

Amherst Fire District 2025 Annual Report

Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 -
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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



On behalf of the officers and members of the Amherst Fire District, I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects a year of dedication and service rooted in our mission to protect life and property through fire prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community engagement.

Throughout 2025, our department responded to a wide range of emergencies, including medical calls, motor vehicle crashes, structure fires, and hazardous conditions. Each call for service represents a moment when our community relied on us, and our members answered with professionalism and teamwork.

Our volunteers and staff devoted countless hours to training, emergency response, and community engagement. Their efforts strengthened operational readiness and reinforced the trust we share with the residents we serve.

This report offers a transparent view of our operations, response activities, and resource utilization. It also highlights our investment in firefighter safety, EMS capability, and long-term capital planning.

Thank you to our municipal boards, our mutual aid partners, and the citizens we serve for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Victor R. Voss
Fire Chief / Service Director
Amherst Fire District

Mission Statement:

The Amherst Fire District members are committed professionals whose mission is to provide the highest standard of service through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community interaction to preserve the quality of life and property for all of those who live, visit, or travel through our communities.

ABOUT THE AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT

The Amherst Fire District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and community risk reduction services to Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and New Hope. The District covers approximately 70 square miles and serves an estimated 4,000 residents and visitors.

The district operates through a hybrid staffing model that combines dedicated volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel to provide 24/7 emergency response.

In support of rescue and emergency medical operations, the district staffs an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) car and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. These units are equipped to deliver high-quality prehospital care, including cardiac monitoring, advanced airway management, medications, trauma supplies, and patient transport systems. As an ALS service provider, the district plays a key leadership role in regional EMS response and coordinated patient care.



4585 Fairgrounds Road

Our station features a well-equipped modern training classroom, comfortable living quarters, office space, training structures, and much more. Station tours are always available.

2025 AT A GLANCE

Metric	2025
Total incidents	420
EMS / Rescue	348 (83%)
Fire	16 (4%)
Hazardous	15 (4%)
Good Intent	28 (7%)
False Alarms	6 (1%)
Service Calls	7 (2%)
Mutual aid incidents	16 (Given: 14, Received: 2)
Volunteer incident-response hours	741.41
PVEMS (personal vehicle EMS responses)	149
PVFIRE (personal vehicle FIRE responses)	8
Standby firefighter activations (STBY)	44
Most utilized unit	MED1 (ALS) - 375 responses



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Fire departments across the United States and in Wisconsin continue to see a sustained shift toward EMS and rescue responses. National incident data reported to NFIRS show that two-thirds of fire department calls are EMS and rescue, while only about 4% are fire-related. In Wisconsin, recent reporting highlights growth in fall-related EMS demand, and a statewide survey found that many departments are concerned about maintaining adequate staffing for call response.

This context mirrors Amherst's 2025 experience, where EMS and rescue calls make up the majority of the District's workload and staffing flexibility remains essential to sustained service delivery.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration (NFIRS Run Profile, 2020); Wisconsin DHS (EMS and Falls, 2024); Wisconsin Public Radio staffing survey (2025).

Amherst Fire District **2025: Regional & National Context**

Amherst (2025)

- Total incidents: 420
- EMS/Rescue: 348 (83%)
- Fire: 16 (4%)
- Other: 56 (13%)

National trend (NFIRS)

- 64% of calls are EMS/Rescue
- About 4% are fire-related

Wisconsin context

- Fall-related EMS calls increased
- Staffing pressures statewide

Staffing reality (WI)

- 62% of departments worry about
- adequate staffing for a call

Sources: USFA NFIRS Run Profile (2020); WI DHS EMS & Falls (2024); WPR survey (2025)

2025 A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wisconsin Paramedic of the Year – Adam Meshak

Life-saving recognition – Thom Bray

Years of Service – 40 years, Ken and Bob Glodowski

Promotions – Captain/Training Officer, Pat Rock

Advancements – **Paramedic**, Lily Ackley, **EMT**, Balin Wojtalewicz, Carmen Schultz, Alyssa Ehr,

Med 2 – Fully stocked with grants and donations.

Grants – FAP \$30,000, DNR \$20,000, PC EMR \$8500

Donations – Total \$91,354

Fundraising – Total \$20,000

Salvation Army – We raised \$1400.

AED's and CPR – We helped add 11 AEDs to our community and have taught seventy-three people CPR.

Sports Cardiac Arrest Drills – 192 Students and 22 Coaches participated.

Child Safety Programs – Now offering Child seat inspections and other safety programs.

Fire Chief Succession Plan – Completed a detailed succession plan through committee work



2025 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



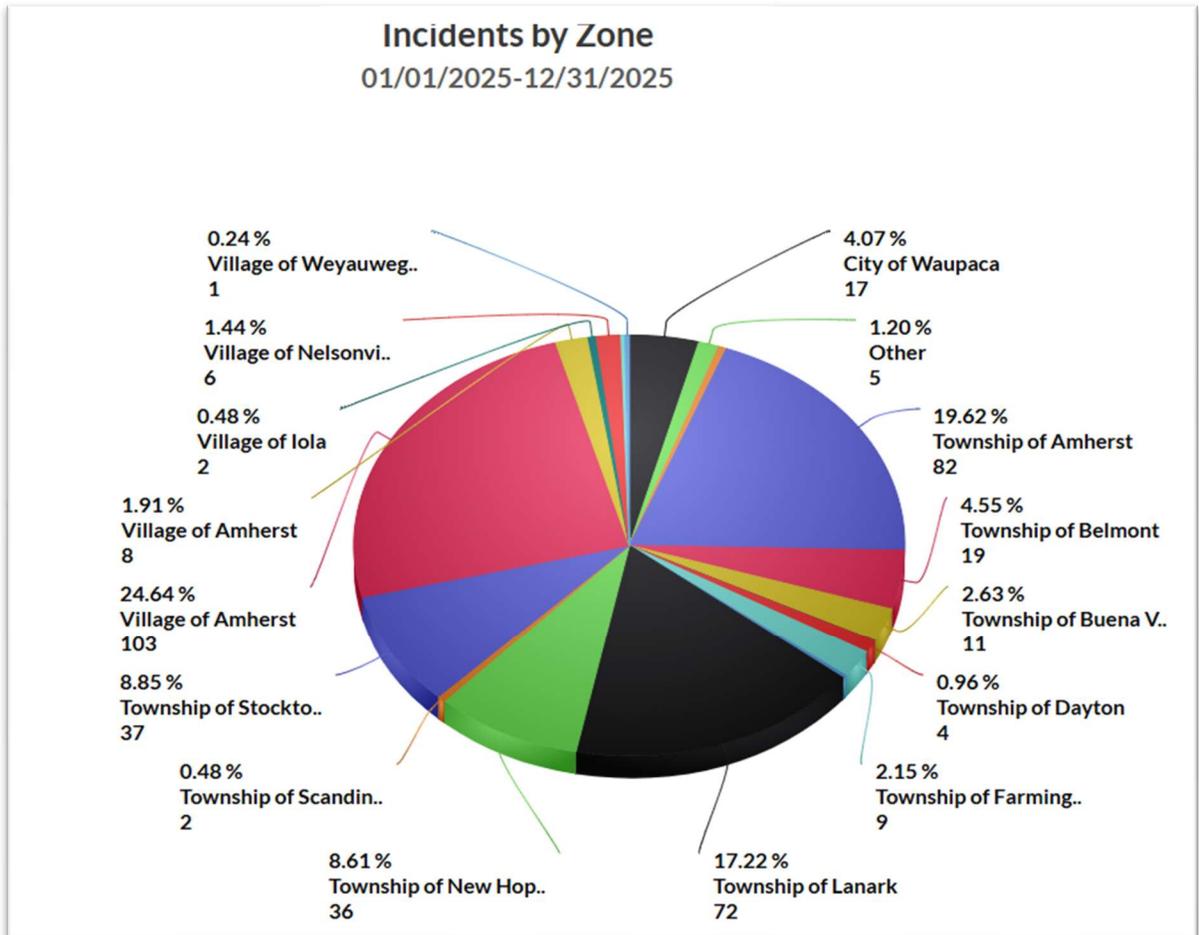
In 2025, the Amherst Fire District recorded 420 incidents. EMS and rescue responses drove most of the service demand, reflecting broader regional and national trends. Fire incidents represented a smaller share of overall activity, while hazardous conditions, good intent calls, and service calls accounted for the remainder of the workload.

We continue to respond to the same types of calls for service and everything else that comes our way. We do this with fewer volunteers than we ever have had. Our roster is strong, and our members are willing and capable, but their availability is reduced.

The future may require us to hire daytime firefighters. The cost of this would be high and needs to be planned.

INCIDENTS BY RESPONSE AREA

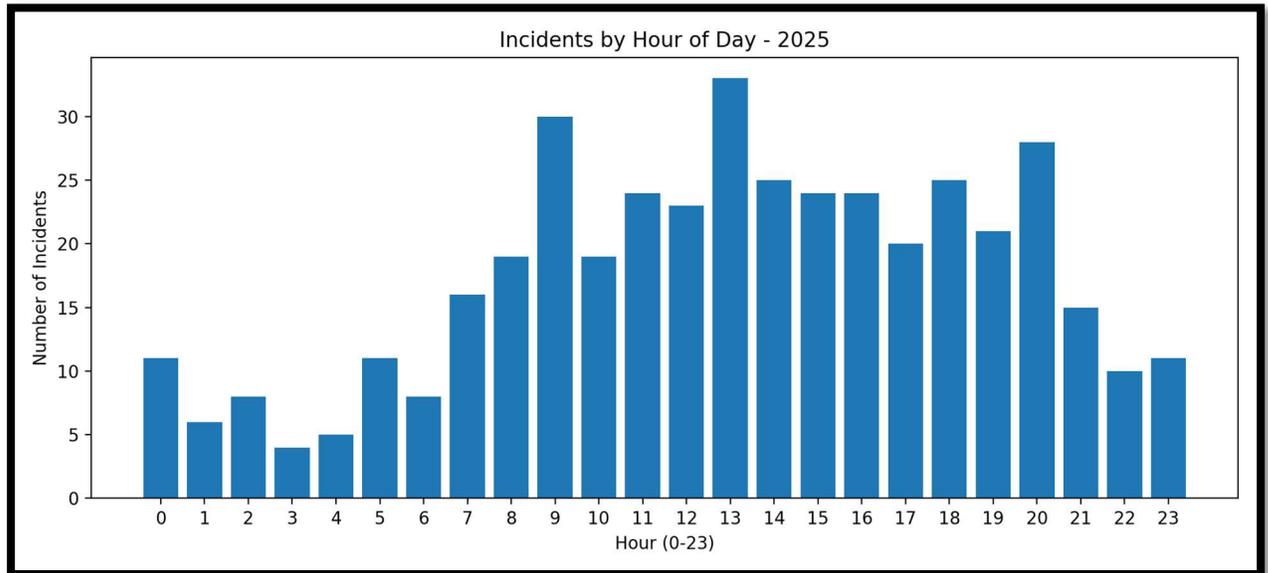
The chart below shows 2025 incident totals by response area, grouped into report-friendly zones representing Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and Belmont, including agricultural and low-density residential areas within the district service area.



Area	Incidents
Amherst (Village)	103
Amherst (Town)	82
Lanark (Town)	72
Belmont (Town) (ambulance only)	19
Amherst Jct (Village)	8
Nelsonville (Village)	6

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Incident volume occurred throughout the day, with higher activity during daytime and early evening hours. Overnight hours maintained a steady baseline demand, requiring continuous readiness. Unfortunately, the peak times for incidents coincided with the lowest availability of our members.



Core Values:

Trust is the cornerstone of all relationships. We will continue to strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the communities we serve. We will earn trust through:

Integrity – We are committed to the highest standard of moral and ethical conduct.

Dedication – We provide quality service through pride and professionalism.

Compassion – We support our neighbors in their time of need.

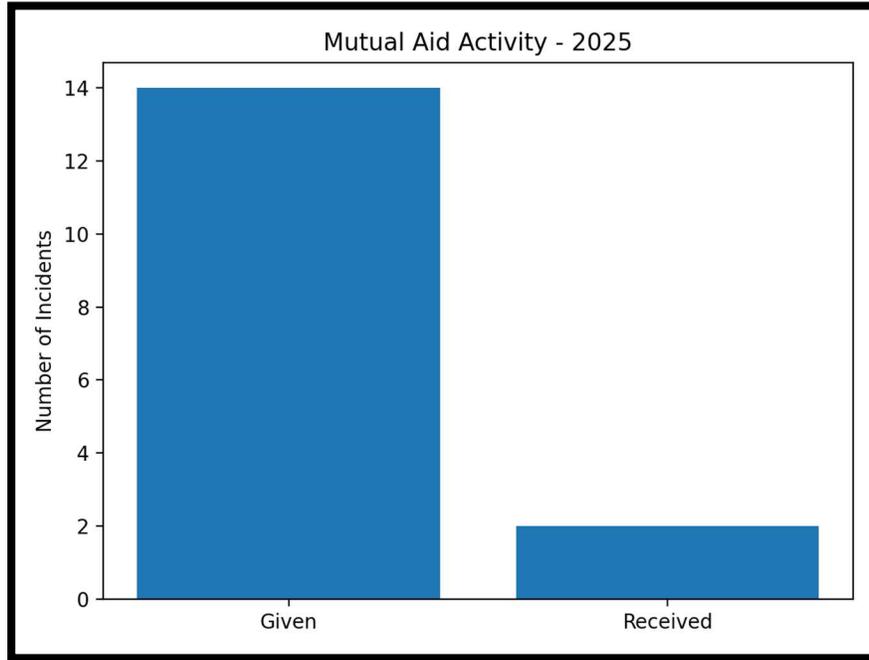
Teamwork – We work together to achieve common goals.

Tradition – We honor the legacy of those who have served before us.

Courage – We do what is right in the face of adversity

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid remains a critical component of regional emergency response. In 2025, the district provided mutual aid on fourteen fire incidents and received mutual aid on two incidents. These events included fill-in/standby coverage, EMS support, and coordinated responses with neighboring agencies.



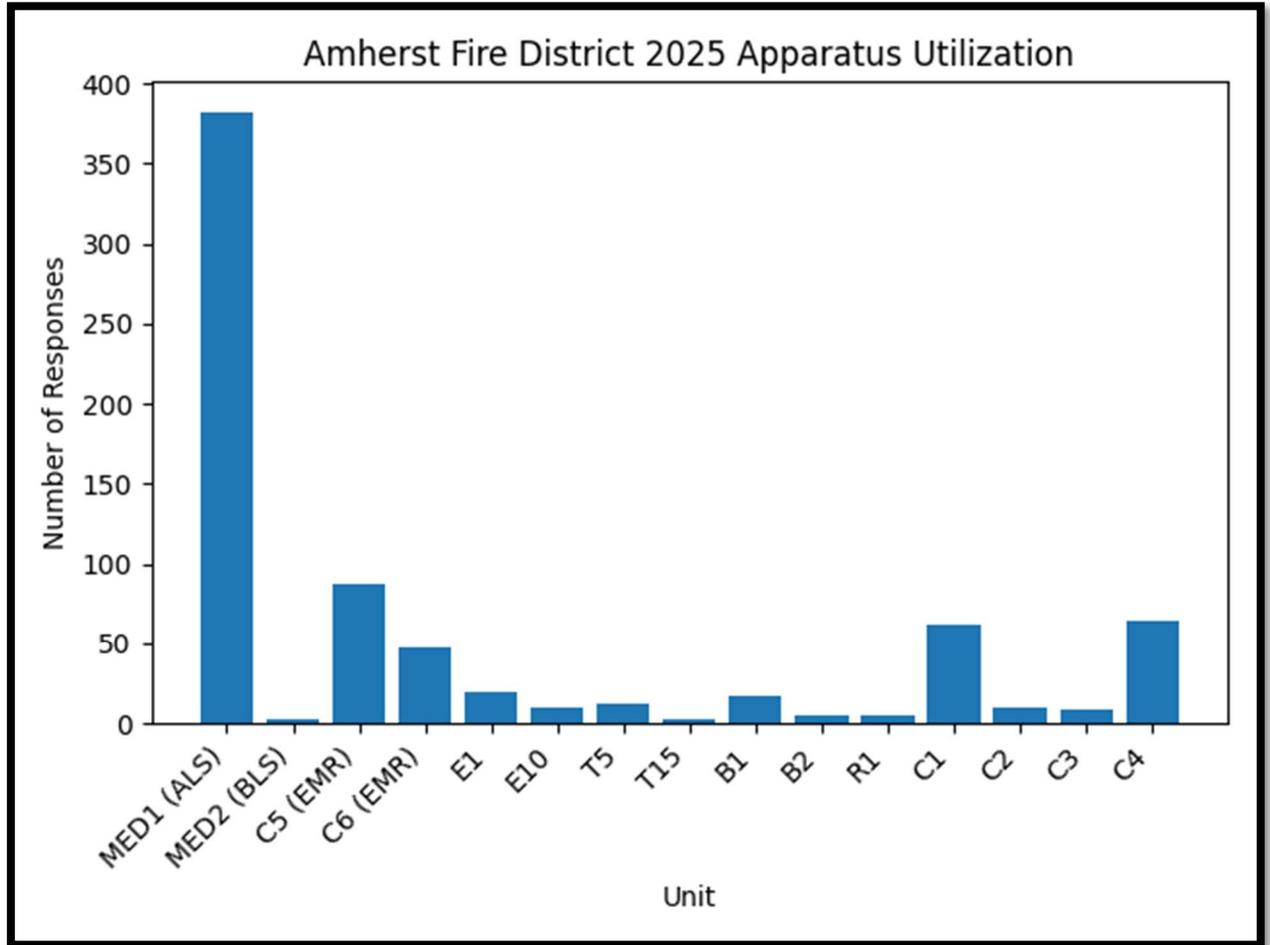
Most frequent mutual aid partners (given):

Almond Volunteer Fire Department	1
Iola & Rural Fire Department	2
Manawa Rural Fire Department	1
Ogdensburg/ St Lawrence Fire Department	1
Rudolph Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1
Scandinavia Volunteer Fire Department	1
Stockton Fire Department	1
Waupaca Area Fire District	1
Weyauwega Area Fire District	3

APPARATUS UTILIZATION

Apparatus utilization is reported for District-owned vehicles. Personal vehicle responses (PVEMS and PVFIRE) and standby firefighter activations (STBY) are reported separately as staffing and coverage metrics. In 2025, the ALS ambulance (MED1) was the most utilized unit, reflecting the EMS-heavy nature of District operations.

As a reminder, C1, C2, C3, and C4 are personal vehicles operated by the fire chief, deputy chief, and assistant chiefs.



PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer members and part-time staff provide essential capacity to sustain 24/7 response coverage. In 2025, documented incident-response hours totaled 741.41 hours. The table below summarizes the **top contributors** by fire incident-response hours.

Member	Incident-response hours
Adam Meshak	83.70
Balin Wojtalewicz	63.87
Robert Smith	63.85
Thomas Bray	56.41
Pat Rock	51.42
Charles Larson	47.14
Mike Klieforth	35.00
Ryan Sundsmo	34.26
Adam Skibicki	31.31
Roy Bohm	28.88



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Amherst Fire District emphasizes prevention and education as part of community safety. In 2025, members supported fire prevention messaging, smoke detector awareness, and safety outreach at school and community events. The district also promoted CPR awareness, basic first aid education, and EMS outreach to encourage early recognition of medical emergencies and prompt activation of the 911 system.



50% of the time when a person suffers cardiac arrest, an AED shock is advised. 100% of the time, CPR is required.

STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

The Amherst Fire District uses a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel. Like many rural and combination departments, the district faces challenges in volunteer recruitment, EMS staffing, and daytime coverage. Leadership continues to focus on recruitment and retention, training support, and reducing barriers to participation to maintain a sustainable workforce.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Amherst Fire District operates under a structured leadership and governance framework designed to support operational readiness, accountability, and effective service delivery.

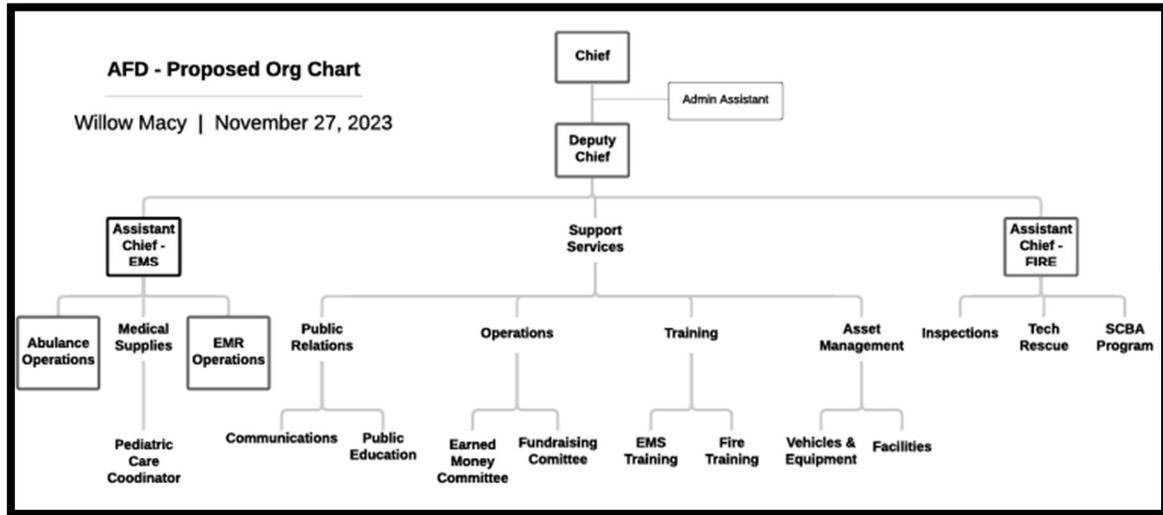
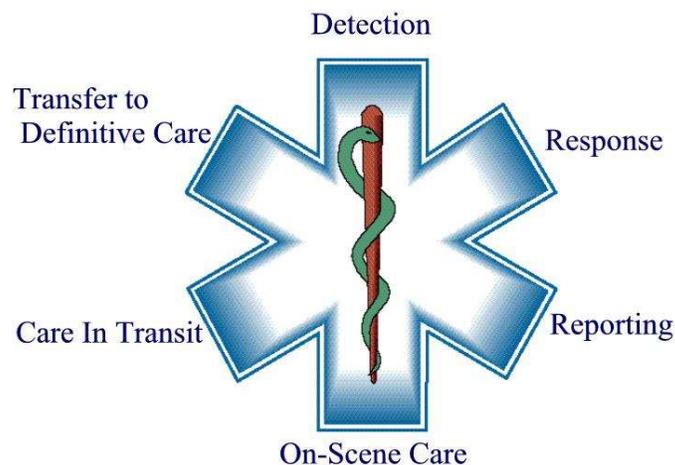


Figure 7: Amherst Fire District Organizational Structure — 2025

In 2023, as part of her Fire Officer certification class, Willow Macy, EMT-P firefighter, mapped our organization as part of her mentorship. This illustrates how our organization is structured. By developing this chart, we can illustrate many of the operational tasks that the department manages. The only positions on this chart that are compensated are the Chief (FTE), Admin. Assistant (PTE), Deputy Chief, and two Assistant Chiefs, who are compensated with annual stipends. All other tasks are done with volunteers, either receiving no pay or the minimum training rate of \$7.25/hour.



HOW THE FIRE DISTRICT WORKS

The Amherst Fire District is a local governmental entity established to provide fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and related public safety services within a defined geographic service area.

The district is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by each owner municipality, which is responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, and providing fiscal oversight.

The Board does not manage day-to-day emergency operations but instead establishes the strategic and financial framework under which the Fire District operates.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Fire Chief, who is responsible for implementing Board policies, overseeing personnel, managing emergency response operations, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

The Fire District delivers services through a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel.

Funding for operations is provided primarily through local tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising, grants, and other limited revenue sources.

The Fire District operates as part of a broader regional emergency services system and coordinates closely with neighboring agencies, dispatch centers, and hospitals.

Before 1992, there were three fire departments in our area. Nelsonville Fire Department, Amherst Jct. Fire Department, and the Amherst Fire Department. There were three fire stations¹, one in Nelsonville, one in Amherst Jct. and one in Amherst.

All three departments worked independently of each other. All three struggled to have enough trained volunteers and usable equipment.

In 1992, the Amherst Fire District was founded with Fire Chief Jay Gordon and members of the newly formed Amherst Fire & Safety Commission. The consolidation of the three departments into one set in motion several changes for our area. The immediate need for a new water tender was filled by ordering a new truck, a 3000-gallon water tender. The need for a new fire station was apparent from the beginning and was planned. In 1994, we broke ground on a new seven thousand square foot fire station and moved in the spring of 1995.

Annual budgets have been created each year to fund the fire district. Contracts with both Lanark and New Hope have existed from the beginning. Trucks have been upgraded as needed; equipment has been purchased through planning, grants, fundraising, and donations. The cost of the fire district is shared by the owner municipalities, the Town of Amherst, the Villages of Nelsonville, Amherst Jct., and Amherst.

¹ All three stations were little more than garages. There were no meeting space, training area, bathrooms, or offices.

THE FORMULA

All costs associated with the fire district are shared between the four owner municipalities. The formula used was developed when the district was formed and has been used every year since. There are two components to the formula.

1. Population – 25% of the formula is based on the population served. This correlates to the idea that on the Emergency Medical side of things, we are treating people. Therefore, as the population changes, our call volume will follow.
2. Personal Property - 75% of the formula is based on the value of buildings in each municipality, as established by the Report of Property Tax of each municipality.

INCOME

The Amherst Fire District also receives income in the form of contracts for services. There are three sources of income.

1. Town of Lanark – the town contracts with AFD for fire and EMS services. The fire response area is about ½ of the township. The EMS response area covers the entire township.
2. Town of New Hope – the town contracts with AFD for EMR services for the southern half of the township.

Portage County – the county contracts with AFD to provide the personnel to staff the ambulance in Amherst. This contract is negotiated to include all costs associated with the ambulance operations.

