



## SEDRO-WOOLLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

325 Metcalf Street  
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284  
Phone (360) 855-2252  
Fax (360) 855-0196  
Chief Frank Wagner

May 5, 2021

Mayor Johnson, City Supervisor Merriman & City Council,

Thank you for the time to present you with the Fire Department's State of the Union prior to your scheduled retreat at the end of this week. As you know we are currently in the process of planning our City Fire Department's Centennial Celebration, which will take place on Friday May 21, 2021. At this same time we will also have the privilege of honoring Chief Dean Klinger with a retirement ceremony to show appreciation of the 40 plus years of service that he has given the community as a volunteer firefighter and Chief of our department. At the end of June we will also be celebrating over 28 years of service by Assistant Chief Todd Olson as he also retires.

Chief Klinger leaves our department headed in the right direction for our anticipated growth, development and future successes. In the past few years we were afforded the privilege of adding eight full-time Paramedic Firefighters with our ALS transition from a County based system to Fire based model. This has been a great addition to our City, as we are able to administer top quality emergency services to our citizens and the neighboring communities. We are extremely fortunate with amazing Paramedics, Volunteer Firefighters and Part-Time Firefighters who are devoted and vested within our department and community.

### THIS PAST YEAR:

- Call volume continues to increase. In 2016 we were running less than 2300 calls per year, and in 2020 we ended the year with 3429.
- Ambulance transports also continue to rise, with 1,550 completed in 2020.
- Received the Assistance to Firefighters Grant for \$270,000 to replace our Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, that were put into service earlier this year.
- Promoted three of our volunteers to LIEUTENANT; Troy Hanson, Aaron Bontrager and Michael Mejia.
- Partnership with Skagit County EMS and Fire Agencies to utilize a cooperative approach to procure needed supplies through our current Pandemic.

- Celebrated the advancements of our dispatch software upgrade to 'ProQa' at Skagit 911, that will allow the calls we receive to be properly coded to send the correct level of care to each event.

#### THIS NEXT YEAR:

- Complete Civil Service processes to fill our two open Assistant Chief positions.
- Recruit, Train and Develop Volunteers and Residents to fill our current openings, and anticipated openings.
- Build the SWFD/SWPD storage building at Fire Station 2 that was originally planned for Murdock St in 2020.
- Create specifications for our upcoming ERR ambulance replacements that are scheduled for 2022.
- Work with Skagit County Fire District 8 on our contract for services that ends in December of 2021.
- Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations for our Paramedic Firefighters contract will also start toward the end of 2022.

#### THE FUTURE:

- Staffing: We currently rely on a combination of volunteers, resident firefighters, part-time firefighters and career staff. While we have 8 full-time Firefighter/Paramedics, and three Chief positions: the other 36 members are volunteers or part-time. We have an amazing group of individuals that do a phenomenal job, not only managing our daily call volume but representing our community on a daily basis. We currently utilize EMS levy funds, ambulance transport fees, and our contract with Skagit County Fire District 8 to maintain the staffing we currently have. We currently have a high functioning system, but with our growing call volume and training requirements there will become a time where hiring more career staff will be necessary. As we have talked with some of you in the past, this will be a costly endeavor. These are options that we need to think about and start planning; whether we utilize grant programs to subsidize those transitions or the public safety levy/tax as we have for Police staffing.
- Recruitment: Our volunteer association and staff have been working diligently on recruiting within the community to build our bench strength of members. Utilizing social media, job fairs, speaking at college classes are among some of the more successful options of late. While staying within the confines of our current budget I would like to look at the option of offering scholarships to local Fire Science programs to draw students into our Resident program.
- Training: With our new Assistant Chief-Training candidate in place; work on implementing a training program that handles our growing needs, and also works with our partnering agencies

around us. Continue to manage and utilize the EMS training hub to certify our EMT's and take care of their ongoing continuing education requirements.

- Equipment: Currently have another Assistance Firefighters Grant submitted with other local Skagit County Fire departments for our communications. This grant is almost a million dollars, with close to \$300,000 of that for our department. If this grant is not approved, we will have to start working on other options to upgrade our current radios and communications equipment. We have already started specifications of our next Fire Engine that is due to be replaced per our ERR schedule in 2024; but can take up to two years for that process.

Thank you,

Frank Wagner, Fire Chief