Rescue that EMS will end in August.

### **Initiatives:**

Putney Fire Department will require a plan to transition Putney EMS employees.

Town Manager met with Jeanette White, Rescue Town Representative, to discuss options and to coordinate a meeting with Rescue.

Town Manager to contact Drew Hazelton and discuss the agreement.