EMS SYSTEM ROLE AND REGIONAL MEDICAL INTEGRATION

The Amherst Fire District provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) care and coordinated prehospital medical response. District EMS operations include rapid first response, cardiac and trauma care, advanced airway management, and medication administration. The district works with neighboring agencies, dispatchers, and regional hospitals to support coordinated responses, ALS intercepts, and efficient transfers of care.

HOW THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKS

Before 2008, all Portage County Ambulances were in Stevens Point. It was common to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in the Amherst, Amherst Jct., or Nelsonville area. In the towns of Lanark and Belmont, the wait was even longer, sometimes over 30 minutes. At that time, I was the fire chief and was responsible for the Amherst Area First Responders. These response times were unacceptable for our community, and something needed to be done to better the service. Extensive work was done to establish an ambulance in Amherst, and it was approved in May of 2007 by the county board.

On January 1, 2008, the Amherst Fire District began staffing a full-time ambulance at our fire station in Amherst. This was a major accomplishment for both Portage County and us. This meant that response time from the time a 911 call was received until an ambulance arrived was cut to an average response of 5 minutes. The Amherst Area First Responders became Emergency Medical Responders and increased their license to EMT Basic or higher.

Over the years, we have negotiated a number of contracts with Portage County. These contracts are quite simple.

- The County provides all the equipment, including the ambulance, the cot, the supplies, the fuel, and more. The contract also provides the wages and benefits for the full-time and part-time employees. There are also funds for training and uniforms for the staff.
- We agree to manage the ambulance, to staff it appropriately, to house it, to maintain the equipment in a ready state, and to respond to calls wherever needed.

Why does this work? It works because we are part of a regional (county-wide) service. When you regionalize services, it spreads the costs out across a region, making it affordable for everyone. The county manages the finances, including collecting the revenue from the billing. The county levies the additional funds to maintain the entire system. In 2019, the county added another ambulance to the system and entered a similar contract with the Plover Fire Department. So together with Plover, Stevens Point, and Amherst, we are now part of a very well-organized countywide system. The residents and visitors to our county receive Paramedic care within a very reasonable time when 911 is called.



SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Amherst Fire District is a leader in the area for expertise and services offered. Our team is trained and equipped to respond to and mitigate many distinct types of calls for service. This sets AFD apart from most other departments in the area. This diverse list of capabilities is one of the key elements to attracting new firefighters.

1. **Advanced Life Support ambulance** – through our contract with the county, we schedule, staff, train, and employ about twenty part-time employees and five full time employees. The ambulance is licensed as a one-paramedic unit with the other provider at least at the EMT level. Also on our roster are a number of Registered Nurses and even a doctor who can function at the Paramedic level.
2. **Emergency Medical Responders (EMR)** – formerly known as first responders, our EMR group is made up of paid per-call employees who respond to medical calls in our entire response area. We utilize two response vehicles that carry life-saving equipment. The EMR also attends local events and provides up to an ALS service.
3. **Fire Response** – our department operates two fire engines, two water tenders, one reserve engine, and two brush fire trucks. Our communities have excellent fire response capabilities as indicated in our Insurance Standards Office (ISO) Community Risk Rate. On a scale of 1 -10, the Village of Amherst is rated at a 3, the Villages of Amherst Jct. and Nelsonville are rated a 6, and the Town of Amherst is rated at a 7.
4. **Technical Rescue** – our department is trained and equipped to respond to the following technical rescues (many of these hazards are found on farms)
 - a. High Angle/Rope rescue – getting people down from high places like silos, grain and fertilizer elevators, roofs, etc.
 - b. Trench rescue – getting people removed from collapsed trenches and holes in the ground.
 - c. Grain Bin rescue – getting people removed from grain bins when they have become engulfed in grain.
 - d. Ice Water rescue – getting people out of the water when they have fallen through the ice.
 - e. Building Collapse rescue – building stabilization and entry to rescue people from collapsed or partially collapsed buildings.
 - f. Extrication rescue – both heavy and medium duty extrication of people from vehicles involved in accidents, farm equipment, and industrial accidents.
5. **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** – we are one of two agencies in the county that are trained and designated as an official TIM team. We provide traffic management on any road, when necessary, for several reasons, such as traffic accidents, downed power lines, road failures, road blockages, etc.
6. **Landing Zone management** – our firefighters are also trained to manage landing zones for medical helicopters that are called into our area.
7. **Medical Assists** – fire personnel are trained to do CPR, use AEDs, and use much of the equipment carried by the EMRs and ambulances. They provide lift assistance, patient access, ambulance drivers, and more to support patient care.



Car 5 and Car 6 – These two vehicles are equipped with advanced life support equipment and supplies. They are primary vehicles for Emergency Medical incidents.

Our department responders can use these vehicles when they are “on call” for medical emergencies. These vehicles are often seen in the community and are staffed with paid-on-call members.



When seconds count, we want our “first responders” available and able to respond directly to the incident or medical situation. These cars give us flexibility and response.

These cars were purchased and equipped with grants, fundraising, and some budgeted items.



Med 2 – Our department purchased this ambulance to serve our community. We are in the process of stocking and equipping it to provide Advanced Life Support. This vehicle, along with the equipment carried, was fully funded through local donors and grant funding. There is currently no cost to the local district budget, and the secured funding will cover the cost for at least 5 years. Currently, we are using Med 2 for event standbys and to respond to emergencies with our

community. The long-term goal will be to use it for interfacility transfers and as a backup for our primary ambulance.

We are not allowed to transport patients YET.



Med 1 – Through our service contract with Portage County, we are assigned an ambulance. The county owns the ambulance and equipment carried. Our contract with them is to staff it 24/7/365. We always do this with at least one Paramedic and another care provider from EMT, RN’s or Physicians. This ambulance has a primary response area including the towns of Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, Belmont, and Buena Vista. It also includes the Villages

of Amherst, Amherst Jct, and Nelsonville.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – PPE

PPE includes all the following pieces of protective clothing.

Fire Helmet - \$400

Particulate Flash Hood - \$120

Turnout Coat - \$1500

Turnout Pant/Suspenders - \$1200

Fire Boots - \$350

Traffic Vest - \$45

Wildland Fire Coat - \$150

Fire Gloves - \$95

Rescue Gloves - \$15

Current standards call for the replacement of all of this in a 10-year cycle. AFD does go beyond 10 years based on the condition of the individual pieces.



\$3875 per fire fighter

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

SCBA is the single piece of equipment we must have to protect ourselves from heat, smoke, toxic gases, carcinogens, and much more. An SCBA allows us to do our job when the air is not safe to breathe. We cannot fight fire, rescue people, manage hazardous materials, or much of anything else without these tools.

Our SCBAs were purchased in 2013, complete with new harnesses, cylinders, and facepieces. The harnesses are recommended to be replaced as the version of the standard is updated. Historically, it has been acceptable to be within two standards of the current, or about 20 years. In 2013, we were compliant with the 2012 standard. Facepieces are also affected by the harness upgrades and typically must be replaced when the harness is replaced.

Cylinders fall under another standard, which only allows for a 15-year life cycle. At the expiration of the cylinder, they must be removed from service and destroyed. Our cylinders were purchased in 2013 and will expire in 2028.

SCBA Harness - \$5500 x 16 (\$88,000 estimate)

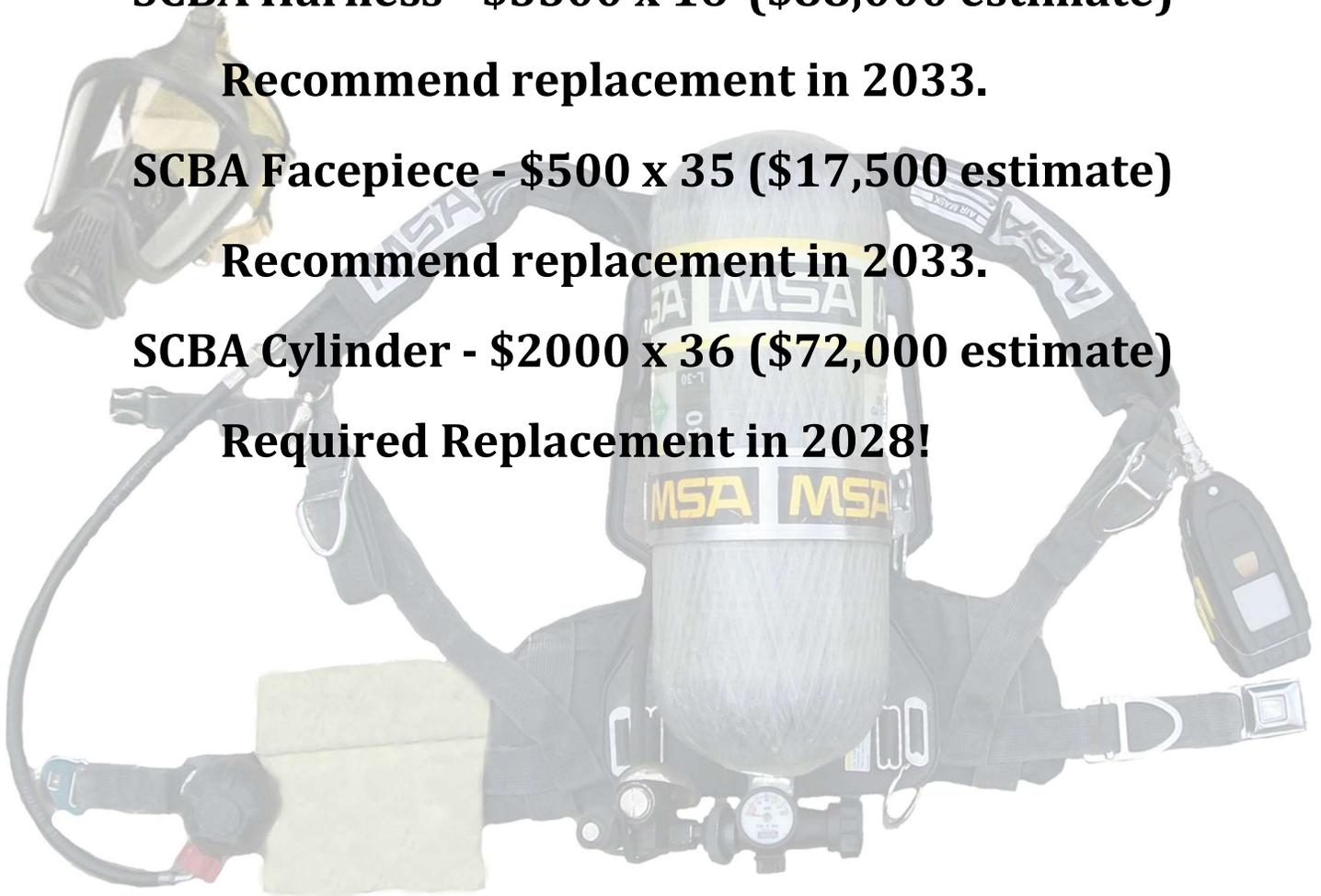
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Facepiece - \$500 x 35 (\$17,500 estimate)

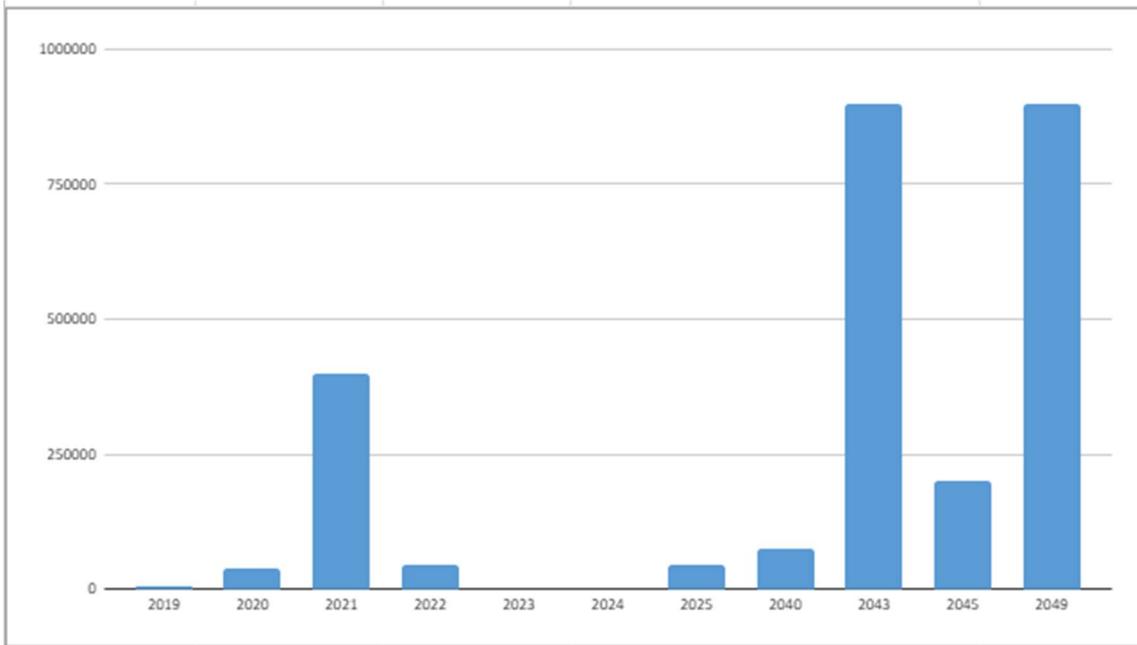
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Cylinder - \$2000 x 36 (\$72,000 estimate)

Required Replacement in 2028!



FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT YEAR AND COST

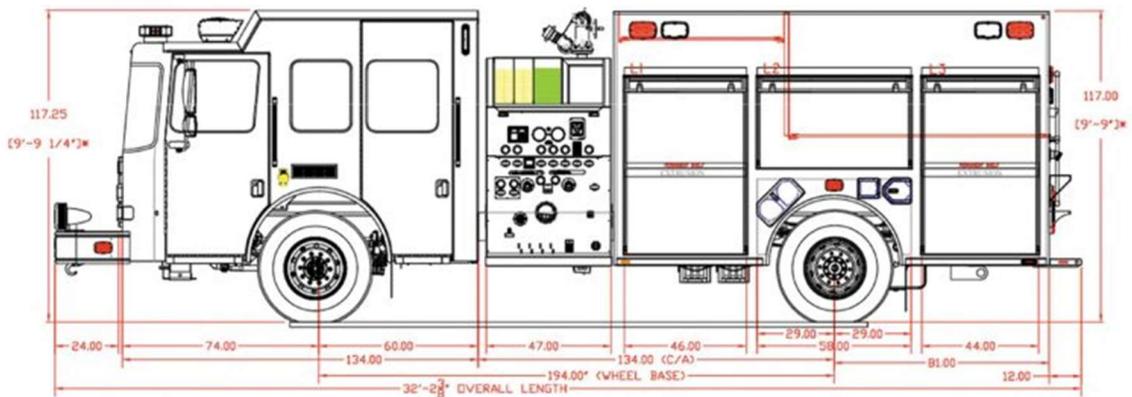


The cost of a fire apparatus varies, but one thing is certain: the prices are not going down.

There are many reasons to purchase a new custom fire engine, and unfortunately, the biggest reason not to is the cost. Every fire engine is custom because every fire department operates in a custom way dictated by its department and the community's needs.

Our current fire apparatus is in excellent working order. Other than some corrosion, wear, and tears, they are in incredibly good condition. This allows us to plan for their eventual replacement. AFD has an apparatus replacement schedule that has many data inputs to give a best guess as to when an apparatus should be replaced. The chart above graphically shows this. 2043 and 2049 are the years when our current Engine 1 and Engine 10 should be replaced. Each of these truck replacements is expected to be more than \$1 Million.

There is a strong possibility that Engine 10 could be refurbished sooner for a lower cost, and a new Engine 1 would be purchased. These conversations will happen soon.





Engine 1 – This is our primary apparatus for all fires and rescue incidents within the district. This apparatus features scene lighting and a traffic control board. It has the “jaws of life” and an onboard breathing air supply. It was purchased, used in 2011, fully equipped.

This apparatus today would cost \$900,000. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2049.



Engine 10 – Although it looks like a ladder truck, it is not. The aerial boom is designed to provide up to one thousand gallons of water per minute when needed. The device also allows us access to places where ground ladders do not work. This apparatus is our first out engine for all mutual aid requests and high-angle rope rescue incidents.

This truck was custom-built for our department in 2002. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2043 or refurbished sooner.



Tender 5 – Rural water supply is necessary, and our two tenders are key components to our fire response in rural areas. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis for our department in 2022. Its primary role is to shuttle water from a source to the fire scene.

This tender has a capacity of 2400 gallons of water and it carries two portable pumps.



Tender 15 – our second water tender. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis in 2000. It is overdue for replacement and has a number of deficiencies. Plans are being developed to reuse the chassis and have a new body built on it.

This tender has a capacity of 2000 gallons of water, and it carries two portable pumps.



Brush 1 – This truck was donated to us by TC Energies. We then had it custom-modified for our use. We used both equipment reserves and grants to build this truck.

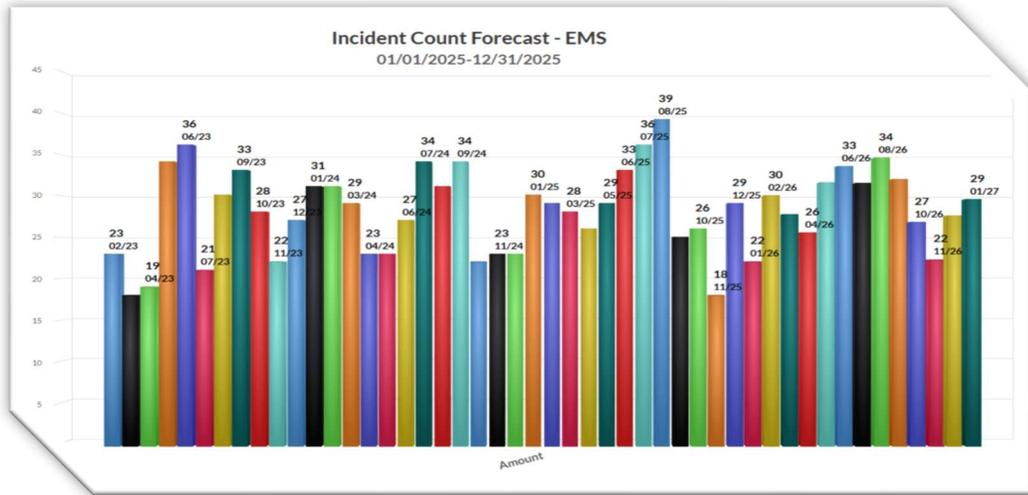
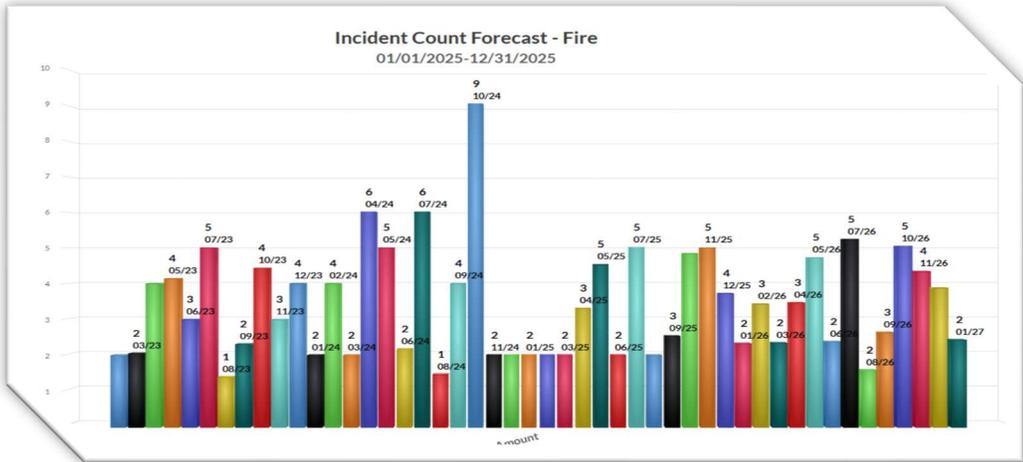
It is our primary vehicle for wildland fires (grass) and traffic incident management (TIM) incidents. It features on-board water, a pump, hoses, traffic control signs, and cones.

LOOKING AHEAD

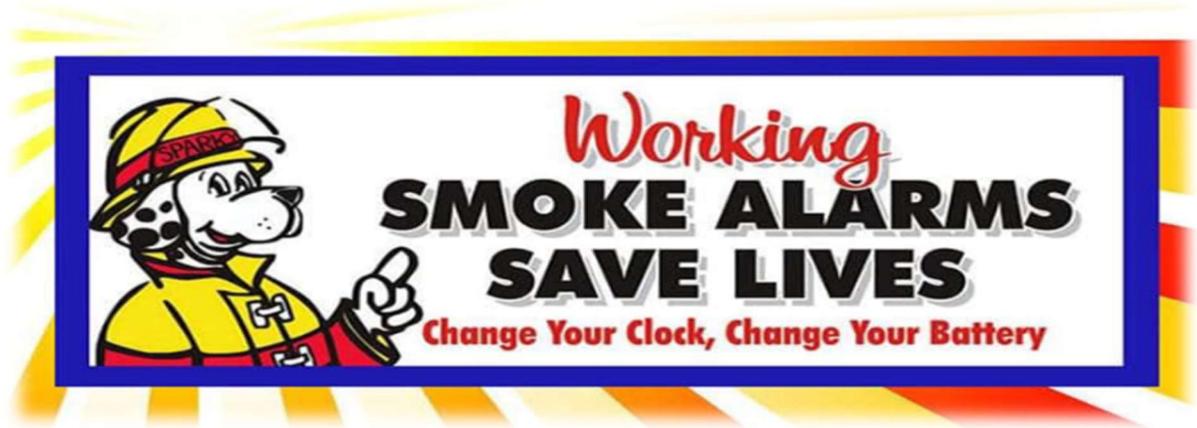
In 2026, the district will continue focusing on operational readiness, personnel development, and long-term planning for apparatus and equipment needs. Priorities include maintaining ALS coverage, strengthening recruitment and retention, and expanding prevention and outreach efforts.

Vision Statement:

The fire service is constantly evolving. Technology and data continue to guide our future. We aim to be leaders in this new fire service. We are committed to staying relevant and purposeful. Our members will be the leaders of our communities. Our department will be a leader for other departments. Our commitment to this vision is strong.



Working Smoke Detectors will save your life long before anyone else will.



SUMMARY

I hope that, as you have read this report, you take away some key points.

- The Amherst Fire District is not separate from the community or the municipalities we serve; the fire district is integral to the quality of life in the community.
- Our staff, full-time, part-time, and paid on call (volunteer) are professionals in the delivery of services. Pay status does not automatically equal professionalism and service excellence.
- Our staff are members of this community; they live, work, and play here. They care about the quality of life here. They are your neighbors and friends.
- We do a lot with what we have.
 - We need more help from you. The number of paid-on-call firefighters able to respond regularly is at the ***lowest level in history***.
 - We are so fortunate to have the support we have. Donations and our Budget make us the envy of many departments. It opens the doors for us to provide a service like no other in a community like ours.
 - We are creative and conscientious with your tax dollars; we pay taxes, too.
- We follow our Mission.
- We have identified our Core Values and embraced them.
- We have a vision for the future.
- The requirements imposed on us, the unfunded mandates, and the continuously rising costs of equipment and personnel safety clothing are creating challenges we will need to solve.
- Paid on-call (volunteer) staff may not be enough in the coming years. The risk and possibility that the day will come when no one is available is real.
- Our fire station is YOUR fire station. If you have never been here, you should come and see us. We are always happy to show off what we have and do.

In closing, as the longest-standing Fire Chief in our history, I give credit to many people for our successes. Previous Fire Chiefs, Fire Commissioners, municipal leaders, and volunteers built the foundation that we stand on today.

The members of the Amherst Fire District have signed up to provide services to you when you need them most and often at their detriment or personal cost. They assess risk differently from most people and act in ways most would not. We tell people to run out of burning buildings while racing each other to run in. What can I say? We are weird like that. You can be too.

Victor

MORE INFORMATION

Our website – www.amherstfd.org



AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
4885 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
AMHERST, WI 715-824-5511

HOME ABOUT US TRAINING PROTOCOLS PUBLIC EDUCATION

AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
ENGINE 1

Contact Us

SERVICES
FIRE/RESCUE
AMBULANCE
EMR

EQUIPMENT
FIRE APPARATUS
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

MEMBERSHIP
MEET OUR MEMBERS

JOIN OUR TEAM
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Numbers

715-824-2699

Admin. Assistant ext. 1

Fire Chief Voss ext. 2

Deputy Fire Chief Bray

Assistant Chief Swan

Assistant Chief Meshak ext. 3

Public Education, Tours, Car Seats

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Amherst Fire District 2025 Annual Report

Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 -
December 31, 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



On behalf of the officers and members of the Amherst Fire District, I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects a year of dedication and service rooted in our mission to protect life and property through fire prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community engagement.

Throughout 2025, our department responded to a wide range of emergencies, including medical calls, motor vehicle crashes, structure fires, and hazardous conditions. Each call for service represents a moment when our community relied on us, and our members answered with professionalism and teamwork.

Our volunteers and staff devoted countless hours to training, emergency response, and community engagement. Their efforts strengthened operational readiness and reinforced the trust we share with the residents we serve.

This report offers a transparent view of our operations, response activities, and resource utilization. It also highlights our investment in firefighter safety, EMS capability, and long-term capital planning.

Thank you to our municipal boards, our mutual aid partners, and the citizens we serve for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Victor R. Voss
Fire Chief / Service Director
Amherst Fire District

Mission Statement:

The Amherst Fire District members are committed professionals whose mission is to provide the highest standard of service through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community interaction to preserve the quality of life and property for all of those who live, visit, or travel through our communities.

ABOUT THE AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT

The Amherst Fire District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and community risk reduction services to Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and New Hope. The District covers approximately 70 square miles and serves an estimated 4,000 residents and visitors.

The district operates through a hybrid staffing model that combines dedicated volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel to provide 24/7 emergency response.

In support of rescue and emergency medical operations, the district staffs an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) car and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. These units are equipped to deliver high-quality prehospital care, including cardiac monitoring, advanced airway management, medications, trauma supplies, and patient transport systems. As an ALS service provider, the district plays a key leadership role in regional EMS response and coordinated patient care.



4585 Fairgrounds Road

Our station features a well-equipped modern training classroom, comfortable living quarters, office space, training structures, and much more. Station tours are always available.

2025 AT A GLANCE

Metric	2025
Total incidents	420
EMS / Rescue	348 (83%)
Fire	16 (4%)
Hazardous	15 (4%)
Good Intent	28 (7%)
False Alarms	6 (1%)
Service Calls	7 (2%)
Mutual aid incidents	16 (Given: 14, Received: 2)
Volunteer incident-response hours	741.41
PVEMS (personal vehicle EMS responses)	149
PVFIRE (personal vehicle FIRE responses)	8
Standby firefighter activations (STBY)	44
Most utilized unit	MED1 (ALS) - 375 responses



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Fire departments across the United States and in Wisconsin continue to see a sustained shift toward EMS and rescue responses. National incident data reported to NFIRS show that two-thirds of fire department calls are EMS and rescue, while only about 4% are fire-related. In Wisconsin, recent reporting highlights growth in fall-related EMS demand, and a statewide survey found that many departments are concerned about maintaining adequate staffing for call response.

This context mirrors Amherst's 2025 experience, where EMS and rescue calls make up the majority of the District's workload and staffing flexibility remains essential to sustained service delivery.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration (NFIRS Run Profile, 2020); Wisconsin DHS (EMS and Falls, 2024); Wisconsin Public Radio staffing survey (2025).

Amherst Fire District **2025: Regional & National Context**

Amherst (2025)

- Total incidents: 420
- EMS/Rescue: 348 (83%)
- Fire: 16 (4%)
- Other: 56 (13%)

National trend (NFIRS)

- 64% of calls are EMS/Rescue
- About 4% are fire-related

Wisconsin context

- Fall-related EMS calls increased
- Staffing pressures statewide

Staffing reality (WI)

- 62% of departments worry about
- adequate staffing for a call

Sources: USFA NFIRS Run Profile (2020); WI DHS EMS & Falls (2024); WPR survey (2025)

2025 A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wisconsin Paramedic of the Year – Adam Meshak

Life-saving recognition – Thom Bray

Years of Service – 40 years, Ken and Bob Glodowski

Promotions – Captain/Training Officer, Pat Rock

Advancements – **Paramedic**, Lily Ackley, **EMT**, Balin Wojtalewicz, Carmen Schultz, Alyssa Ehr,

Med 2 – Fully stocked with grants and donations.

Grants – FAP \$30,000, DNR \$20,000, PC EMR \$8500

Donations – Total \$91,354

Fundraising – Total \$20,000

Salvation Army – We raised \$1400.

AED's and CPR – We helped add 11 AEDs to our community and have taught seventy-three people CPR.

Sports Cardiac Arrest Drills – 192 Students and 22 Coaches participated.

Child Safety Programs – Now offering Child seat inspections and other safety programs.

Fire Chief Succession Plan – Completed a detailed succession plan through committee work



2025 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



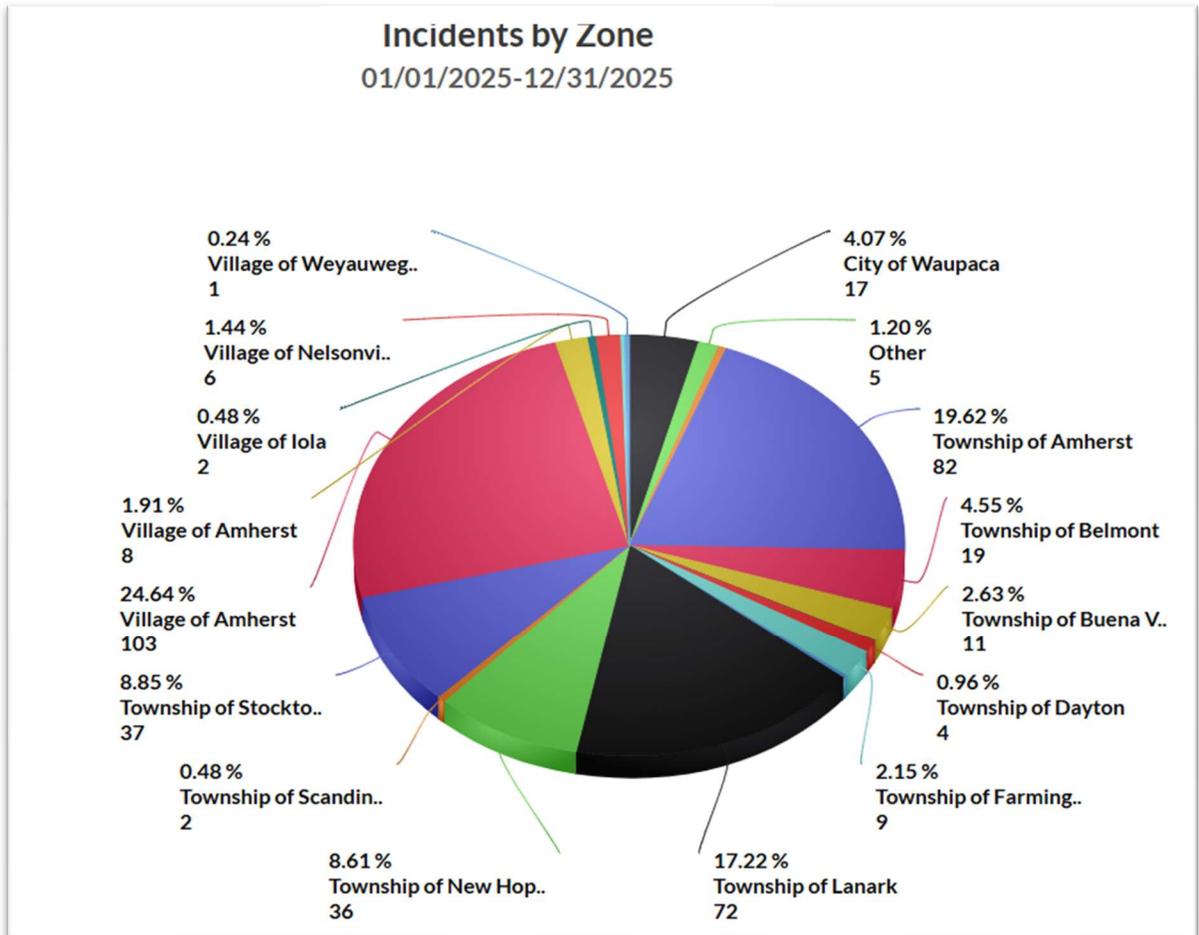
In 2025, the Amherst Fire District recorded 420 incidents. EMS and rescue responses drove most of the service demand, reflecting broader regional and national trends. Fire incidents represented a smaller share of overall activity, while hazardous conditions, good intent calls, and service calls accounted for the remainder of the workload.

We continue to respond to the same types of calls for service and everything else that comes our way. We do this with fewer volunteers than we ever have had. Our roster is strong, and our members are willing and capable, but their availability is reduced.

The future may require us to hire daytime firefighters. The cost of this would be high and needs to be planned.

INCIDENTS BY RESPONSE AREA

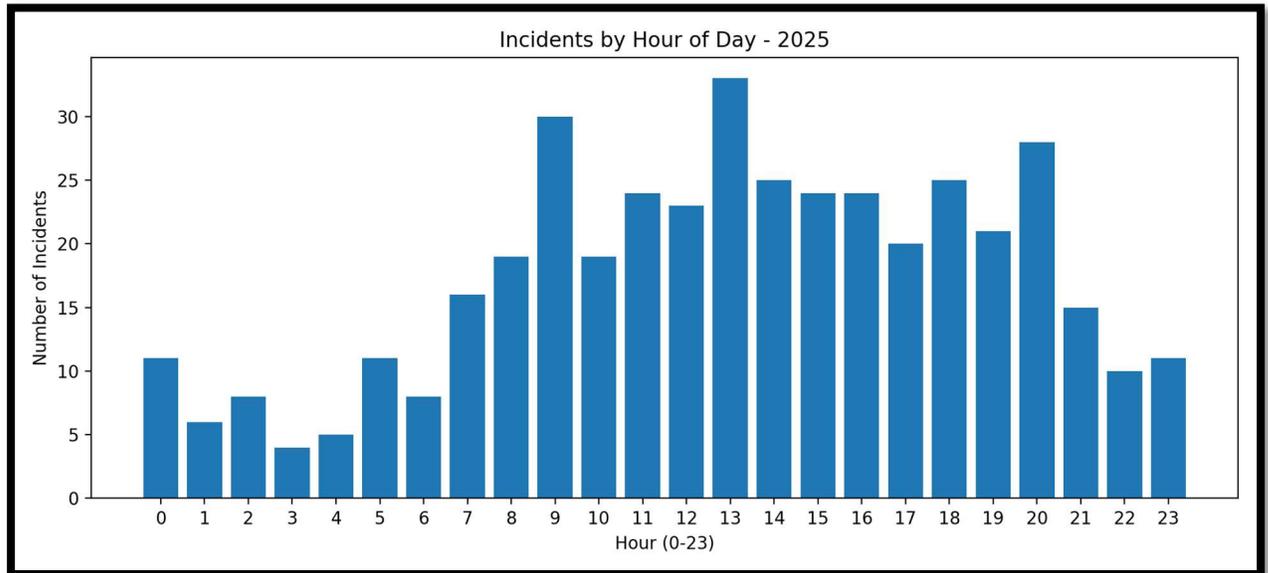
The chart below shows 2025 incident totals by response area, grouped into report-friendly zones representing Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and Belmont, including agricultural and low-density residential areas within the district service area.



Area	Incidents
Amherst (Village)	103
Amherst (Town)	82
Lanark (Town)	72
Belmont (Town) (ambulance only)	19
Amherst Jct (Village)	8
Nelsonville (Village)	6

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Incident volume occurred throughout the day, with higher activity during daytime and early evening hours. Overnight hours maintained a steady baseline demand, requiring continuous readiness. Unfortunately, the peak times for incidents coincided with the lowest availability of our members.



Core Values:

Trust is the cornerstone of all relationships. We will continue to strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the communities we serve. We will earn trust through:

Integrity – We are committed to the highest standard of moral and ethical conduct.

Dedication – We provide quality service through pride and professionalism.

Compassion – We support our neighbors in their time of need.

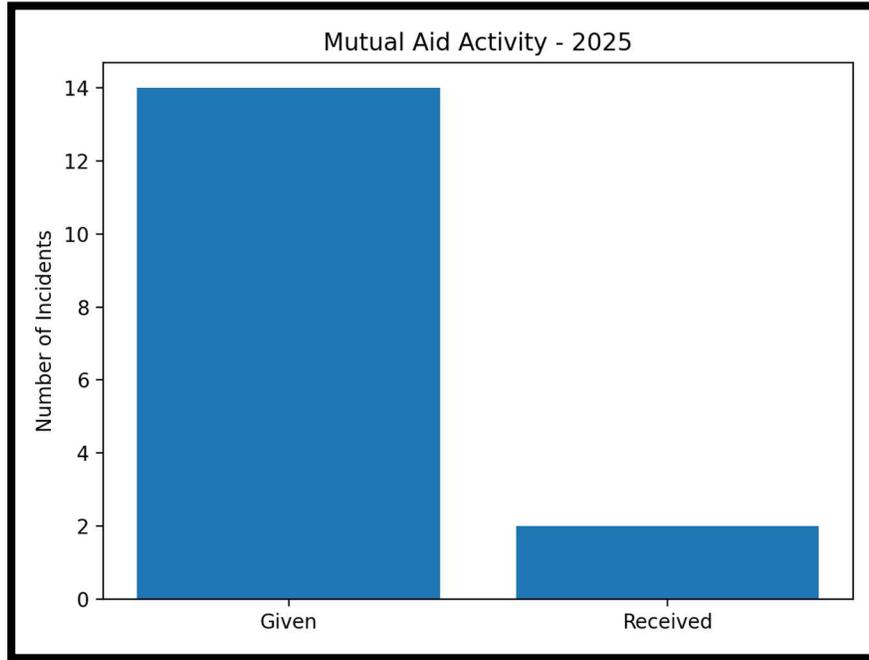
Teamwork – We work together to achieve common goals.

Tradition – We honor the legacy of those who have served before us.

Courage – We do what is right in the face of adversity

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid remains a critical component of regional emergency response. In 2025, the district provided mutual aid on fourteen fire incidents and received mutual aid on two incidents. These events included fill-in/standby coverage, EMS support, and coordinated responses with neighboring agencies.



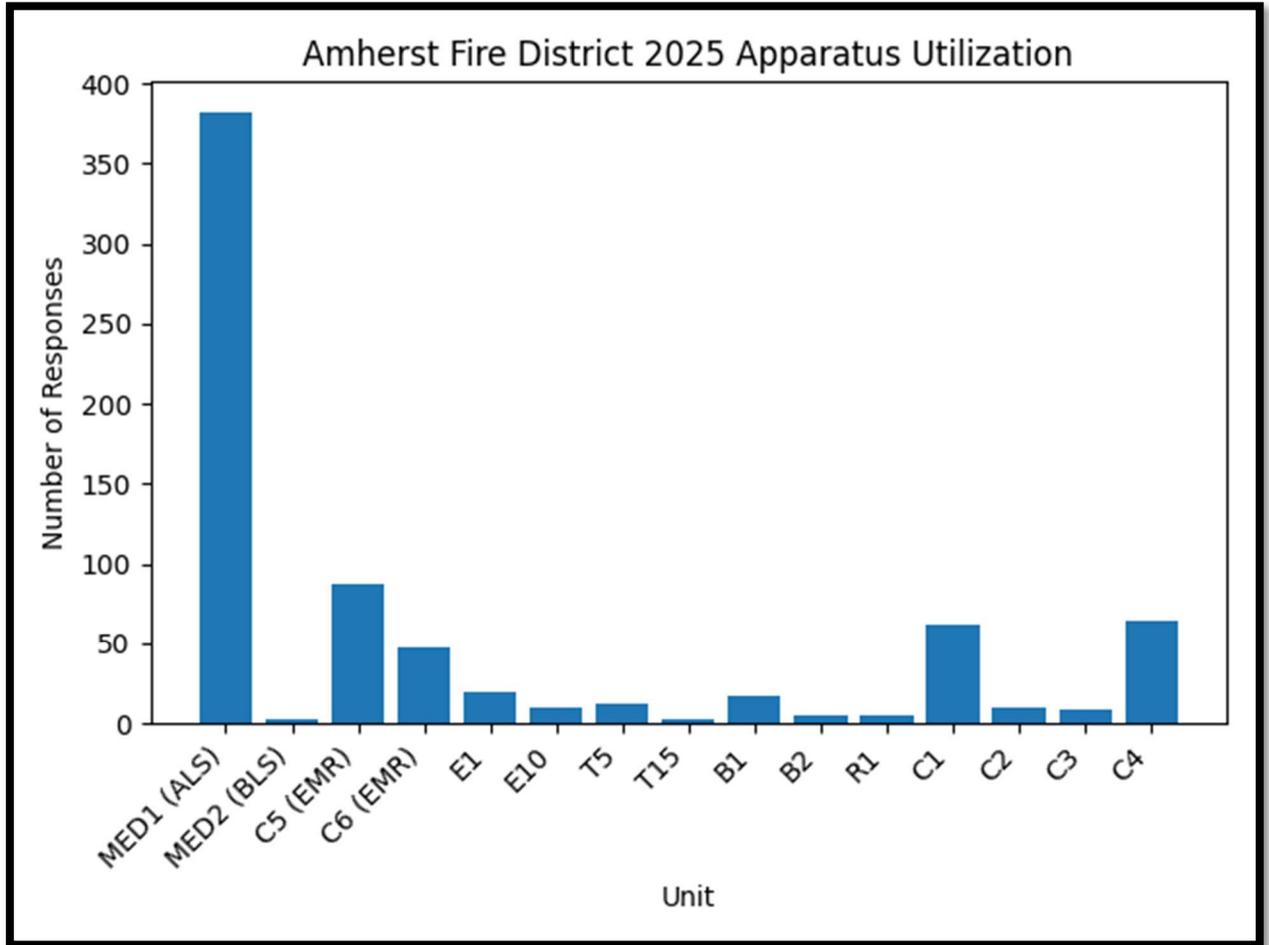
Most frequent mutual aid partners (given):

Almond Volunteer Fire Department	1
Iola & Rural Fire Department	2
Manawa Rural Fire Department	1
Ogdensburg/ St Lawrence Fire Department	1
Rudolph Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1
Scandinavia Volunteer Fire Department	1
Stockton Fire Department	1
Waupaca Area Fire District	1
Weyauwega Area Fire District	3

APPARATUS UTILIZATION

Apparatus utilization is reported for District-owned vehicles. Personal vehicle responses (PVEMS and PVFIRE) and standby firefighter activations (STBY) are reported separately as staffing and coverage metrics. In 2025, the ALS ambulance (MED1) was the most utilized unit, reflecting the EMS-heavy nature of District operations.

As a reminder, C1, C2, C3, and C4 are personal vehicles operated by the fire chief, deputy chief, and assistant chiefs.



PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer members and part-time staff provide essential capacity to sustain 24/7 response coverage. In 2025, documented incident-response hours totaled 741.41 hours. The table below summarizes the **top contributors** by fire incident-response hours.

Member	Incident-response hours
Adam Meshak	83.70
Balin Wojtalewicz	63.87
Robert Smith	63.85
Thomas Bray	56.41
Pat Rock	51.42
Charles Larson	47.14
Mike Klieforth	35.00
Ryan Sundsmo	34.26
Adam Skibicki	31.31
Roy Bohm	28.88



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Amherst Fire District emphasizes prevention and education as part of community safety. In 2025, members supported fire prevention messaging, smoke detector awareness, and safety outreach at school and community events. The district also promoted CPR awareness, basic first aid education, and EMS outreach to encourage early recognition of medical emergencies and prompt activation of the 911 system.



50% of the time when a person suffers cardiac arrest, an AED shock is advised. 100% of the time, CPR is required.

STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

The Amherst Fire District uses a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel. Like many rural and combination departments, the district faces challenges in volunteer recruitment, EMS staffing, and daytime coverage. Leadership continues to focus on recruitment and retention, training support, and reducing barriers to participation to maintain a sustainable workforce.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Amherst Fire District operates under a structured leadership and governance framework designed to support operational readiness, accountability, and effective service delivery.

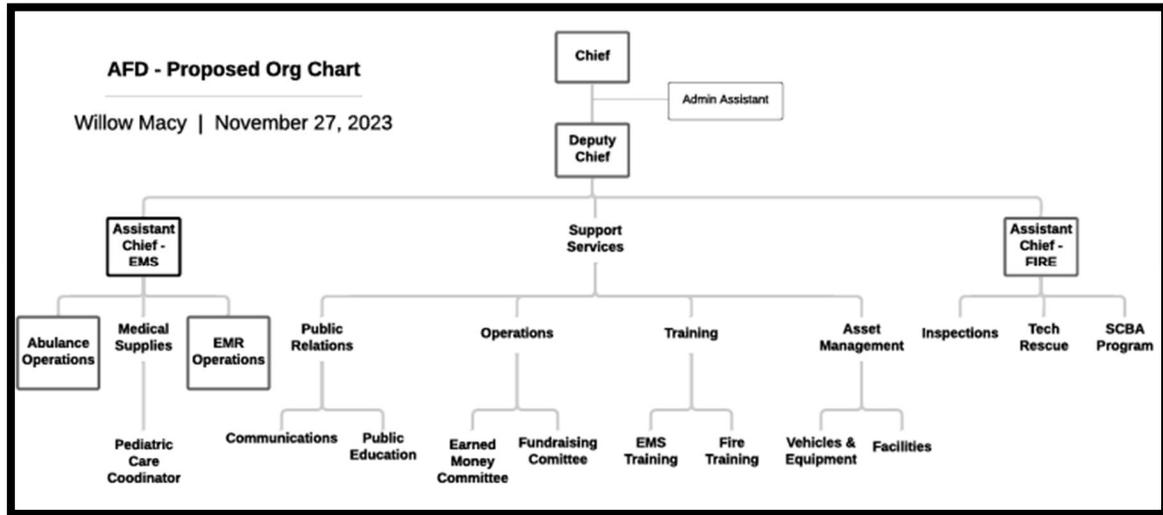
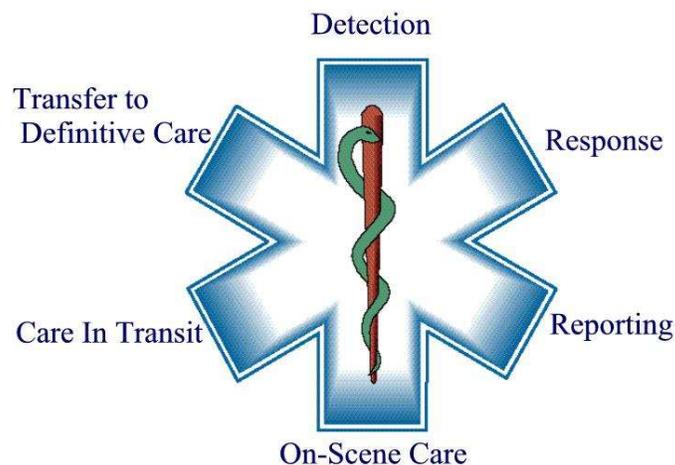


Figure 7: Amherst Fire District Organizational Structure — 2025

In 2023, as part of her Fire Officer certification class, Willow Macy, EMT-P firefighter, mapped our organization as part of her mentorship. This illustrates how our organization is structured. By developing this chart, we can illustrate many of the operational tasks that the department manages. The only positions on this chart that are compensated are the Chief (FTE), Admin. Assistant (PTE), Deputy Chief, and two Assistant Chiefs, who are compensated with annual stipends. All other tasks are done with volunteers, either receiving no pay or the minimum training rate of \$7.25/hour.



HOW THE FIRE DISTRICT WORKS

The Amherst Fire District is a local governmental entity established to provide fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and related public safety services within a defined geographic service area.

The district is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by each owner municipality, which is responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, and providing fiscal oversight.

The Board does not manage day-to-day emergency operations but instead establishes the strategic and financial framework under which the Fire District operates.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Fire Chief, who is responsible for implementing Board policies, overseeing personnel, managing emergency response operations, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

The Fire District delivers services through a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel.

Funding for operations is provided primarily through local tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising, grants, and other limited revenue sources.

The Fire District operates as part of a broader regional emergency services system and coordinates closely with neighboring agencies, dispatch centers, and hospitals.

Before 1992, there were three fire departments in our area. Nelsonville Fire Department, Amherst Jct. Fire Department, and the Amherst Fire Department. There were three fire stations¹, one in Nelsonville, one in Amherst Jct. and one in Amherst.

All three departments worked independently of each other. All three struggled to have enough trained volunteers and usable equipment.

In 1992, the Amherst Fire District was founded with Fire Chief Jay Gordon and members of the newly formed Amherst Fire & Safety Commission. The consolidation of the three departments into one set in motion several changes for our area. The immediate need for a new water tender was filled by ordering a new truck, a 3000-gallon water tender. The need for a new fire station was apparent from the beginning and was planned. In 1994, we broke ground on a new seven thousand square foot fire station and moved in the spring of 1995.

Annual budgets have been created each year to fund the fire district. Contracts with both Lanark and New Hope have existed from the beginning. Trucks have been upgraded as needed; equipment has been purchased through planning, grants, fundraising, and donations. The cost of the fire district is shared by the owner municipalities, the Town of Amherst, the Villages of Nelsonville, Amherst Jct., and Amherst.

¹ All three stations were little more than garages. There were no meeting space, training area, bathrooms, or offices.

THE FORMULA

All costs associated with the fire district are shared between the four owner municipalities. The formula used was developed when the district was formed and has been used every year since. There are two components to the formula.

1. Population – 25% of the formula is based on the population served. This correlates to the idea that on the Emergency Medical side of things, we are treating people. Therefore, as the population changes, our call volume will follow.
2. Personal Property - 75% of the formula is based on the value of buildings in each municipality, as established by the Report of Property Tax of each municipality.

INCOME

The Amherst Fire District also receives income in the form of contracts for services. There are three sources of income.

1. Town of Lanark – the town contracts with AFD for fire and EMS services. The fire response area is about ½ of the township. The EMS response area covers the entire township.
2. Town of New Hope – the town contracts with AFD for EMR services for the southern half of the township.

Portage County – the county contracts with AFD to provide the personnel to staff the ambulance in Amherst. This contract is negotiated to include all costs associated with the ambulance operations.

EMS SYSTEM ROLE AND REGIONAL MEDICAL INTEGRATION

The Amherst Fire District provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) care and coordinated prehospital medical response. District EMS operations include rapid first response, cardiac and trauma care, advanced airway management, and medication administration. The district works with neighboring agencies, dispatchers, and regional hospitals to support coordinated responses, ALS intercepts, and efficient transfers of care.

HOW THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKS

Before 2008, all Portage County Ambulances were in Stevens Point. It was common to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in the Amherst, Amherst Jct., or Nelsonville area. In the towns of Lanark and Belmont, the wait was even longer, sometimes over 30 minutes. At that time, I was the fire chief and was responsible for the Amherst Area First Responders. These response times were unacceptable for our community, and something needed to be done to better the service. Extensive work was done to establish an ambulance in Amherst, and it was approved in May of 2007 by the county board.

On January 1, 2008, the Amherst Fire District began staffing a full-time ambulance at our fire station in Amherst. This was a major accomplishment for both Portage County and us. This meant that response time from the time a 911 call was received until an ambulance arrived was cut to an average response of 5 minutes. The Amherst Area First Responders became Emergency Medical Responders and increased their license to EMT Basic or higher.

Over the years, we have negotiated a number of contracts with Portage County. These contracts are quite simple.

- The County provides all the equipment, including the ambulance, the cot, the supplies, the fuel, and more. The contract also provides the wages and benefits for the full-time and part-time employees. There are also funds for training and uniforms for the staff.
- We agree to manage the ambulance, to staff it appropriately, to house it, to maintain the equipment in a ready state, and to respond to calls wherever needed.

Why does this work? It works because we are part of a regional (county-wide) service. When you regionalize services, it spreads the costs out across a region, making it affordable for everyone. The county manages the finances, including collecting the revenue from the billing. The county levies the additional funds to maintain the entire system. In 2019, the county added another ambulance to the system and entered a similar contract with the Plover Fire Department. So together with Plover, Stevens Point, and Amherst, we are now part of a very well-organized countywide system. The residents and visitors to our county receive Paramedic care within a very reasonable time when 911 is called.



SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Amherst Fire District is a leader in the area for expertise and services offered. Our team is trained and equipped to respond to and mitigate many distinct types of calls for service. This sets AFD apart from most other departments in the area. This diverse list of capabilities is one of the key elements to attracting new firefighters.

1. **Advanced Life Support ambulance** – through our contract with the county, we schedule, staff, train, and employ about twenty part-time employees and five full time employees. The ambulance is licensed as a one-paramedic unit with the other provider at least at the EMT level. Also on our roster are a number of Registered Nurses and even a doctor who can function at the Paramedic level.
2. **Emergency Medical Responders (EMR)** – formerly known as first responders, our EMR group is made up of paid per-call employees who respond to medical calls in our entire response area. We utilize two response vehicles that carry life-saving equipment. The EMR also attends local events and provides up to an ALS service.
3. **Fire Response** – our department operates two fire engines, two water tenders, one reserve engine, and two brush fire trucks. Our communities have excellent fire response capabilities as indicated in our Insurance Standards Office (ISO) Community Risk Rate. On a scale of 1 -10, the Village of Amherst is rated at a 3, the Villages of Amherst Jct. and Nelsonville are rated a 6, and the Town of Amherst is rated at a 7.
4. **Technical Rescue** – our department is trained and equipped to respond to the following technical rescues (many of these hazards are found on farms)
 - a. High Angle/Rope rescue – getting people down from high places like silos, grain and fertilizer elevators, roofs, etc.
 - b. Trench rescue – getting people removed from collapsed trenches and holes in the ground.
 - c. Grain Bin rescue – getting people removed from grain bins when they have become engulfed in grain.
 - d. Ice Water rescue – getting people out of the water when they have fallen through the ice.
 - e. Building Collapse rescue – building stabilization and entry to rescue people from collapsed or partially collapsed buildings.
 - f. Extrication rescue – both heavy and medium duty extrication of people from vehicles involved in accidents, farm equipment, and industrial accidents.
5. **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** – we are one of two agencies in the county that are trained and designated as an official TIM team. We provide traffic management on any road, when necessary, for several reasons, such as traffic accidents, downed power lines, road failures, road blockages, etc.
6. **Landing Zone management** – our firefighters are also trained to manage landing zones for medical helicopters that are called into our area.
7. **Medical Assists** – fire personnel are trained to do CPR, use AEDs, and use much of the equipment carried by the EMRs and ambulances. They provide lift assistance, patient access, ambulance drivers, and more to support patient care.



Car 5 and Car 6 – These two vehicles are equipped with advanced life support equipment and supplies. They are primary vehicles for Emergency Medical incidents.

Our department responders can use these vehicles when they are “on call” for medical emergencies. These vehicles are often seen in the community and are staffed with paid-on-call members.



When seconds count, we want our “first responders” available and able to respond directly to the incident or medical situation. These cars give us flexibility and response.

These cars were purchased and equipped with grants, fundraising, and some budgeted items.



Med 2 – Our department purchased this ambulance to serve our community. We are in the process of stocking and equipping it to provide Advanced Life Support. This vehicle, along with the equipment carried, was fully funded through local donors and grant funding. There is currently no cost to the local district budget, and the secured funding will cover the cost for at least 5 years. Currently, we are using Med 2 for event standbys and to respond to emergencies with our

community. The long-term goal will be to use it for interfacility transfers and as a backup for our primary ambulance.

We are not allowed to transport patients YET.



Med 1 – Through our service contract with Portage County, we are assigned an ambulance. The county owns the ambulance and equipment carried. Our contract with them is to staff it 24/7/365. We always do this with at least one Paramedic and another care provider from EMT, RN’s or Physicians. This ambulance has a primary response area including the towns of Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, Belmont, and Buena Vista. It also includes the Villages

of Amherst, Amherst Jct, and Nelsonville.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – PPE

PPE includes all the following pieces of protective clothing.

Fire Helmet - \$400

Particulate Flash Hood - \$120

Turnout Coat - \$1500

Turnout Pant/Suspenders - \$1200

Fire Boots - \$350

Traffic Vest - \$45

Wildland Fire Coat - \$150

Fire Gloves - \$95

Rescue Gloves - \$15

Current standards call for the replacement of all of this in a 10-year cycle. AFD does go beyond 10 years based on the condition of the individual pieces.



\$3875 per fire fighter

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

SCBA is the single piece of equipment we must have to protect ourselves from heat, smoke, toxic gases, carcinogens, and much more. An SCBA allows us to do our job when the air is not safe to breathe. We cannot fight fire, rescue people, manage hazardous materials, or much of anything else without these tools.

Our SCBAs were purchased in 2013, complete with new harnesses, cylinders, and facepieces. The harnesses are recommended to be replaced as the version of the standard is updated. Historically, it has been acceptable to be within two standards of the current, or about 20 years. In 2013, we were compliant with the 2012 standard. Facepieces are also affected by the harness upgrades and typically must be replaced when the harness is replaced.

Cylinders fall under another standard, which only allows for a 15-year life cycle. At the expiration of the cylinder, they must be removed from service and destroyed. Our cylinders were purchased in 2013 and will expire in 2028.

SCBA Harness - \$5500 x 16 (\$88,000 estimate)

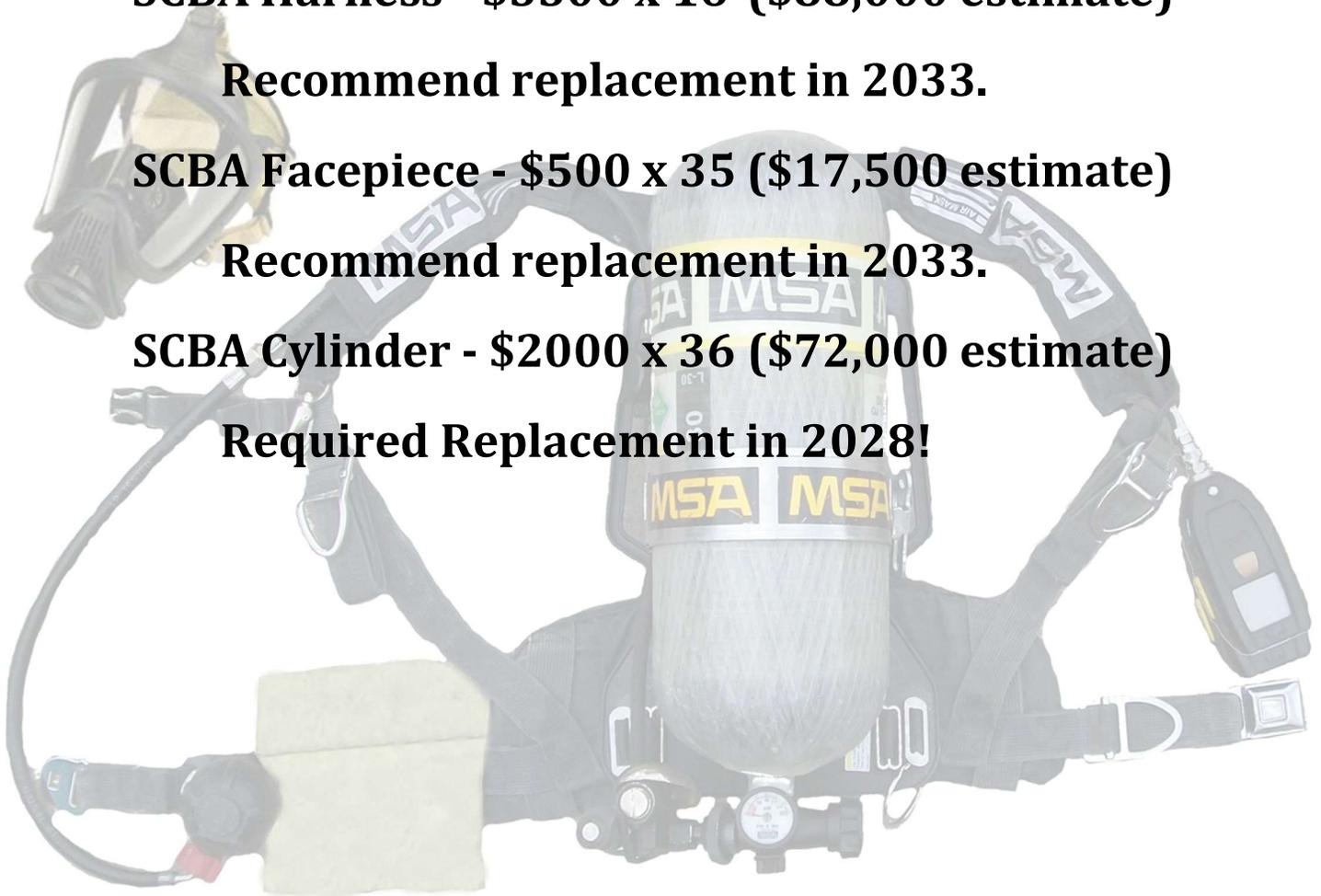
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Facepiece - \$500 x 35 (\$17,500 estimate)

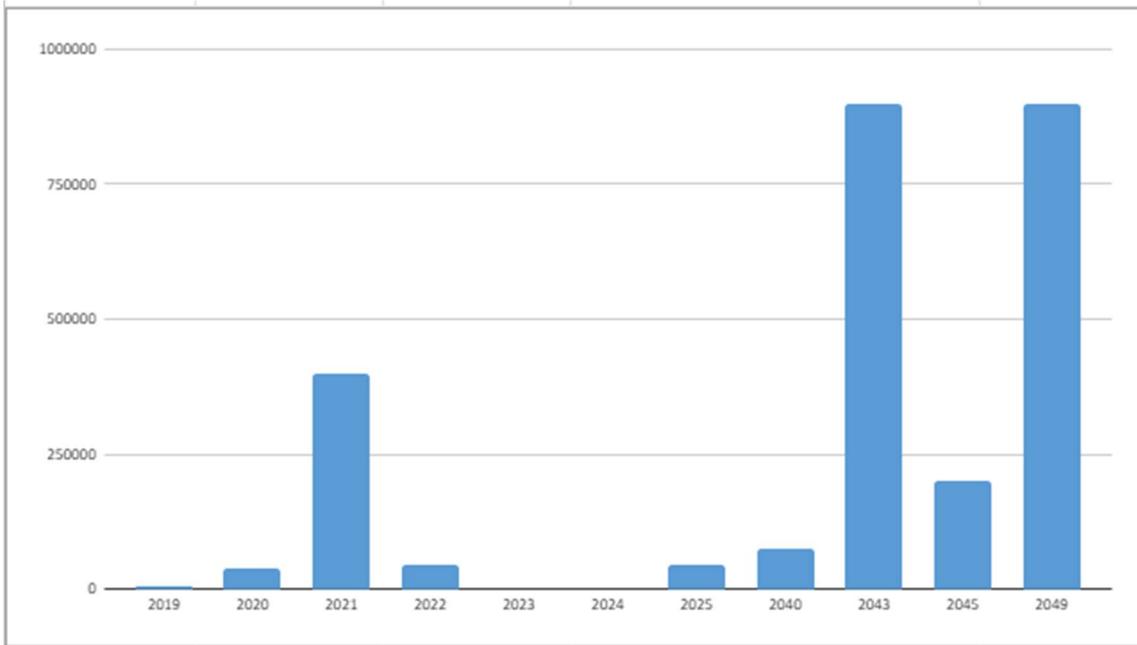
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Cylinder - \$2000 x 36 (\$72,000 estimate)

Required Replacement in 2028!



FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT YEAR AND COST

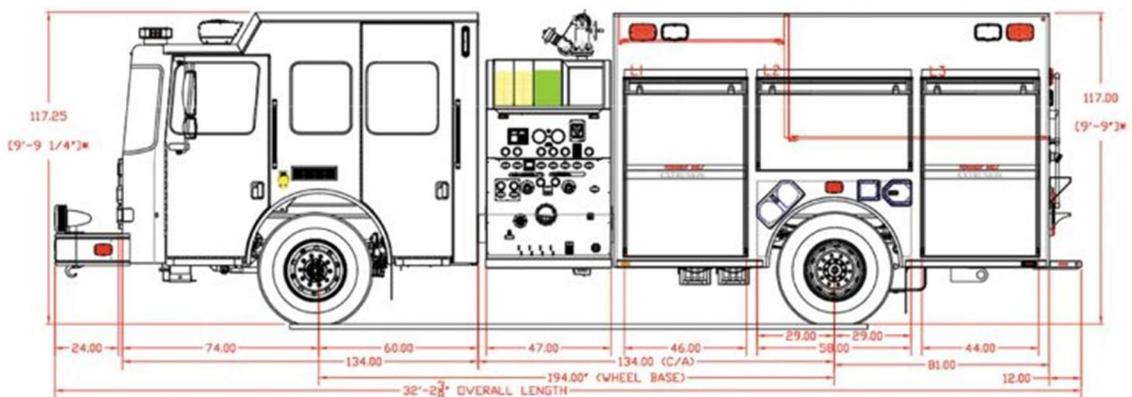


The cost of a fire apparatus varies, but one thing is certain: the prices are not going down.

There are many reasons to purchase a new custom fire engine, and unfortunately, the biggest reason not to is the cost. Every fire engine is custom because every fire department operates in a custom way dictated by its department and the community's needs.

Our current fire apparatus is in excellent working order. Other than some corrosion, wear, and tears, they are in incredibly good condition. This allows us to plan for their eventual replacement. AFD has an apparatus replacement schedule that has many data inputs to give a best guess as to when an apparatus should be replaced. The chart above graphically shows this. 2043 and 2049 are the years when our current Engine 1 and Engine 10 should be replaced. Each of these truck replacements is expected to be more than \$1 Million.

There is a strong possibility that Engine 10 could be refurbished sooner for a lower cost, and a new Engine 1 would be purchased. These conversations will happen soon.





Engine 1 – This is our primary apparatus for all fires and rescue incidents within the district. This apparatus features scene lighting and a traffic control board. It has the “jaws of life” and an onboard breathing air supply. It was purchased, used in 2011, fully equipped.

This apparatus today would cost \$900,000. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2049.



Engine 10 – Although it looks like a ladder truck, it is not. The aerial boom is designed to provide up to one thousand gallons of water per minute when needed. The device also allows us access to places where ground ladders do not work. This apparatus is our first out engine for all mutual aid requests and high-angle rope rescue incidents.

This truck was custom-built for our department in 2002. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2043 or refurbished sooner.



Tender 5 – Rural water supply is necessary, and our two tenders are key components to our fire response in rural areas. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis for our department in 2022. Its primary role is to shuttle water from a source to the fire scene.

This tender has a capacity of 2400 gallons of water and it carries two portable pumps.



Tender 15 – our second water tender. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis in 2000. It is overdue for replacement and has a number of deficiencies. Plans are being developed to reuse the chassis and have a new body built on it.

This tender has a capacity of 2000 gallons of water, and it carries two portable pumps.



Brush 1 – This truck was donated to us by TC Energies. We then had it custom-modified for our use. We used both equipment reserves and grants to build this truck.

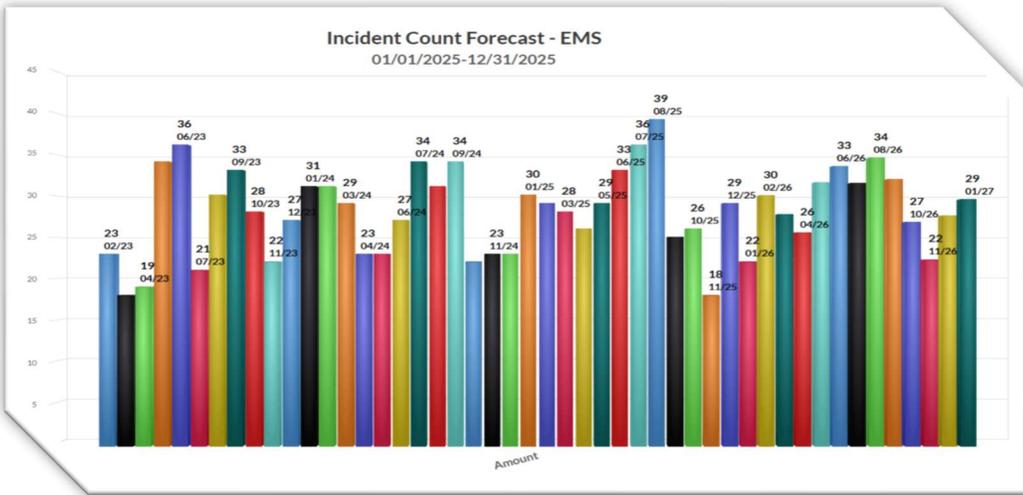
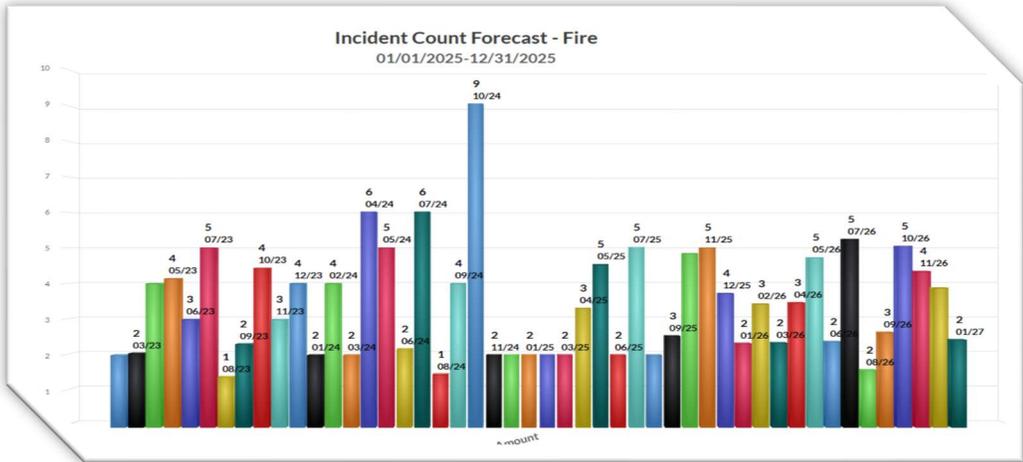
It is our primary vehicle for wildland fires (grass) and traffic incident management (TIM) incidents. It features on-board water, a pump, hoses, traffic control signs, and cones.

LOOKING AHEAD

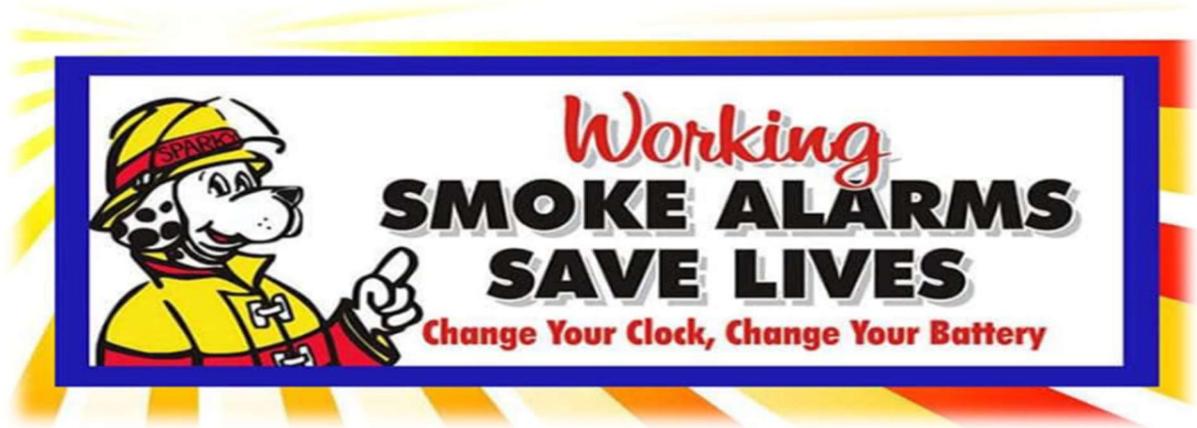
In 2026, the district will continue focusing on operational readiness, personnel development, and long-term planning for apparatus and equipment needs. Priorities include maintaining ALS coverage, strengthening recruitment and retention, and expanding prevention and outreach efforts.

Vision Statement:

The fire service is constantly evolving. Technology and data continue to guide our future. We aim to be leaders in this new fire service. We are committed to staying relevant and purposeful. Our members will be the leaders of our communities. Our department will be a leader for other departments. Our commitment to this vision is strong.



Working Smoke Detectors will save your life long before anyone else will.



SUMMARY

I hope that, as you have read this report, you take away some key points.

- The Amherst Fire District is not separate from the community or the municipalities we serve; the fire district is integral to the quality of life in the community.
- Our staff, full-time, part-time, and paid on call (volunteer) are professionals in the delivery of services. Pay status does not automatically equal professionalism and service excellence.
- Our staff are members of this community; they live, work, and play here. They care about the quality of life here. They are your neighbors and friends.
- We do a lot with what we have.
 - We need more help from you. The number of paid-on-call firefighters able to respond regularly is at the ***lowest level in history***.
 - We are so fortunate to have the support we have. Donations and our Budget make us the envy of many departments. It opens the doors for us to provide a service like no other in a community like ours.
 - We are creative and conscientious with your tax dollars; we pay taxes, too.
- We follow our Mission.
- We have identified our Core Values and embraced them.
- We have a vision for the future.
- The requirements imposed on us, the unfunded mandates, and the continuously rising costs of equipment and personnel safety clothing are creating challenges we will need to solve.
- Paid on-call (volunteer) staff may not be enough in the coming years. The risk and possibility that the day will come when no one is available is real.
- Our fire station is YOUR fire station. If you have never been here, you should come and see us. We are always happy to show off what we have and do.

In closing, as the longest-standing Fire Chief in our history, I give credit to many people for our successes. Previous Fire Chiefs, Fire Commissioners, municipal leaders, and volunteers built the foundation that we stand on today.

The members of the Amherst Fire District have signed up to provide services to you when you need them most and often at their detriment or personal cost. They assess risk differently from most people and act in ways most would not. We tell people to run out of burning buildings while racing each other to run in. What can I say? We are weird like that. You can be too.

Victor

MORE INFORMATION

Our website – www.amherstfd.org



AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
4885 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
AMHERST, WI 715-824-5511

HOME ABOUT US TRAINING PROTOCOLS PUBLIC EDUCATION

AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
ENGINE 1

Contact Us

SERVICES
FIRE/RESCUE
AMBULANCE
EMR

EQUIPMENT
FIRE APPARATUS
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

MEMBERSHIP
MEET OUR MEMBERS

JOIN OUR TEAM
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Numbers

715-824-2699

Admin. Assistant ext. 1

Fire Chief Voss ext. 2

Deputy Fire Chief Bray

Assistant Chief Swan

Assistant Chief Meshak ext. 3

Public Education, Tours, Car Seats

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Amherst Fire District 2025 Annual Report

Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 -
December 31, 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



On behalf of the officers and members of the Amherst Fire District, I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects a year of dedication and service rooted in our mission to protect life and property through fire prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community engagement.

Throughout 2025, our department responded to a wide range of emergencies, including medical calls, motor vehicle crashes, structure fires, and hazardous conditions. Each call for service represents a moment when our community relied on us, and our members answered with professionalism and teamwork.

Our volunteers and staff devoted countless hours to training, emergency response, and community engagement. Their efforts strengthened operational readiness and reinforced the trust we share with the residents we serve.

This report offers a transparent view of our operations, response activities, and resource utilization. It also highlights our investment in firefighter safety, EMS capability, and long-term capital planning.

Thank you to our municipal boards, our mutual aid partners, and the citizens we serve for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Victor R. Voss
Fire Chief / Service Director
Amherst Fire District

Mission Statement:

The Amherst Fire District members are committed professionals whose mission is to provide the highest standard of service through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community interaction to preserve the quality of life and property for all of those who live, visit, or travel through our communities.

ABOUT THE AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT

The Amherst Fire District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and community risk reduction services to Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and New Hope. The District covers approximately 70 square miles and serves an estimated 4,000 residents and visitors.

The district operates through a hybrid staffing model that combines dedicated volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel to provide 24/7 emergency response.

In support of rescue and emergency medical operations, the district staffs an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) car and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. These units are equipped to deliver high-quality prehospital care, including cardiac monitoring, advanced airway management, medications, trauma supplies, and patient transport systems. As an ALS service provider, the district plays a key leadership role in regional EMS response and coordinated patient care.



4585 Fairgrounds Road

Our station features a well-equipped modern training classroom, comfortable living quarters, office space, training structures, and much more. Station tours are always available.

2025 AT A GLANCE

Metric	2025
Total incidents	420
EMS / Rescue	348 (83%)
Fire	16 (4%)
Hazardous	15 (4%)
Good Intent	28 (7%)
False Alarms	6 (1%)
Service Calls	7 (2%)
Mutual aid incidents	16 (Given: 14, Received: 2)
Volunteer incident-response hours	741.41
PVEMS (personal vehicle EMS responses)	149
PVFIRE (personal vehicle FIRE responses)	8
Standby firefighter activations (STBY)	44
Most utilized unit	MED1 (ALS) - 375 responses



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Fire departments across the United States and in Wisconsin continue to see a sustained shift toward EMS and rescue responses. National incident data reported to NFIRS show that two-thirds of fire department calls are EMS and rescue, while only about 4% are fire-related. In Wisconsin, recent reporting highlights growth in fall-related EMS demand, and a statewide survey found that many departments are concerned about maintaining adequate staffing for call response.

This context mirrors Amherst's 2025 experience, where EMS and rescue calls make up the majority of the District's workload and staffing flexibility remains essential to sustained service delivery.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration (NFIRS Run Profile, 2020); Wisconsin DHS (EMS and Falls, 2024); Wisconsin Public Radio staffing survey (2025).

Amherst Fire District **2025: Regional & National Context**

Amherst (2025)

- Total incidents: 420
- EMS/Rescue: 348 (83%)
- Fire: 16 (4%)
- Other: 56 (13%)

National trend (NFIRS)

- 64% of calls are EMS/Rescue
- About 4% are fire-related

Wisconsin context

- Fall-related EMS calls increased
- Staffing pressures statewide

Staffing reality (WI)

- 62% of departments worry about
- adequate staffing for a call

Sources: USFA NFIRS Run Profile (2020); WI DHS EMS & Falls (2024); WPR survey (2025)

2025 A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wisconsin Paramedic of the Year – Adam Meshak

Life-saving recognition – Thom Bray

Years of Service – 40 years, Ken and Bob Glodowski

Promotions – Captain/Training Officer, Pat Rock

Advancements – **Paramedic**, Lily Ackley, **EMT**, Balin Wojtalewicz, Carmen Schultz, Alyssa Ehr,

Med 2 – Fully stocked with grants and donations.

Grants – FAP \$30,000, DNR \$20,000, PC EMR \$8500

Donations – Total \$91,354

Fundraising – Total \$20,000

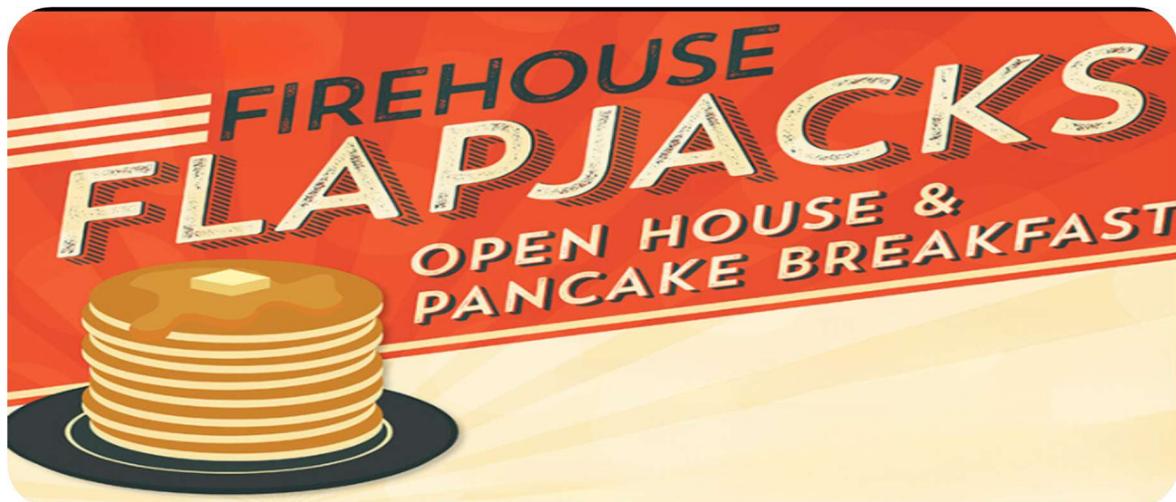
Salvation Army – We raised \$1400.

AED's and CPR – We helped add 11 AEDs to our community and have taught seventy-three people CPR.

Sports Cardiac Arrest Drills – 192 Students and 22 Coaches participated.

Child Safety Programs – Now offering Child seat inspections and other safety programs.

Fire Chief Succession Plan – Completed a detailed succession plan through committee work



2025 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



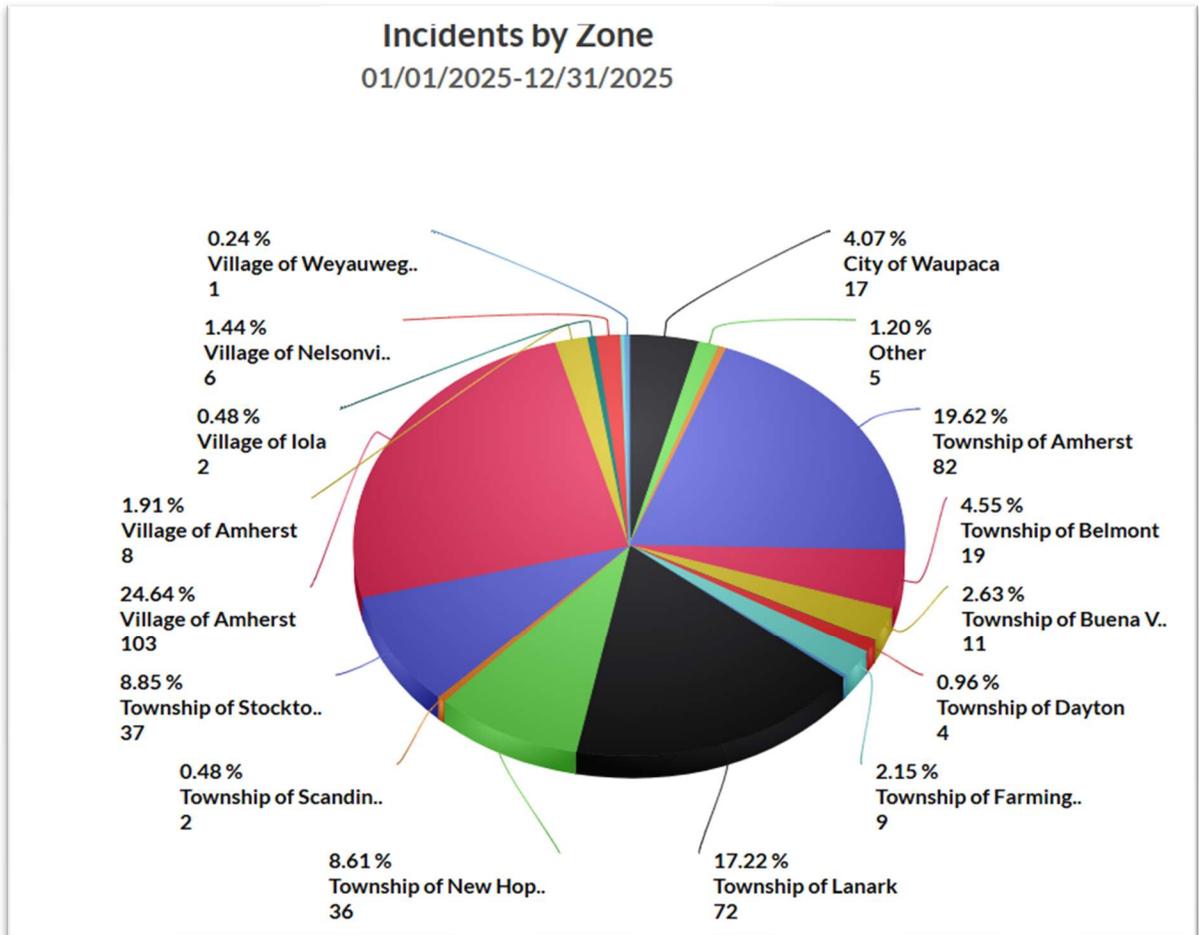
In 2025, the Amherst Fire District recorded 420 incidents. EMS and rescue responses drove most of the service demand, reflecting broader regional and national trends. Fire incidents represented a smaller share of overall activity, while hazardous conditions, good intent calls, and service calls accounted for the remainder of the workload.

We continue to respond to the same types of calls for service and everything else that comes our way. We do this with fewer volunteers than we ever have had. Our roster is strong, and our members are willing and capable, but their availability is reduced.

The future may require us to hire daytime firefighters. The cost of this would be high and needs to be planned.

INCIDENTS BY RESPONSE AREA

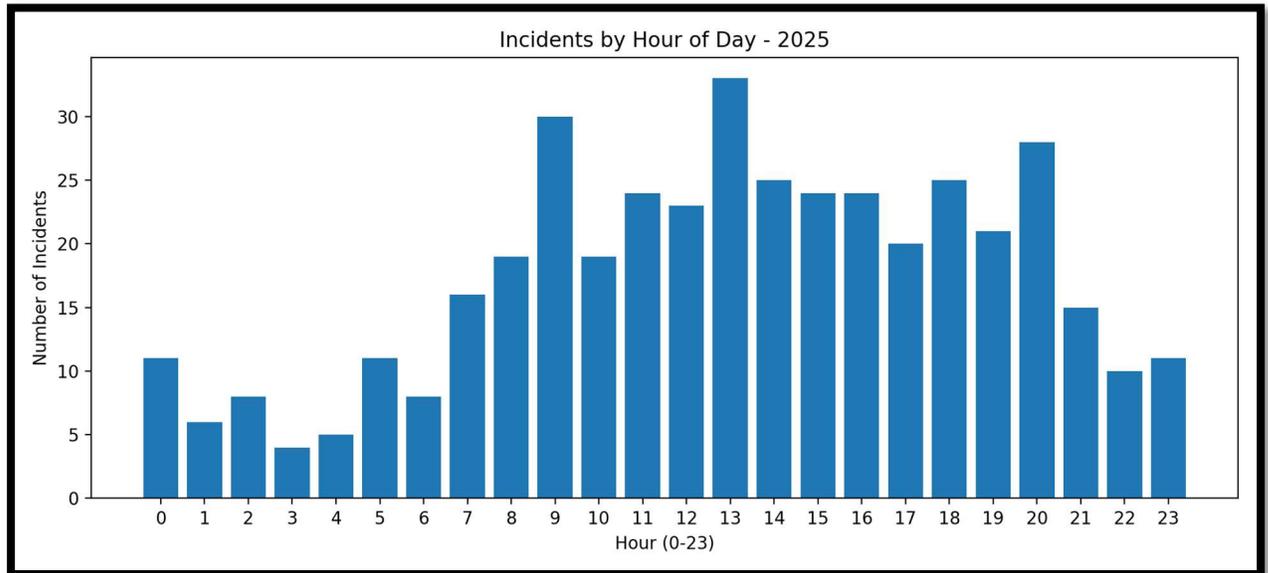
The chart below shows 2025 incident totals by response area, grouped into report-friendly zones representing Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and Belmont, including agricultural and low-density residential areas within the district service area.



Area	Incidents
Amherst (Village)	103
Amherst (Town)	82
Lanark (Town)	72
Belmont (Town) (ambulance only)	19
Amherst Jct (Village)	8
Nelsonville (Village)	6

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Incident volume occurred throughout the day, with higher activity during daytime and early evening hours. Overnight hours maintained a steady baseline demand, requiring continuous readiness. Unfortunately, the peak times for incidents coincided with the lowest availability of our members.



Core Values:

Trust is the cornerstone of all relationships. We will continue to strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the communities we serve. We will earn trust through:

Integrity – We are committed to the highest standard of moral and ethical conduct.

Dedication – We provide quality service through pride and professionalism.

Compassion – We support our neighbors in their time of need.

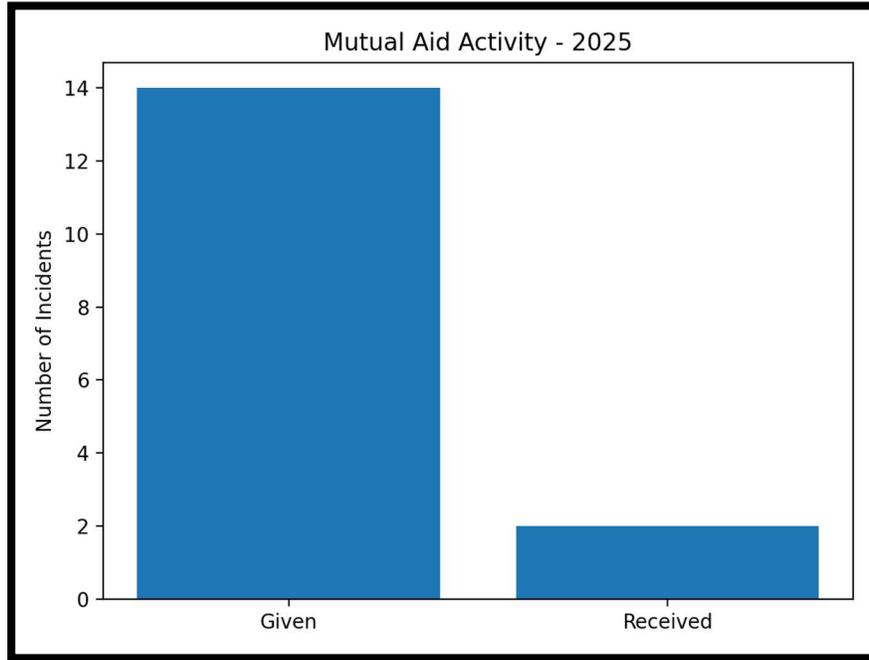
Teamwork – We work together to achieve common goals.

Tradition – We honor the legacy of those who have served before us.

Courage – We do what is right in the face of adversity

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid remains a critical component of regional emergency response. In 2025, the district provided mutual aid on fourteen fire incidents and received mutual aid on two incidents. These events included fill-in/standby coverage, EMS support, and coordinated responses with neighboring agencies.



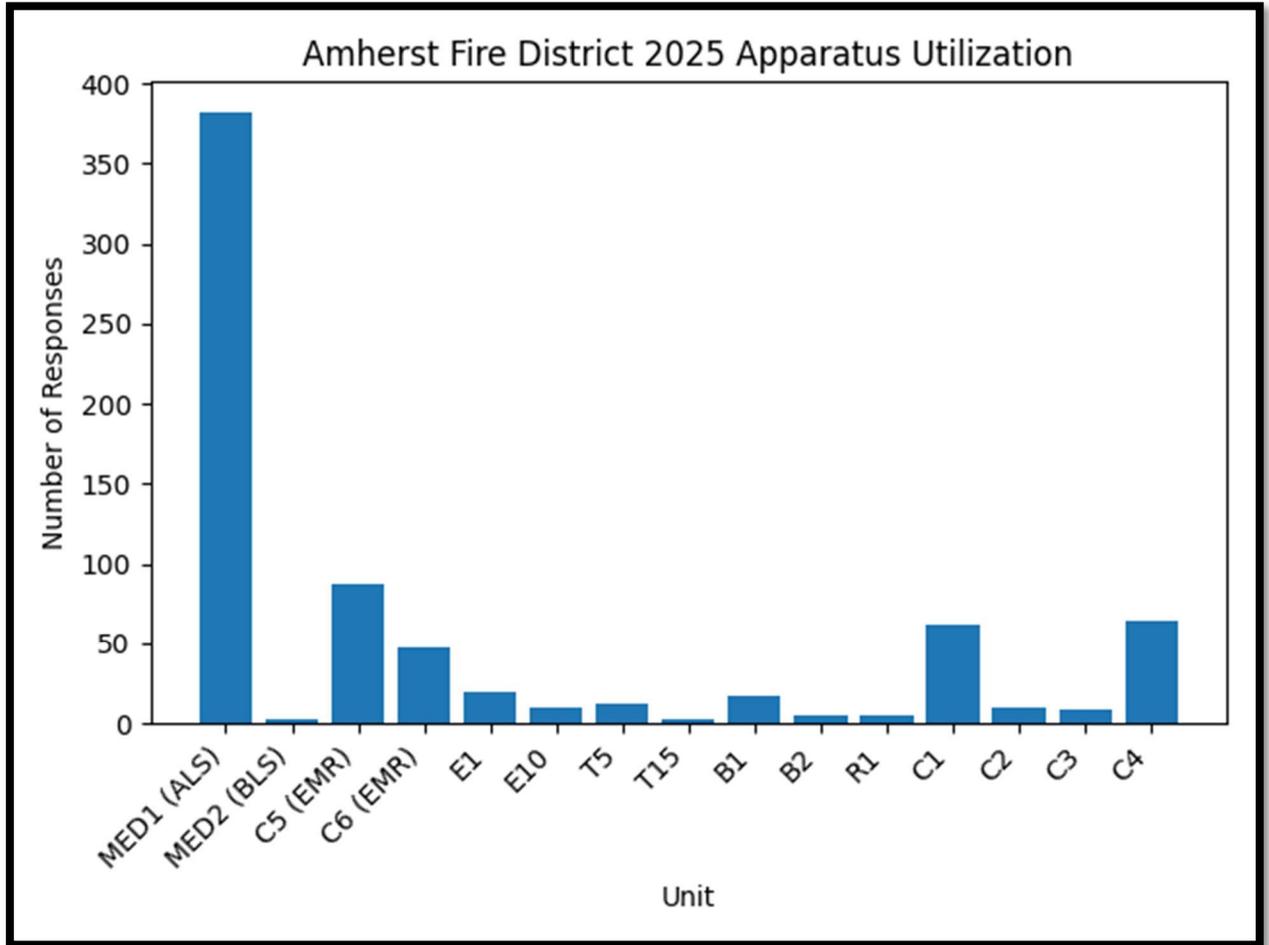
Most frequent mutual aid partners (given):

Almond Volunteer Fire Department	1
Iola & Rural Fire Department	2
Manawa Rural Fire Department	1
Ogdensburg/ St Lawrence Fire Department	1
Rudolph Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1
Scandinavia Volunteer Fire Department	1
Stockton Fire Department	1
Waupaca Area Fire District	1
Weyauwega Area Fire District	3

APPARATUS UTILIZATION

Apparatus utilization is reported for District-owned vehicles. Personal vehicle responses (PVEMS and PVFIRE) and standby firefighter activations (STBY) are reported separately as staffing and coverage metrics. In 2025, the ALS ambulance (MED1) was the most utilized unit, reflecting the EMS-heavy nature of District operations.

As a reminder, C1, C2, C3, and C4 are personal vehicles operated by the fire chief, deputy chief, and assistant chiefs.



PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer members and part-time staff provide essential capacity to sustain 24/7 response coverage. In 2025, documented incident-response hours totaled 741.41 hours. The table below summarizes the **top contributors** by fire incident-response hours.

Member	Incident-response hours
Adam Meshak	83.70
Balin Wojtalewicz	63.87
Robert Smith	63.85
Thomas Bray	56.41
Pat Rock	51.42
Charles Larson	47.14
Mike Klieforth	35.00
Ryan Sundsmo	34.26
Adam Skibicki	31.31
Roy Bohm	28.88



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Amherst Fire District emphasizes prevention and education as part of community safety. In 2025, members supported fire prevention messaging, smoke detector awareness, and safety outreach at school and community events. The district also promoted CPR awareness, basic first aid education, and EMS outreach to encourage early recognition of medical emergencies and prompt activation of the 911 system.



50% of the time when a person suffers cardiac arrest, an AED shock is advised. 100% of the time, CPR is required.

STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

The Amherst Fire District uses a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel. Like many rural and combination departments, the district faces challenges in volunteer recruitment, EMS staffing, and daytime coverage. Leadership continues to focus on recruitment and retention, training support, and reducing barriers to participation to maintain a sustainable workforce.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Amherst Fire District operates under a structured leadership and governance framework designed to support operational readiness, accountability, and effective service delivery.

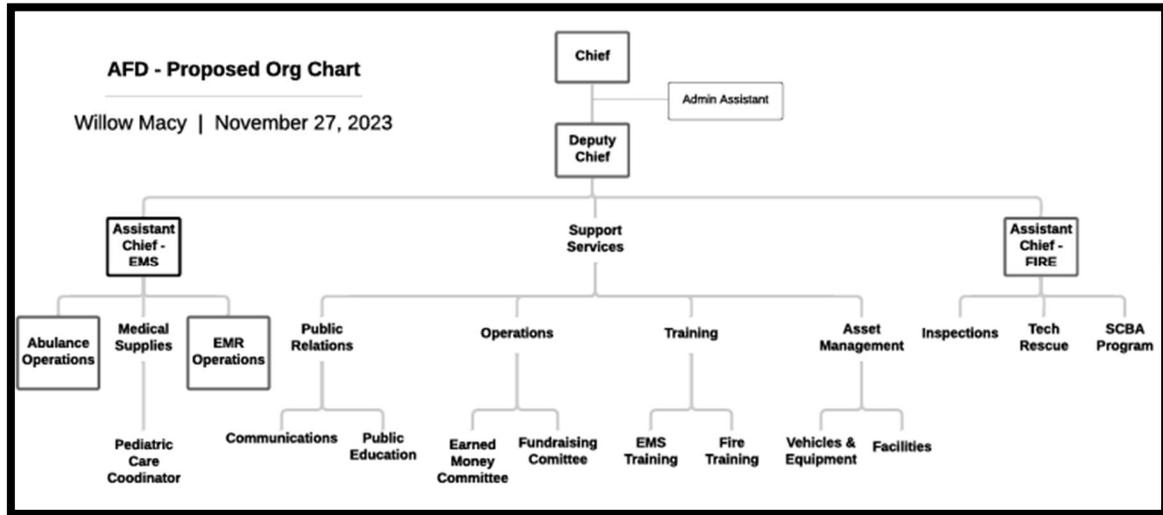
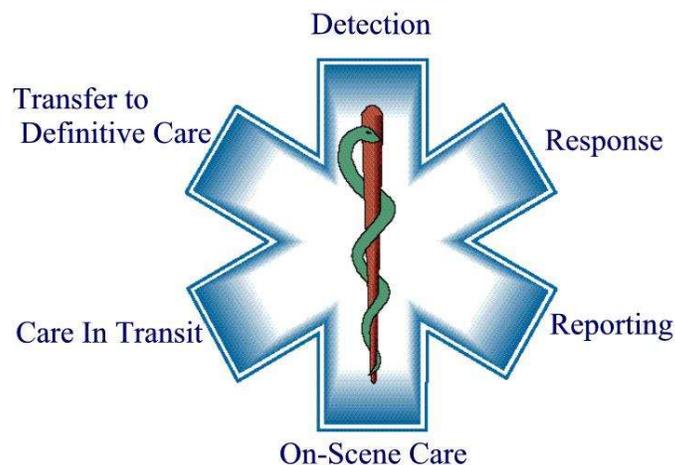


Figure 7: Amherst Fire District Organizational Structure — 2025

In 2023, as part of her Fire Officer certification class, Willow Macy, EMT-P firefighter, mapped our organization as part of her mentorship. This illustrates how our organization is structured. By developing this chart, we can illustrate many of the operational tasks that the department manages. The only positions on this chart that are compensated are the Chief (FTE), Admin. Assistant (PTE), Deputy Chief, and two Assistant Chiefs, who are compensated with annual stipends. All other tasks are done with volunteers, either receiving no pay or the minimum training rate of \$7.25/hour.



HOW THE FIRE DISTRICT WORKS

The Amherst Fire District is a local governmental entity established to provide fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and related public safety services within a defined geographic service area.

The district is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by each owner municipality, which is responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, and providing fiscal oversight.

The Board does not manage day-to-day emergency operations but instead establishes the strategic and financial framework under which the Fire District operates.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Fire Chief, who is responsible for implementing Board policies, overseeing personnel, managing emergency response operations, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

The Fire District delivers services through a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel.

Funding for operations is provided primarily through local tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising, grants, and other limited revenue sources.

The Fire District operates as part of a broader regional emergency services system and coordinates closely with neighboring agencies, dispatch centers, and hospitals.

Before 1992, there were three fire departments in our area. Nelsonville Fire Department, Amherst Jct. Fire Department, and the Amherst Fire Department. There were three fire stations¹, one in Nelsonville, one in Amherst Jct. and one in Amherst.

All three departments worked independently of each other. All three struggled to have enough trained volunteers and usable equipment.

In 1992, the Amherst Fire District was founded with Fire Chief Jay Gordon and members of the newly formed Amherst Fire & Safety Commission. The consolidation of the three departments into one set in motion several changes for our area. The immediate need for a new water tender was filled by ordering a new truck, a 3000-gallon water tender. The need for a new fire station was apparent from the beginning and was planned. In 1994, we broke ground on a new seven thousand square foot fire station and moved in the spring of 1995.

Annual budgets have been created each year to fund the fire district. Contracts with both Lanark and New Hope have existed from the beginning. Trucks have been upgraded as needed; equipment has been purchased through planning, grants, fundraising, and donations. The cost of the fire district is shared by the owner municipalities, the Town of Amherst, the Villages of Nelsonville, Amherst Jct., and Amherst.

¹ All three stations were little more than garages. There were no meeting space, training area, bathrooms, or offices.

THE FORMULA

All costs associated with the fire district are shared between the four owner municipalities. The formula used was developed when the district was formed and has been used every year since. There are two components to the formula.

1. Population – 25% of the formula is based on the population served. This correlates to the idea that on the Emergency Medical side of things, we are treating people. Therefore, as the population changes, our call volume will follow.
2. Personal Property - 75% of the formula is based on the value of buildings in each municipality, as established by the Report of Property Tax of each municipality.

INCOME

The Amherst Fire District also receives income in the form of contracts for services. There are three sources of income.

1. Town of Lanark – the town contracts with AFD for fire and EMS services. The fire response area is about ½ of the township. The EMS response area covers the entire township.
2. Town of New Hope – the town contracts with AFD for EMR services for the southern half of the township.

Portage County – the county contracts with AFD to provide the personnel to staff the ambulance in Amherst. This contract is negotiated to include all costs associated with the ambulance operations.

EMS SYSTEM ROLE AND REGIONAL MEDICAL INTEGRATION

The Amherst Fire District provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) care and coordinated prehospital medical response. District EMS operations include rapid first response, cardiac and trauma care, advanced airway management, and medication administration. The district works with neighboring agencies, dispatchers, and regional hospitals to support coordinated responses, ALS intercepts, and efficient transfers of care.

HOW THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKS

Before 2008, all Portage County Ambulances were in Stevens Point. It was common to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in the Amherst, Amherst Jct., or Nelsonville area. In the towns of Lanark and Belmont, the wait was even longer, sometimes over 30 minutes. At that time, I was the fire chief and was responsible for the Amherst Area First Responders. These response times were unacceptable for our community, and something needed to be done to better the service. Extensive work was done to establish an ambulance in Amherst, and it was approved in May of 2007 by the county board.

On January 1, 2008, the Amherst Fire District began staffing a full-time ambulance at our fire station in Amherst. This was a major accomplishment for both Portage County and us. This meant that response time from the time a 911 call was received until an ambulance arrived was cut to an average response of 5 minutes. The Amherst Area First Responders became Emergency Medical Responders and increased their license to EMT Basic or higher.

Over the years, we have negotiated a number of contracts with Portage County. These contracts are quite simple.

- The County provides all the equipment, including the ambulance, the cot, the supplies, the fuel, and more. The contract also provides the wages and benefits for the full-time and part-time employees. There are also funds for training and uniforms for the staff.
- We agree to manage the ambulance, to staff it appropriately, to house it, to maintain the equipment in a ready state, and to respond to calls wherever needed.

Why does this work? It works because we are part of a regional (county-wide) service. When you regionalize services, it spreads the costs out across a region, making it affordable for everyone. The county manages the finances, including collecting the revenue from the billing. The county levies the additional funds to maintain the entire system. In 2019, the county added another ambulance to the system and entered a similar contract with the Plover Fire Department. So together with Plover, Stevens Point, and Amherst, we are now part of a very well-organized countywide system. The residents and visitors to our county receive Paramedic care within a very reasonable time when 911 is called.



SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Amherst Fire District is a leader in the area for expertise and services offered. Our team is trained and equipped to respond to and mitigate many distinct types of calls for service. This sets AFD apart from most other departments in the area. This diverse list of capabilities is one of the key elements to attracting new firefighters.

1. **Advanced Life Support ambulance** – through our contract with the county, we schedule, staff, train, and employ about twenty part-time employees and five full time employees. The ambulance is licensed as a one-paramedic unit with the other provider at least at the EMT level. Also on our roster are a number of Registered Nurses and even a doctor who can function at the Paramedic level.
2. **Emergency Medical Responders (EMR)** – formerly known as first responders, our EMR group is made up of paid per-call employees who respond to medical calls in our entire response area. We utilize two response vehicles that carry life-saving equipment. The EMR also attends local events and provides up to an ALS service.
3. **Fire Response** – our department operates two fire engines, two water tenders, one reserve engine, and two brush fire trucks. Our communities have excellent fire response capabilities as indicated in our Insurance Standards Office (ISO) Community Risk Rate. On a scale of 1 -10, the Village of Amherst is rated at a 3, the Villages of Amherst Jct. and Nelsonville are rated a 6, and the Town of Amherst is rated at a 7.
4. **Technical Rescue** – our department is trained and equipped to respond to the following technical rescues (many of these hazards are found on farms)
 - a. High Angle/Rope rescue – getting people down from high places like silos, grain and fertilizer elevators, roofs, etc.
 - b. Trench rescue – getting people removed from collapsed trenches and holes in the ground.
 - c. Grain Bin rescue – getting people removed from grain bins when they have become engulfed in grain.
 - d. Ice Water rescue – getting people out of the water when they have fallen through the ice.
 - e. Building Collapse rescue – building stabilization and entry to rescue people from collapsed or partially collapsed buildings.
 - f. Extrication rescue – both heavy and medium duty extrication of people from vehicles involved in accidents, farm equipment, and industrial accidents.
5. **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** – we are one of two agencies in the county that are trained and designated as an official TIM team. We provide traffic management on any road, when necessary, for several reasons, such as traffic accidents, downed power lines, road failures, road blockages, etc.
6. **Landing Zone management** – our firefighters are also trained to manage landing zones for medical helicopters that are called into our area.
7. **Medical Assists** – fire personnel are trained to do CPR, use AEDs, and use much of the equipment carried by the EMRs and ambulances. They provide lift assistance, patient access, ambulance drivers, and more to support patient care.



Car 5 and Car 6 – These two vehicles are equipped with advanced life support equipment and supplies. They are primary vehicles for Emergency Medical incidents.

Our department responders can use these vehicles when they are “on call” for medical emergencies. These vehicles are often seen in the community and are staffed with paid-on-call members.



When seconds count, we want our “first responders” available and able to respond directly to the incident or medical situation. These cars give us flexibility and response.

These cars were purchased and equipped with grants, fundraising, and some budgeted items.



Med 2 – Our department purchased this ambulance to serve our community. We are in the process of stocking and equipping it to provide Advanced Life Support. This vehicle, along with the equipment carried, was fully funded through local donors and grant funding. There is currently no cost to the local district budget, and the secured funding will cover the cost for at least 5 years. Currently, we are using Med 2 for event standbys and to respond to emergencies with our

community. The long-term goal will be to use it for interfacility transfers and as a backup for our primary ambulance.

We are not allowed to transport patients YET.



Med 1 – Through our service contract with Portage County, we are assigned an ambulance. The county owns the ambulance and equipment carried. Our contract with them is to staff it 24/7/365. We always do this with at least one Paramedic and another care provider from EMT, RN’s or Physicians. This ambulance has a primary response area including the towns of Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, Belmont, and Buena Vista. It also includes the Villages

of Amherst, Amherst Jct, and Nelsonville.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – PPE

PPE includes all the following pieces of protective clothing.

Fire Helmet - \$400

Particulate Flash Hood - \$120

Turnout Coat - \$1500

Turnout Pant/Suspenders - \$1200

Fire Boots - \$350

Traffic Vest - \$45

Wildland Fire Coat - \$150

Fire Gloves - \$95

Rescue Gloves - \$15

Current standards call for the replacement of all of this in a 10-year cycle. AFD does go beyond 10 years based on the condition of the individual pieces.



\$3875 per fire fighter

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

SCBA is the single piece of equipment we must have to protect ourselves from heat, smoke, toxic gases, carcinogens, and much more. An SCBA allows us to do our job when the air is not safe to breathe. We cannot fight fire, rescue people, manage hazardous materials, or much of anything else without these tools.

Our SCBAs were purchased in 2013, complete with new harnesses, cylinders, and facepieces. The harnesses are recommended to be replaced as the version of the standard is updated. Historically, it has been acceptable to be within two standards of the current, or about 20 years. In 2013, we were compliant with the 2012 standard. Facepieces are also affected by the harness upgrades and typically must be replaced when the harness is replaced.

Cylinders fall under another standard, which only allows for a 15-year life cycle. At the expiration of the cylinder, they must be removed from service and destroyed. Our cylinders were purchased in 2013 and will expire in 2028.

SCBA Harness - \$5500 x 16 (\$88,000 estimate)

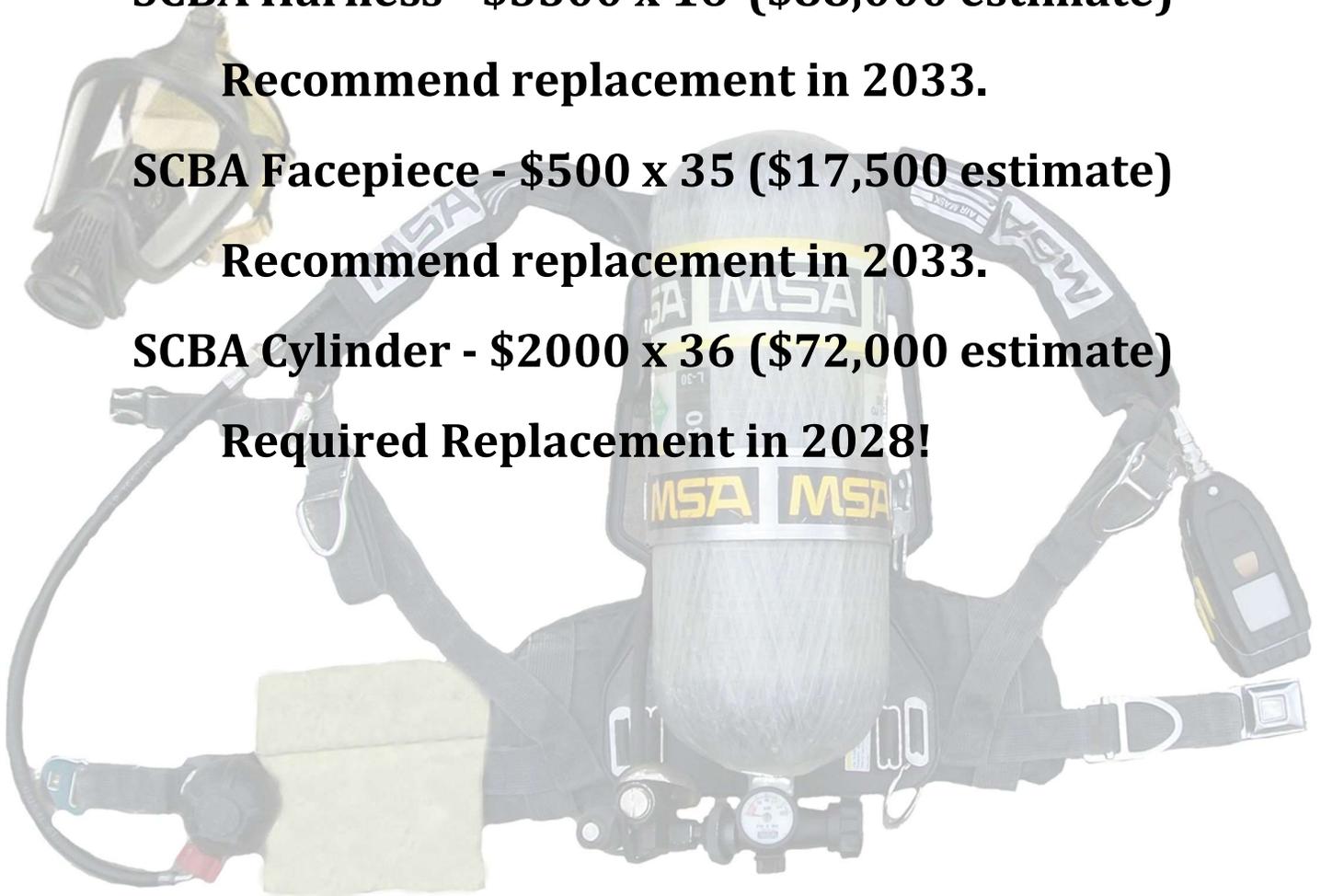
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Facepiece - \$500 x 35 (\$17,500 estimate)

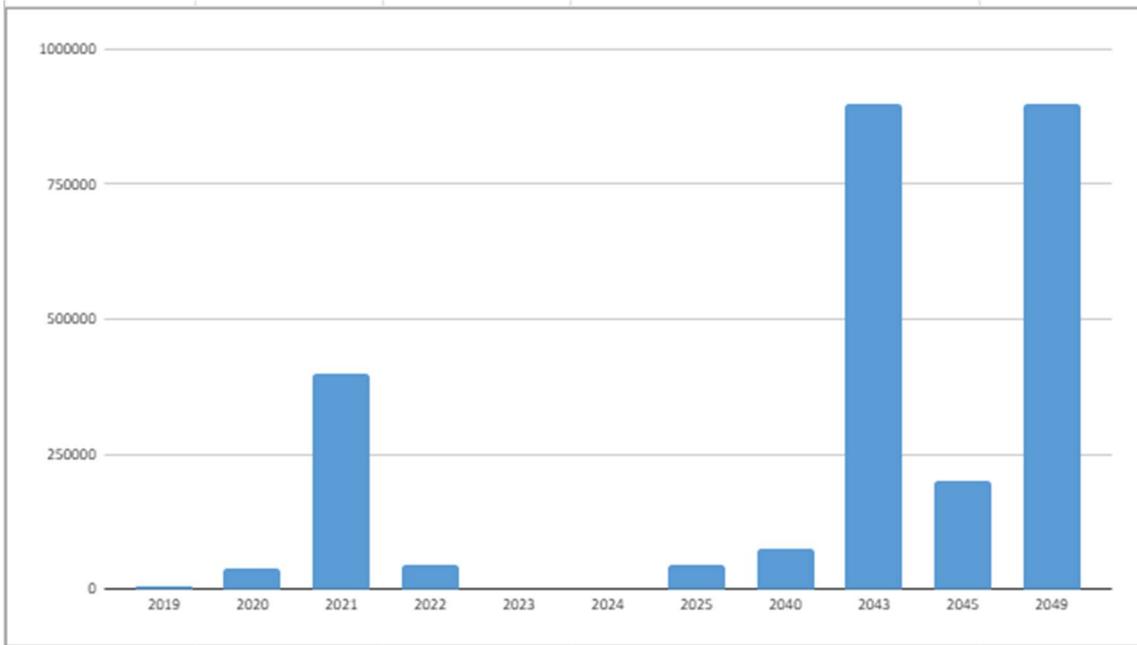
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Cylinder - \$2000 x 36 (\$72,000 estimate)

Required Replacement in 2028!



FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT YEAR AND COST

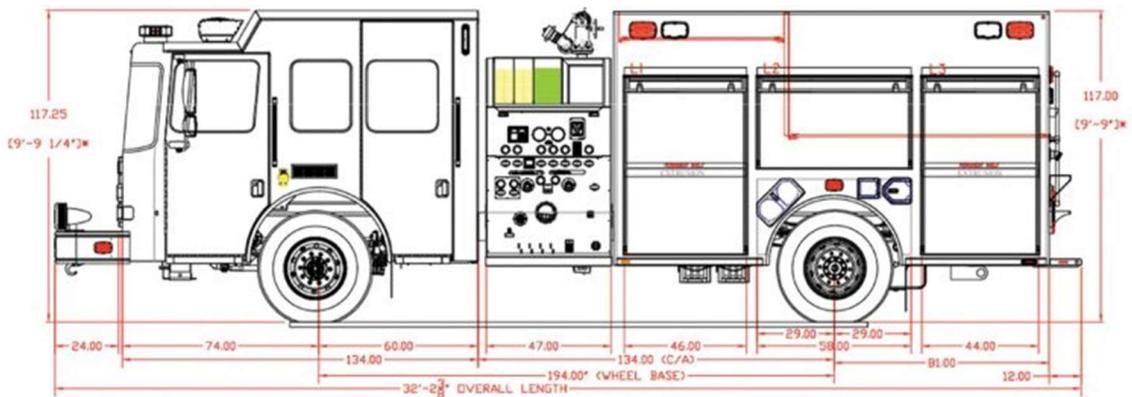


The cost of a fire apparatus varies, but one thing is certain: the prices are not going down.

There are many reasons to purchase a new custom fire engine, and unfortunately, the biggest reason not to is the cost. Every fire engine is custom because every fire department operates in a custom way dictated by its department and the community's needs.

Our current fire apparatus is in excellent working order. Other than some corrosion, wear, and tears, they are in incredibly good condition. This allows us to plan for their eventual replacement. AFD has an apparatus replacement schedule that has many data inputs to give a best guess as to when an apparatus should be replaced. The chart above graphically shows this. 2043 and 2049 are the years when our current Engine 1 and Engine 10 should be replaced. Each of these truck replacements is expected to be more than \$1 Million.

There is a strong possibility that Engine 10 could be refurbished sooner for a lower cost, and a new Engine 1 would be purchased. These conversations will happen soon.





Engine 1 – This is our primary apparatus for all fires and rescue incidents within the district. This apparatus features scene lighting and a traffic control board. It has the “jaws of life” and an onboard breathing air supply. It was purchased, used in 2011, fully equipped.

This apparatus today would cost \$900,000. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2049.



Engine 10 – Although it looks like a ladder truck, it is not. The aerial boom is designed to provide up to one thousand gallons of water per minute when needed. The device also allows us access to places where ground ladders do not work. This apparatus is our first out engine for all mutual aid requests and high-angle rope rescue incidents.

This truck was custom-built for our department in 2002. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2043 or refurbished sooner.



Tender 5 – Rural water supply is necessary, and our two tenders are key components to our fire response in rural areas. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis for our department in 2022. Its primary role is to shuttle water from a source to the fire scene.

This tender has a capacity of 2400 gallons of water and it carries two portable pumps.



Tender 15 – our second water tender. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis in 2000. It is overdue for replacement and has a number of deficiencies. Plans are being developed to reuse the chassis and have a new body built on it.

This tender has a capacity of 2000 gallons of water, and it carries two portable pumps.



Brush 1 – This truck was donated to us by TC Energies. We then had it custom-modified for our use. We used both equipment reserves and grants to build this truck.

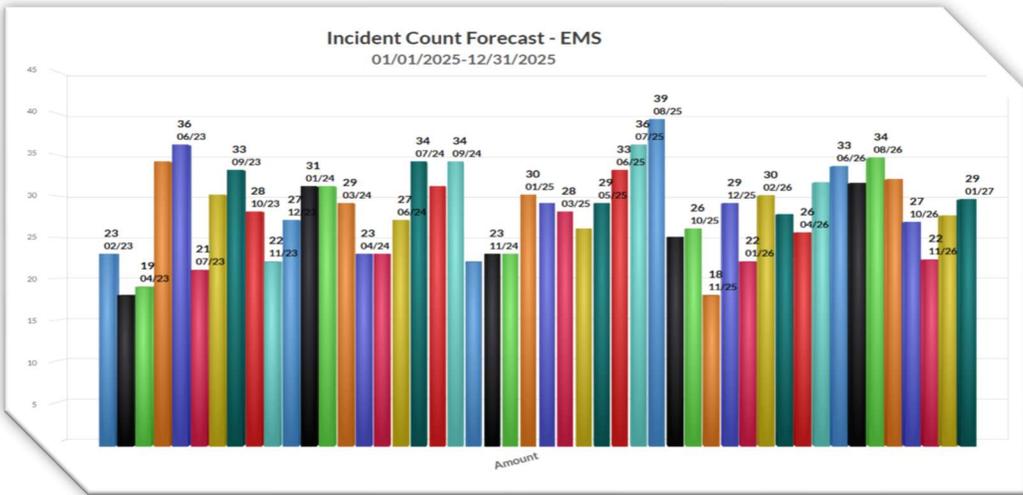
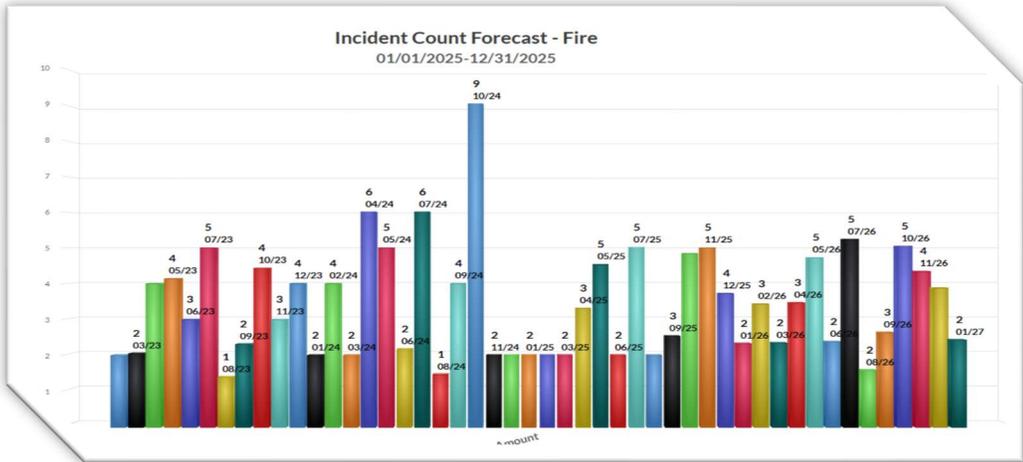
It is our primary vehicle for wildland fires (grass) and traffic incident management (TIM) incidents. It features on-board water, a pump, hoses, traffic control signs, and cones.

LOOKING AHEAD

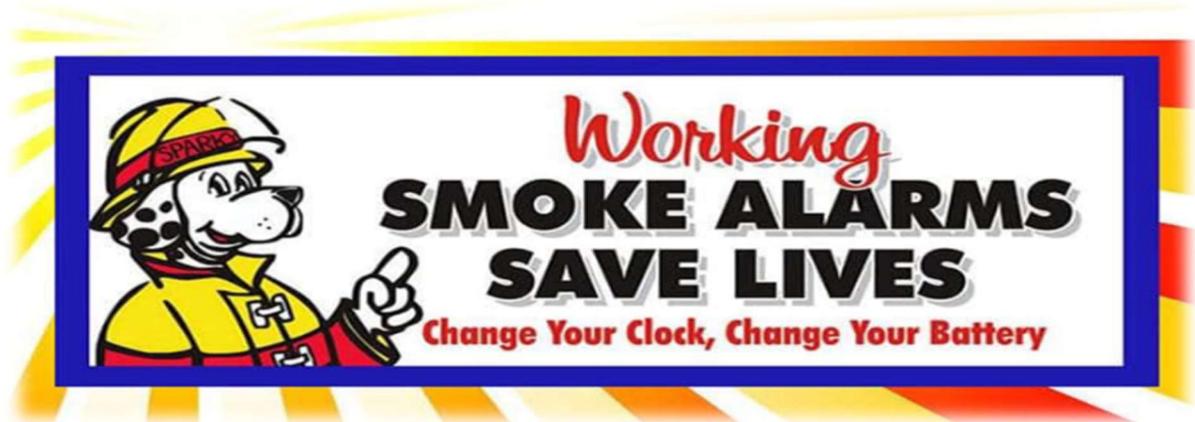
In 2026, the district will continue focusing on operational readiness, personnel development, and long-term planning for apparatus and equipment needs. Priorities include maintaining ALS coverage, strengthening recruitment and retention, and expanding prevention and outreach efforts.

Vision Statement:

The fire service is constantly evolving. Technology and data continue to guide our future. We aim to be leaders in this new fire service. We are committed to staying relevant and purposeful. Our members will be the leaders of our communities. Our department will be a leader for other departments. Our commitment to this vision is strong.



Working Smoke Detectors will save your life long before anyone else will.



SUMMARY

I hope that, as you have read this report, you take away some key points.

- The Amherst Fire District is not separate from the community or the municipalities we serve; the fire district is integral to the quality of life in the community.
- Our staff, full-time, part-time, and paid on call (volunteer) are professionals in the delivery of services. Pay status does not automatically equal professionalism and service excellence.
- Our staff are members of this community; they live, work, and play here. They care about the quality of life here. They are your neighbors and friends.
- We do a lot with what we have.
 - We need more help from you. The number of paid-on-call firefighters able to respond regularly is at the ***lowest level in history***.
 - We are so fortunate to have the support we have. Donations and our Budget make us the envy of many departments. It opens the doors for us to provide a service like no other in a community like ours.
 - We are creative and conscientious with your tax dollars; we pay taxes, too.
- We follow our Mission.
- We have identified our Core Values and embraced them.
- We have a vision for the future.
- The requirements imposed on us, the unfunded mandates, and the continuously rising costs of equipment and personnel safety clothing are creating challenges we will need to solve.
- Paid on-call (volunteer) staff may not be enough in the coming years. The risk and possibility that the day will come when no one is available is real.
- Our fire station is YOUR fire station. If you have never been here, you should come and see us. We are always happy to show off what we have and do.

In closing, as the longest-standing Fire Chief in our history, I give credit to many people for our successes. Previous Fire Chiefs, Fire Commissioners, municipal leaders, and volunteers built the foundation that we stand on today.

The members of the Amherst Fire District have signed up to provide services to you when you need them most and often at their detriment or personal cost. They assess risk differently from most people and act in ways most would not. We tell people to run out of burning buildings while racing each other to run in. What can I say? We are weird like that. You can be too.

Victor

MORE INFORMATION

Our website – www.amherstfd.org

HOME ABOUT US TRAINING PROTOCOLS PUBLIC EDUCATION

**AMHERST
FIRE DISTRICT**
4885 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
AMHERST, WI 715-824-5511

AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
ENGINE 1

Contact Us

SERVICES
FIRE/RESCUE
AMBULANCE
EMR

EQUIPMENT
FIRE APPARATUS
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

MEMBERSHIP
MEET OUR MEMBERS

JOIN OUR TEAM
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Numbers

715-824-2699

Admin. Assistant ext. 1

Fire Chief Voss ext. 2

Deputy Fire Chief Bray

Assistant Chief Swan

Assistant Chief Meshak ext. 3

Public Education, Tours, Car Seats

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Amherst Fire District 2025 Annual Report

Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 -
December 31, 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



On behalf of the officers and members of the Amherst Fire District, I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects a year of dedication and service rooted in our mission to protect life and property through fire prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community engagement.

Throughout 2025, our department responded to a wide range of emergencies, including medical calls, motor vehicle crashes, structure fires, and hazardous conditions. Each call for service represents a moment when our community relied on us, and our members answered with professionalism and teamwork.

Our volunteers and staff devoted countless hours to training, emergency response, and community engagement. Their efforts strengthened operational readiness and reinforced the trust we share with the residents we serve.

This report offers a transparent view of our operations, response activities, and resource utilization. It also highlights our investment in firefighter safety, EMS capability, and long-term capital planning.

Thank you to our municipal boards, our mutual aid partners, and the citizens we serve for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Victor R. Voss
Fire Chief / Service Director
Amherst Fire District

Mission Statement:

The Amherst Fire District members are committed professionals whose mission is to provide the highest standard of service through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community interaction to preserve the quality of life and property for all of those who live, visit, or travel through our communities.

ABOUT THE AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT

The Amherst Fire District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and community risk reduction services to Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and New Hope. The District covers approximately 70 square miles and serves an estimated 4,000 residents and visitors.

The district operates through a hybrid staffing model that combines dedicated volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel to provide 24/7 emergency response.

In support of rescue and emergency medical operations, the district staffs an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) car and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. These units are equipped to deliver high-quality prehospital care, including cardiac monitoring, advanced airway management, medications, trauma supplies, and patient transport systems. As an ALS service provider, the district plays a key leadership role in regional EMS response and coordinated patient care.



4585 Fairgrounds Road

Our station features a well-equipped modern training classroom, comfortable living quarters, office space, training structures, and much more. Station tours are always available.

2025 AT A GLANCE

Metric	2025
Total incidents	420
EMS / Rescue	348 (83%)
Fire	16 (4%)
Hazardous	15 (4%)
Good Intent	28 (7%)
False Alarms	6 (1%)
Service Calls	7 (2%)
Mutual aid incidents	16 (Given: 14, Received: 2)
Volunteer incident-response hours	741.41
PVEMS (personal vehicle EMS responses)	149
PVFIRE (personal vehicle FIRE responses)	8
Standby firefighter activations (STBY)	44
Most utilized unit	MED1 (ALS) - 375 responses



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Fire departments across the United States and in Wisconsin continue to see a sustained shift toward EMS and rescue responses. National incident data reported to NFIRS show that two-thirds of fire department calls are EMS and rescue, while only about 4% are fire-related. In Wisconsin, recent reporting highlights growth in fall-related EMS demand, and a statewide survey found that many departments are concerned about maintaining adequate staffing for call response.

This context mirrors Amherst's 2025 experience, where EMS and rescue calls make up the majority of the District's workload and staffing flexibility remains essential to sustained service delivery.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration (NFIRS Run Profile, 2020); Wisconsin DHS (EMS and Falls, 2024); Wisconsin Public Radio staffing survey (2025).

Amherst Fire District **2025: Regional & National Context**

Amherst (2025)

- Total incidents: 420
- EMS/Rescue: 348 (83%)
- Fire: 16 (4%)
- Other: 56 (13%)

National trend (NFIRS)

- 64% of calls are EMS/Rescue
- About 4% are fire-related

Wisconsin context

- Fall-related EMS calls increased
- Staffing pressures statewide

Staffing reality (WI)

- 62% of departments worry about
- adequate staffing for a call

Sources: USFA NFIRS Run Profile (2020); WI DHS EMS & Falls (2024); WPR survey (2025)

2025 A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wisconsin Paramedic of the Year – Adam Meshak

Life-saving recognition – Thom Bray

Years of Service – 40 years, Ken and Bob Glodowski

Promotions – Captain/Training Officer, Pat Rock

Advancements – **Paramedic**, Lily Ackley, **EMT**, Balin Wojtalewicz, Carmen Schultz, Alyssa Ehr,

Med 2 – Fully stocked with grants and donations.

Grants – FAP \$30,000, DNR \$20,000, PC EMR \$8500

Donations – Total \$91,354

Fundraising – Total \$20,000

Salvation Army – We raised \$1400.

AED's and CPR – We helped add 11 AEDs to our community and have taught seventy-three people CPR.

Sports Cardiac Arrest Drills – 192 Students and 22 Coaches participated.

Child Safety Programs – Now offering Child seat inspections and other safety programs.

Fire Chief Succession Plan – Completed a detailed succession plan through committee work



2025 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



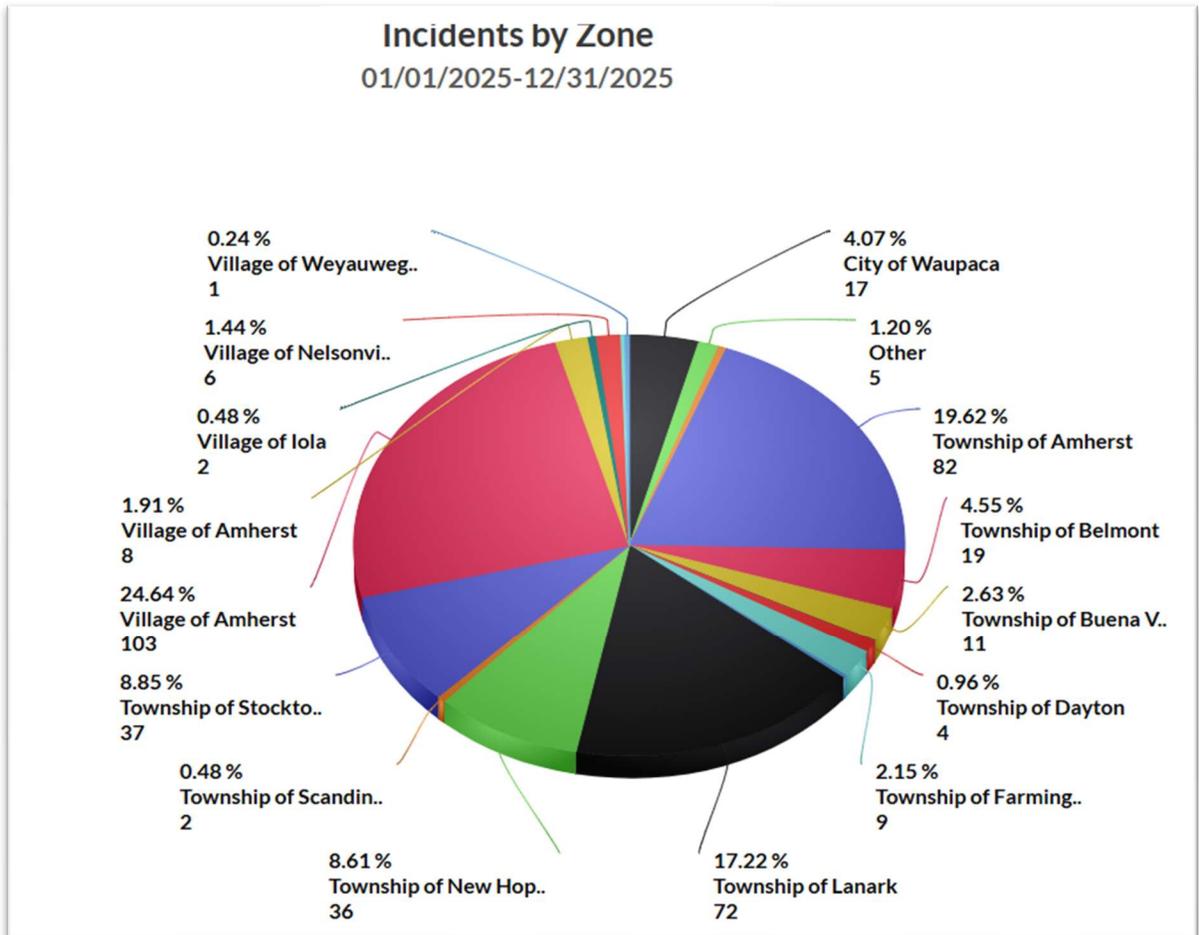
In 2025, the Amherst Fire District recorded 420 incidents. EMS and rescue responses drove most of the service demand, reflecting broader regional and national trends. Fire incidents represented a smaller share of overall activity, while hazardous conditions, good intent calls, and service calls accounted for the remainder of the workload.

We continue to respond to the same types of calls for service and everything else that comes our way. We do this with fewer volunteers than we ever have had. Our roster is strong, and our members are willing and capable, but their availability is reduced.

The future may require us to hire daytime firefighters. The cost of this would be high and needs to be planned.

INCIDENTS BY RESPONSE AREA

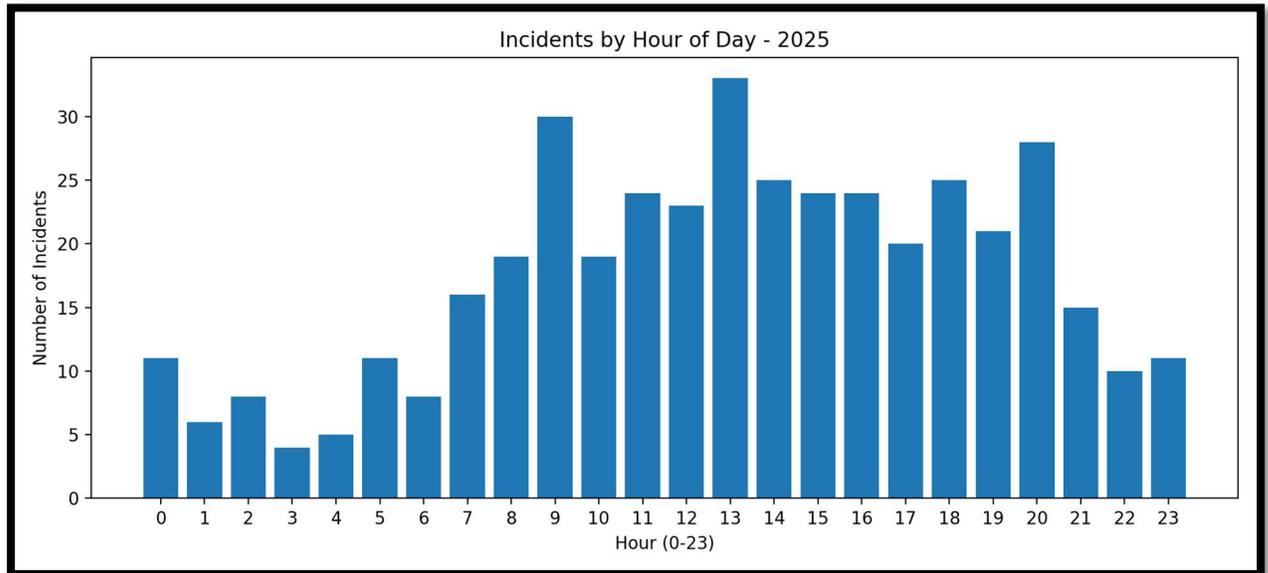
The chart below shows 2025 incident totals by response area, grouped into report-friendly zones representing Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and Belmont, including agricultural and low-density residential areas within the district service area.



Area	Incidents
Amherst (Village)	103
Amherst (Town)	82
Lanark (Town)	72
Belmont (Town) (ambulance only)	19
Amherst Jct (Village)	8
Nelsonville (Village)	6

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Incident volume occurred throughout the day, with higher activity during daytime and early evening hours. Overnight hours maintained a steady baseline demand, requiring continuous readiness. Unfortunately, the peak times for incidents coincided with the lowest availability of our members.



Core Values:

Trust is the cornerstone of all relationships. We will continue to strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the communities we serve. We will earn trust through:

Integrity – We are committed to the highest standard of moral and ethical conduct.

Dedication – We provide quality service through pride and professionalism.

Compassion – We support our neighbors in their time of need.

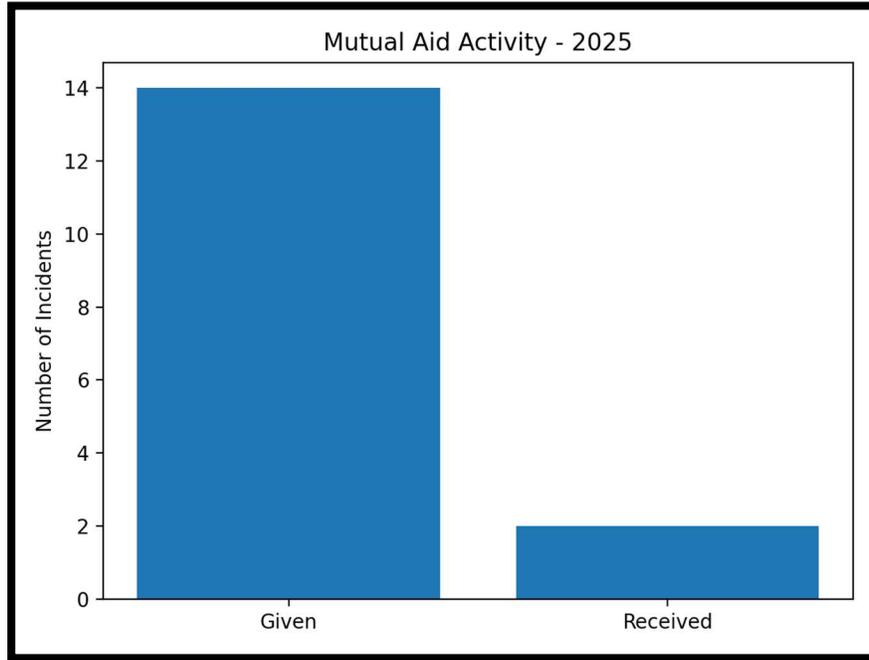
Teamwork – We work together to achieve common goals.

Tradition – We honor the legacy of those who have served before us.

Courage – We do what is right in the face of adversity

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid remains a critical component of regional emergency response. In 2025, the district provided mutual aid on fourteen fire incidents and received mutual aid on two incidents. These events included fill-in/standby coverage, EMS support, and coordinated responses with neighboring agencies.



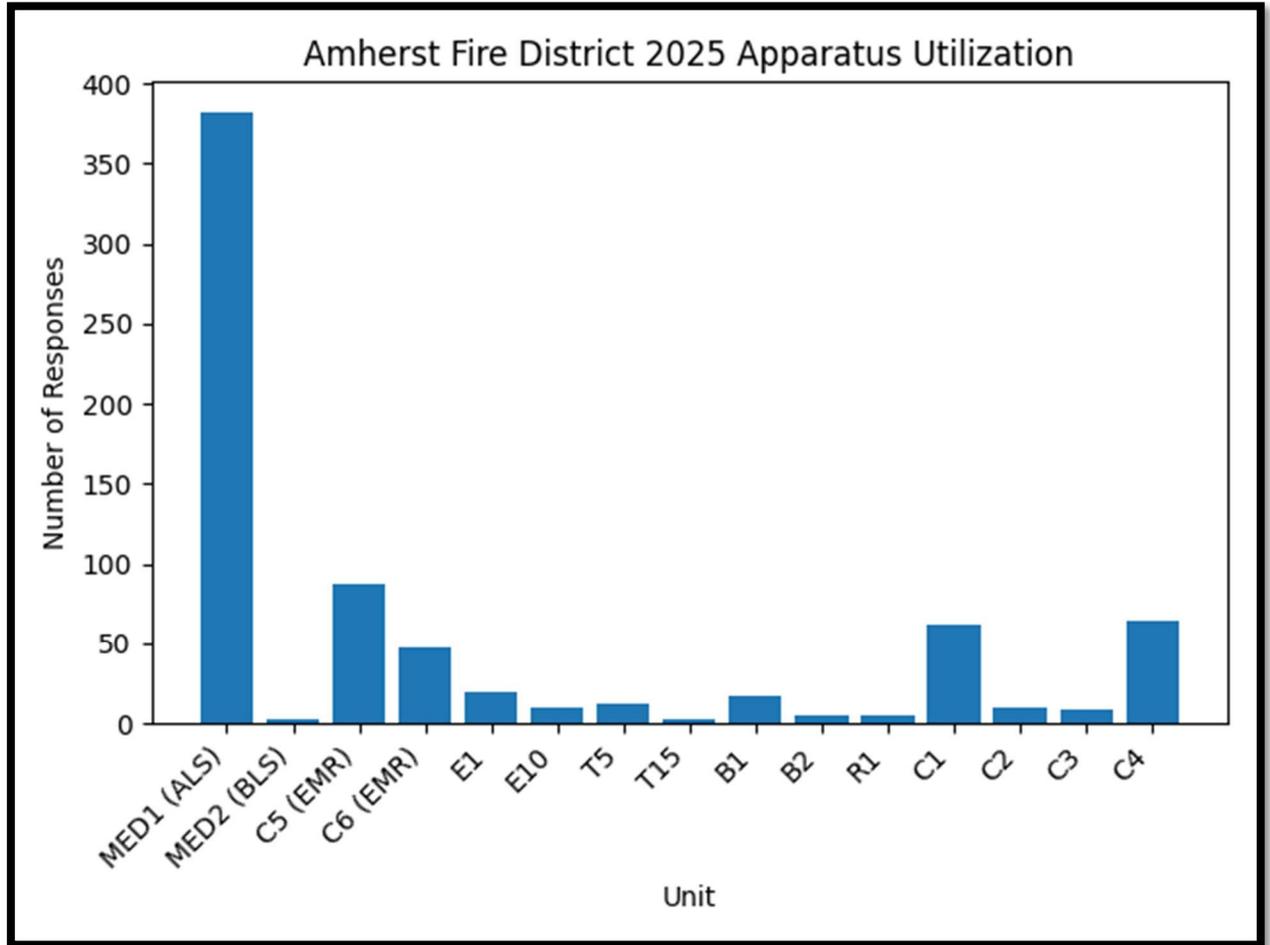
Most frequent mutual aid partners (given):

Almond Volunteer Fire Department	1
Iola & Rural Fire Department	2
Manawa Rural Fire Department	1
Ogdensburg/ St Lawrence Fire Department	1
Rudolph Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1
Scandinavia Volunteer Fire Department	1
Stockton Fire Department	1
Waupaca Area Fire District	1
Weyauwega Area Fire District	3

APPARATUS UTILIZATION

Apparatus utilization is reported for District-owned vehicles. Personal vehicle responses (PVEMS and PVFIRE) and standby firefighter activations (STBY) are reported separately as staffing and coverage metrics. In 2025, the ALS ambulance (MED1) was the most utilized unit, reflecting the EMS-heavy nature of District operations.

As a reminder, C1, C2, C3, and C4 are personal vehicles operated by the fire chief, deputy chief, and assistant chiefs.



PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer members and part-time staff provide essential capacity to sustain 24/7 response coverage. In 2025, documented incident-response hours totaled 741.41 hours. The table below summarizes the **top contributors** by fire incident-response hours.

Member	Incident-response hours
Adam Meshak	83.70
Balin Wojtalewicz	63.87
Robert Smith	63.85
Thomas Bray	56.41
Pat Rock	51.42
Charles Larson	47.14
Mike Klieforth	35.00
Ryan Sundsmo	34.26
Adam Skibicki	31.31
Roy Bohm	28.88



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Amherst Fire District emphasizes prevention and education as part of community safety. In 2025, members supported fire prevention messaging, smoke detector awareness, and safety outreach at school and community events. The district also promoted CPR awareness, basic first aid education, and EMS outreach to encourage early recognition of medical emergencies and prompt activation of the 911 system.



50% of the time when a person suffers cardiac arrest, an AED shock is advised. 100% of the time, CPR is required.

STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

The Amherst Fire District uses a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel. Like many rural and combination departments, the district faces challenges in volunteer recruitment, EMS staffing, and daytime coverage. Leadership continues to focus on recruitment and retention, training support, and reducing barriers to participation to maintain a sustainable workforce.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Amherst Fire District operates under a structured leadership and governance framework designed to support operational readiness, accountability, and effective service delivery.

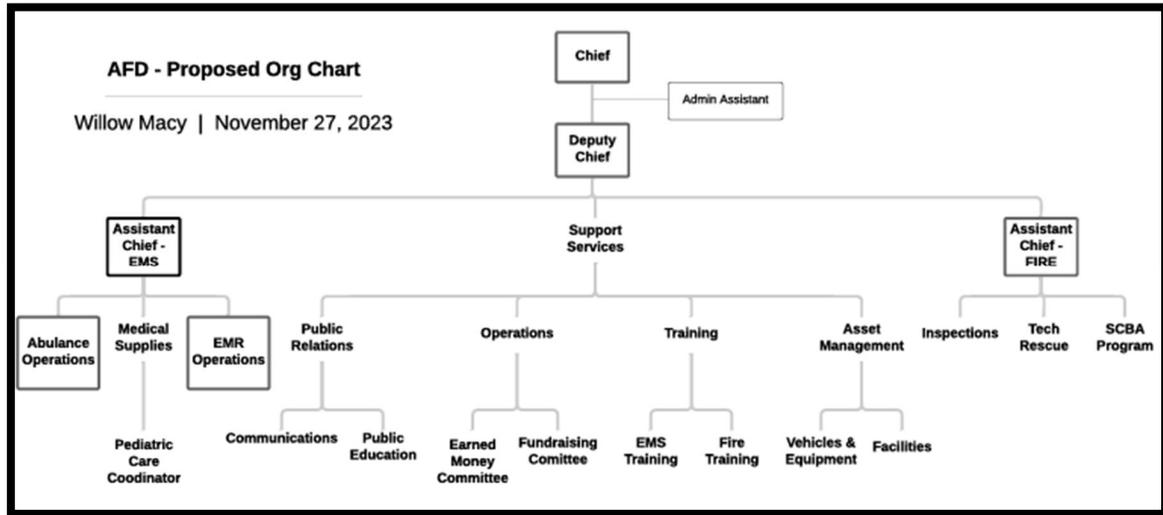
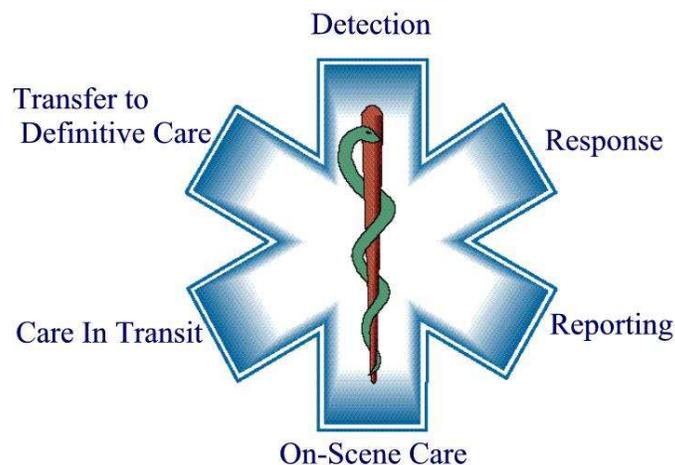


Figure 7: Amherst Fire District Organizational Structure — 2025

In 2023, as part of her Fire Officer certification class, Willow Macy, EMT-P firefighter, mapped our organization as part of her mentorship. This illustrates how our organization is structured. By developing this chart, we can illustrate many of the operational tasks that the department manages. The only positions on this chart that are compensated are the Chief (FTE), Admin. Assistant (PTE), Deputy Chief, and two Assistant Chiefs, who are compensated with annual stipends. All other tasks are done with volunteers, either receiving no pay or the minimum training rate of \$7.25/hour.



HOW THE FIRE DISTRICT WORKS

The Amherst Fire District is a local governmental entity established to provide fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and related public safety services within a defined geographic service area.

The district is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by each owner municipality, which is responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, and providing fiscal oversight.

The Board does not manage day-to-day emergency operations but instead establishes the strategic and financial framework under which the Fire District operates.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Fire Chief, who is responsible for implementing Board policies, overseeing personnel, managing emergency response operations, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

The Fire District delivers services through a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel.

Funding for operations is provided primarily through local tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising, grants, and other limited revenue sources.

The Fire District operates as part of a broader regional emergency services system and coordinates closely with neighboring agencies, dispatch centers, and hospitals.

Before 1992, there were three fire departments in our area. Nelsonville Fire Department, Amherst Jct. Fire Department, and the Amherst Fire Department. There were three fire stations¹, one in Nelsonville, one in Amherst Jct. and one in Amherst.

All three departments worked independently of each other. All three struggled to have enough trained volunteers and usable equipment.

In 1992, the Amherst Fire District was founded with Fire Chief Jay Gordon and members of the newly formed Amherst Fire & Safety Commission. The consolidation of the three departments into one set in motion several changes for our area. The immediate need for a new water tender was filled by ordering a new truck, a 3000-gallon water tender. The need for a new fire station was apparent from the beginning and was planned. In 1994, we broke ground on a new seven thousand square foot fire station and moved in the spring of 1995.

Annual budgets have been created each year to fund the fire district. Contracts with both Lanark and New Hope have existed from the beginning. Trucks have been upgraded as needed; equipment has been purchased through planning, grants, fundraising, and donations. The cost of the fire district is shared by the owner municipalities, the Town of Amherst, the Villages of Nelsonville, Amherst Jct., and Amherst.

¹ All three stations were little more than garages. There were no meeting space, training area, bathrooms, or offices.

THE FORMULA

All costs associated with the fire district are shared between the four owner municipalities. The formula used was developed when the district was formed and has been used every year since. There are two components to the formula.

1. Population – 25% of the formula is based on the population served. This correlates to the idea that on the Emergency Medical side of things, we are treating people. Therefore, as the population changes, our call volume will follow.
2. Personal Property - 75% of the formula is based on the value of buildings in each municipality, as established by the Report of Property Tax of each municipality.

INCOME

The Amherst Fire District also receives income in the form of contracts for services. There are three sources of income.

1. Town of Lanark – the town contracts with AFD for fire and EMS services. The fire response area is about ½ of the township. The EMS response area covers the entire township.
2. Town of New Hope – the town contracts with AFD for EMR services for the southern half of the township.

Portage County – the county contracts with AFD to provide the personnel to staff the ambulance in Amherst. This contract is negotiated to include all costs associated with the ambulance operations.

EMS SYSTEM ROLE AND REGIONAL MEDICAL INTEGRATION

The Amherst Fire District provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) care and coordinated prehospital medical response. District EMS operations include rapid first response, cardiac and trauma care, advanced airway management, and medication administration. The district works with neighboring agencies, dispatchers, and regional hospitals to support coordinated responses, ALS intercepts, and efficient transfers of care.

HOW THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKS

Before 2008, all Portage County Ambulances were in Stevens Point. It was common to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in the Amherst, Amherst Jct., or Nelsonville area. In the towns of Lanark and Belmont, the wait was even longer, sometimes over 30 minutes. At that time, I was the fire chief and was responsible for the Amherst Area First Responders. These response times were unacceptable for our community, and something needed to be done to better the service. Extensive work was done to establish an ambulance in Amherst, and it was approved in May of 2007 by the county board.

On January 1, 2008, the Amherst Fire District began staffing a full-time ambulance at our fire station in Amherst. This was a major accomplishment for both Portage County and us. This meant that response time from the time a 911 call was received until an ambulance arrived was cut to an average response of 5 minutes. The Amherst Area First Responders became Emergency Medical Responders and increased their license to EMT Basic or higher.

Over the years, we have negotiated a number of contracts with Portage County. These contracts are quite simple.

- The County provides all the equipment, including the ambulance, the cot, the supplies, the fuel, and more. The contract also provides the wages and benefits for the full-time and part-time employees. There are also funds for training and uniforms for the staff.
- We agree to manage the ambulance, to staff it appropriately, to house it, to maintain the equipment in a ready state, and to respond to calls wherever needed.

Why does this work? It works because we are part of a regional (county-wide) service. When you regionalize services, it spreads the costs out across a region, making it affordable for everyone. The county manages the finances, including collecting the revenue from the billing. The county levies the additional funds to maintain the entire system. In 2019, the county added another ambulance to the system and entered a similar contract with the Plover Fire Department. So together with Plover, Stevens Point, and Amherst, we are now part of a very well-organized countywide system. The residents and visitors to our county receive Paramedic care within a very reasonable time when 911 is called.



SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Amherst Fire District is a leader in the area for expertise and services offered. Our team is trained and equipped to respond to and mitigate many distinct types of calls for service. This sets AFD apart from most other departments in the area. This diverse list of capabilities is one of the key elements to attracting new firefighters.

1. **Advanced Life Support ambulance** – through our contract with the county, we schedule, staff, train, and employ about twenty part-time employees and five full time employees. The ambulance is licensed as a one-paramedic unit with the other provider at least at the EMT level. Also on our roster are a number of Registered Nurses and even a doctor who can function at the Paramedic level.
2. **Emergency Medical Responders (EMR)** – formerly known as first responders, our EMR group is made up of paid per-call employees who respond to medical calls in our entire response area. We utilize two response vehicles that carry life-saving equipment. The EMR also attends local events and provides up to an ALS service.
3. **Fire Response** – our department operates two fire engines, two water tenders, one reserve engine, and two brush fire trucks. Our communities have excellent fire response capabilities as indicated in our Insurance Standards Office (ISO) Community Risk Rate. On a scale of 1 -10, the Village of Amherst is rated at a 3, the Villages of Amherst Jct. and Nelsonville are rated a 6, and the Town of Amherst is rated at a 7.
4. **Technical Rescue** – our department is trained and equipped to respond to the following technical rescues (many of these hazards are found on farms)
 - a. High Angle/Rope rescue – getting people down from high places like silos, grain and fertilizer elevators, roofs, etc.
 - b. Trench rescue – getting people removed from collapsed trenches and holes in the ground.
 - c. Grain Bin rescue – getting people removed from grain bins when they have become engulfed in grain.
 - d. Ice Water rescue – getting people out of the water when they have fallen through the ice.
 - e. Building Collapse rescue – building stabilization and entry to rescue people from collapsed or partially collapsed buildings.
 - f. Extrication rescue – both heavy and medium duty extrication of people from vehicles involved in accidents, farm equipment, and industrial accidents.
5. **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** – we are one of two agencies in the county that are trained and designated as an official TIM team. We provide traffic management on any road, when necessary, for several reasons, such as traffic accidents, downed power lines, road failures, road blockages, etc.
6. **Landing Zone management** – our firefighters are also trained to manage landing zones for medical helicopters that are called into our area.
7. **Medical Assists** – fire personnel are trained to do CPR, use AEDs, and use much of the equipment carried by the EMRs and ambulances. They provide lift assistance, patient access, ambulance drivers, and more to support patient care.



Car 5 and Car 6 – These two vehicles are equipped with advanced life support equipment and supplies. They are primary vehicles for Emergency Medical incidents.

Our department responders can use these vehicles when they are “on call” for medical emergencies. These vehicles are often seen in the community and are staffed with paid-on-call members.



When seconds count, we want our “first responders” available and able to respond directly to the incident or medical situation. These cars give us flexibility and response.

These cars were purchased and equipped with grants, fundraising, and some budgeted items.



Med 2 – Our department purchased this ambulance to serve our community. We are in the process of stocking and equipping it to provide Advanced Life Support. This vehicle, along with the equipment carried, was fully funded through local donors and grant funding. There is currently no cost to the local district budget, and the secured funding will cover the cost for at least 5 years. Currently, we are using Med 2 for event standbys and to respond to emergencies with our

community. The long-term goal will be to use it for interfacility transfers and as a backup for our primary ambulance.

We are not allowed to transport patients YET.



Med 1 – Through our service contract with Portage County, we are assigned an ambulance. The county owns the ambulance and equipment carried. Our contract with them is to staff it 24/7/365. We always do this with at least one Paramedic and another care provider from EMT, RN’s or Physicians. This ambulance has a primary response area including the towns of Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, Belmont, and Buena Vista. It also includes the Villages

of Amherst, Amherst Jct, and Nelsonville.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – PPE

PPE includes all the following pieces of protective clothing.

Fire Helmet - \$400

Particulate Flash Hood - \$120

Turnout Coat - \$1500

Turnout Pant/Suspenders - \$1200

Fire Boots - \$350

Traffic Vest - \$45

Wildland Fire Coat - \$150

Fire Gloves - \$95

Rescue Gloves - \$15

Current standards call for the replacement of all of this in a 10-year cycle. AFD does go beyond 10 years based on the condition of the individual pieces.



\$3875 per fire fighter

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

SCBA is the single piece of equipment we must have to protect ourselves from heat, smoke, toxic gases, carcinogens, and much more. An SCBA allows us to do our job when the air is not safe to breathe. We cannot fight fire, rescue people, manage hazardous materials, or much of anything else without these tools.

Our SCBAs were purchased in 2013, complete with new harnesses, cylinders, and facepieces. The harnesses are recommended to be replaced as the version of the standard is updated. Historically, it has been acceptable to be within two standards of the current, or about 20 years. In 2013, we were compliant with the 2012 standard. Facepieces are also affected by the harness upgrades and typically must be replaced when the harness is replaced.

Cylinders fall under another standard, which only allows for a 15-year life cycle. At the expiration of the cylinder, they must be removed from service and destroyed. Our cylinders were purchased in 2013 and will expire in 2028.

SCBA Harness - \$5500 x 16 (\$88,000 estimate)

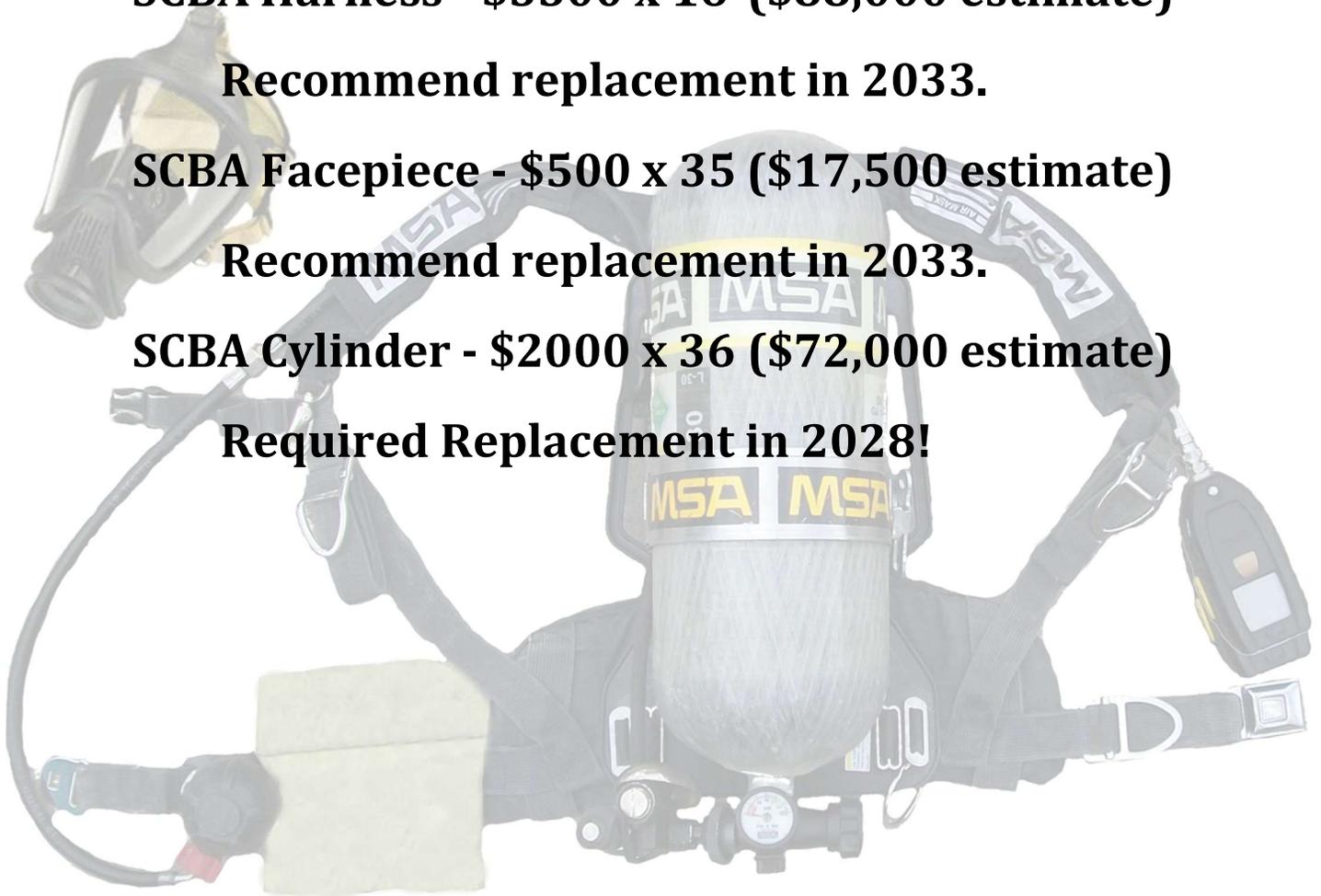
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Facepiece - \$500 x 35 (\$17,500 estimate)

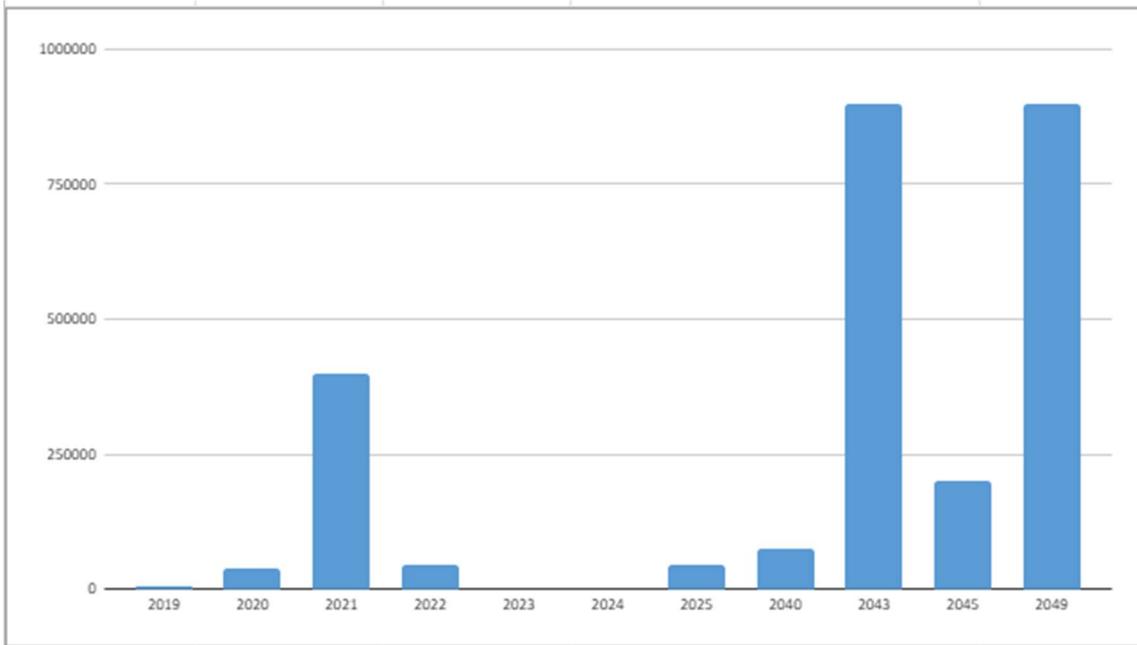
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Cylinder - \$2000 x 36 (\$72,000 estimate)

Required Replacement in 2028!



FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT YEAR AND COST

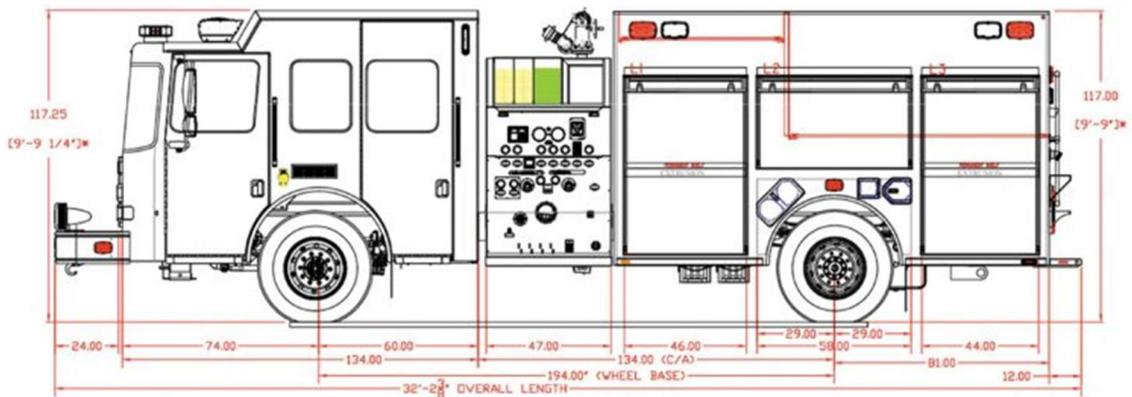


The cost of a fire apparatus varies, but one thing is certain: the prices are not going down.

There are many reasons to purchase a new custom fire engine, and unfortunately, the biggest reason not to is the cost. Every fire engine is custom because every fire department operates in a custom way dictated by its department and the community's needs.

Our current fire apparatus is in excellent working order. Other than some corrosion, wear, and tears, they are in incredibly good condition. This allows us to plan for their eventual replacement. AFD has an apparatus replacement schedule that has many data inputs to give a best guess as to when an apparatus should be replaced. The chart above graphically shows this. 2043 and 2049 are the years when our current Engine 1 and Engine 10 should be replaced. Each of these truck replacements is expected to be more than \$1 Million.

There is a strong possibility that Engine 10 could be refurbished sooner for a lower cost, and a new Engine 1 would be purchased. These conversations will happen soon.





Engine 1 – This is our primary apparatus for all fires and rescue incidents within the district. This apparatus features scene lighting and a traffic control board. It has the “jaws of life” and an onboard breathing air supply. It was purchased, used in 2011, fully equipped.

This apparatus today would cost \$900,000. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2049.



Engine 10 – Although it looks like a ladder truck, it is not. The aerial boom is designed to provide up to one thousand gallons of water per minute when needed. The device also allows us access to places where ground ladders do not work. This apparatus is our first out engine for all mutual aid requests and high-angle rope rescue incidents.

This truck was custom-built for our department in 2002. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2043 or refurbished sooner.



Tender 5 – Rural water supply is necessary, and our two tenders are key components to our fire response in rural areas. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis for our department in 2022. Its primary role is to shuttle water from a source to the fire scene.

This tender has a capacity of 2400 gallons of water and it carries two portable pumps.



Tender 15 – our second water tender. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis in 2000. It is overdue for replacement and has a number of deficiencies. Plans are being developed to reuse the chassis and have a new body built on it.

This tender has a capacity of 2000 gallons of water, and it carries two portable pumps.



Brush 1 – This truck was donated to us by TC Energies. We then had it custom-modified for our use. We used both equipment reserves and grants to build this truck.

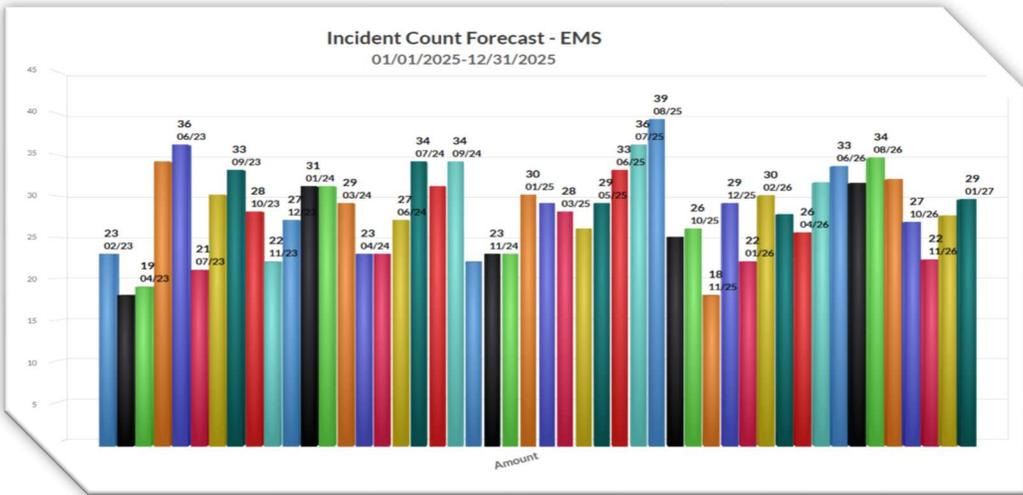
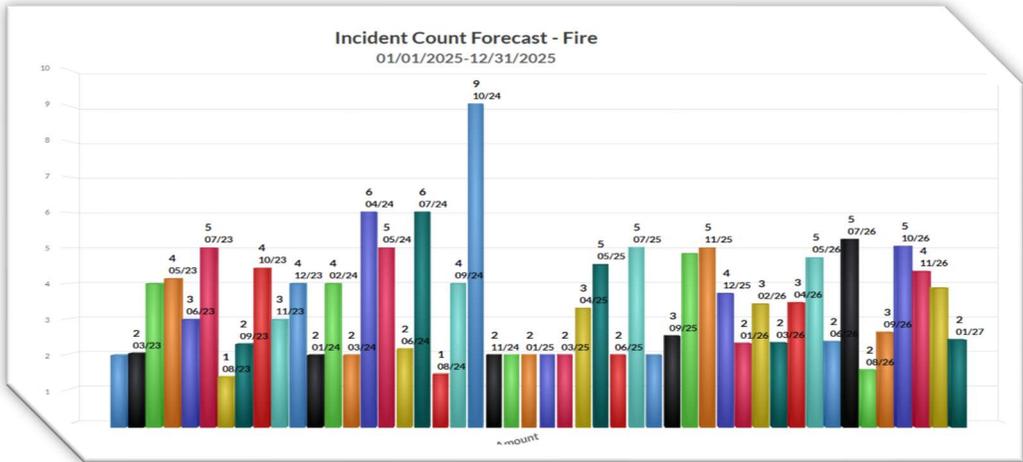
It is our primary vehicle for wildland fires (grass) and traffic incident management (TIM) incidents. It features on-board water, a pump, hoses, traffic control signs, and cones.

LOOKING AHEAD

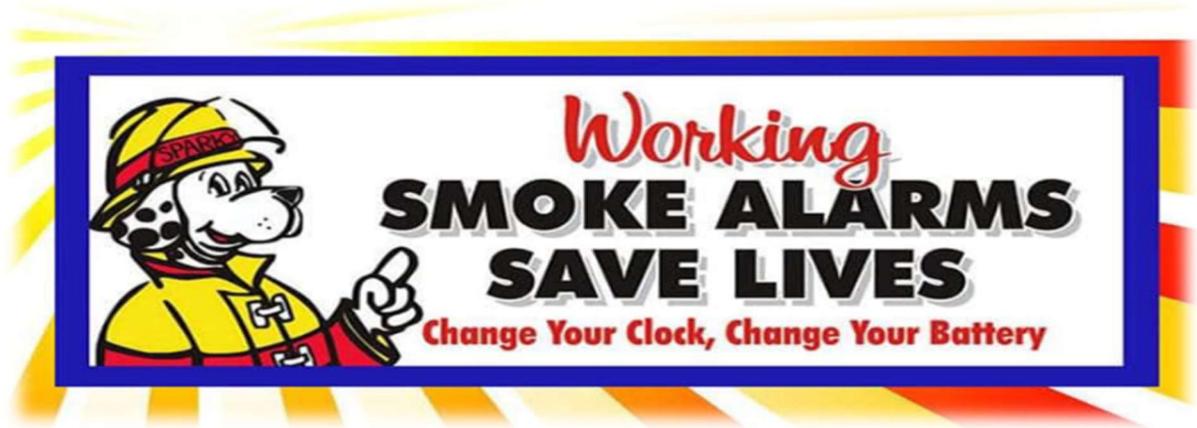
In 2026, the district will continue focusing on operational readiness, personnel development, and long-term planning for apparatus and equipment needs. Priorities include maintaining ALS coverage, strengthening recruitment and retention, and expanding prevention and outreach efforts.

Vision Statement:

The fire service is constantly evolving. Technology and data continue to guide our future. We aim to be leaders in this new fire service. We are committed to staying relevant and purposeful. Our members will be the leaders of our communities. Our department will be a leader for other departments. Our commitment to this vision is strong.



Working Smoke Detectors will save your life long before anyone else will.



SUMMARY

I hope that, as you have read this report, you take away some key points.

- The Amherst Fire District is not separate from the community or the municipalities we serve; the fire district is integral to the quality of life in the community.
- Our staff, full-time, part-time, and paid on call (volunteer) are professionals in the delivery of services. Pay status does not automatically equal professionalism and service excellence.
- Our staff are members of this community; they live, work, and play here. They care about the quality of life here. They are your neighbors and friends.
- We do a lot with what we have.
 - We need more help from you. The number of paid-on-call firefighters able to respond regularly is at the ***lowest level in history***.
 - We are so fortunate to have the support we have. Donations and our Budget make us the envy of many departments. It opens the doors for us to provide a service like no other in a community like ours.
 - We are creative and conscientious with your tax dollars; we pay taxes, too.
- We follow our Mission.
- We have identified our Core Values and embraced them.
- We have a vision for the future.
- The requirements imposed on us, the unfunded mandates, and the continuously rising costs of equipment and personnel safety clothing are creating challenges we will need to solve.
- Paid on-call (volunteer) staff may not be enough in the coming years. The risk and possibility that the day will come when no one is available is real.
- Our fire station is YOUR fire station. If you have never been here, you should come and see us. We are always happy to show off what we have and do.

In closing, as the longest-standing Fire Chief in our history, I give credit to many people for our successes. Previous Fire Chiefs, Fire Commissioners, municipal leaders, and volunteers built the foundation that we stand on today.

The members of the Amherst Fire District have signed up to provide services to you when you need them most and often at their detriment or personal cost. They assess risk differently from most people and act in ways most would not. We tell people to run out of burning buildings while racing each other to run in. What can I say? We are weird like that. You can be too.

Victor

MORE INFORMATION

Our website – www.amherstfd.org



AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
4885 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
AMHERST, WI 715-824-5511

HOME ABOUT US TRAINING PROTOCOLS PUBLIC EDUCATION

AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
ENGINE 1

Contact Us

SERVICES
FIRE/RESCUE
AMBULANCE
EMR

EQUIPMENT
FIRE APPARATUS
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

MEMBERSHIP
MEET OUR MEMBERS

JOIN OUR TEAM
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Phone Numbers

715-824-2699

Admin. Assistant ext. 1

Fire Chief Voss ext. 2

Deputy Fire Chief Bray

Assistant Chief Swan

Assistant Chief Meshak ext. 3

Public Education, Tours, Car Seats

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Amherst Fire District 2025 Annual Report

Reporting Period: January 1, 2025 -
December 31, 2025



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MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF



On behalf of the officers and members of the Amherst Fire District, I am proud to present our 2025 Annual Report. This report reflects a year of dedication and service rooted in our mission to protect life and property through fire prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community engagement.

Throughout 2025, our department responded to a wide range of emergencies, including medical calls, motor vehicle crashes, structure fires, and hazardous conditions. Each call for service represents a moment when our community relied on us, and our members answered with professionalism and teamwork.

Our volunteers and staff devoted countless hours to training, emergency response, and community engagement. Their efforts strengthened operational readiness and reinforced the trust we share with the residents we serve.

This report offers a transparent view of our operations, response activities, and resource utilization. It also highlights our investment in firefighter safety, EMS capability, and long-term capital planning.

Thank you to our municipal boards, our mutual aid partners, and the citizens we serve for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Victor R. Voss
Fire Chief / Service Director
Amherst Fire District

Mission Statement:

The Amherst Fire District members are committed professionals whose mission is to provide the highest standard of service through prevention, education, fire suppression, emergency medical care, technical rescue, and community interaction to preserve the quality of life and property for all of those who live, visit, or travel through our communities.

ABOUT THE AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT

The Amherst Fire District provides fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and community risk reduction services to Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and New Hope. The District covers approximately 70 square miles and serves an estimated 4,000 residents and visitors.

The district operates through a hybrid staffing model that combines dedicated volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel to provide 24/7 emergency response.

In support of rescue and emergency medical operations, the district staffs an Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) car and an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. These units are equipped to deliver high-quality prehospital care, including cardiac monitoring, advanced airway management, medications, trauma supplies, and patient transport systems. As an ALS service provider, the district plays a key leadership role in regional EMS response and coordinated patient care.



4585 Fairgrounds Road

Our station features a well-equipped modern training classroom, comfortable living quarters, office space, training structures, and much more. Station tours are always available.

2025 AT A GLANCE

Metric	2025
Total incidents	420
EMS / Rescue	348 (83%)
Fire	16 (4%)
Hazardous	15 (4%)
Good Intent	28 (7%)
False Alarms	6 (1%)
Service Calls	7 (2%)
Mutual aid incidents	16 (Given: 14, Received: 2)
Volunteer incident-response hours	741.41
PVEMS (personal vehicle EMS responses)	149
PVFIRE (personal vehicle FIRE responses)	8
Standby firefighter activations (STBY)	44
Most utilized unit	MED1 (ALS) - 375 responses



REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

Fire departments across the United States and in Wisconsin continue to see a sustained shift toward EMS and rescue responses. National incident data reported to NFIRS show that two-thirds of fire department calls are EMS and rescue, while only about 4% are fire-related. In Wisconsin, recent reporting highlights growth in fall-related EMS demand, and a statewide survey found that many departments are concerned about maintaining adequate staffing for call response.

This context mirrors Amherst's 2025 experience, where EMS and rescue calls make up the majority of the District's workload and staffing flexibility remains essential to sustained service delivery.

Sources: U.S. Fire Administration (NFIRS Run Profile, 2020); Wisconsin DHS (EMS and Falls, 2024); Wisconsin Public Radio staffing survey (2025).

Amherst Fire District **2025: Regional & National Context**

Amherst (2025)

- Total incidents: 420
- EMS/Rescue: 348 (83%)
- Fire: 16 (4%)
- Other: 56 (13%)

National trend (NFIRS)

- 64% of calls are EMS/Rescue
- About 4% are fire-related

Wisconsin context

- Fall-related EMS calls increased
- Staffing pressures statewide

Staffing reality (WI)

- 62% of departments worry about
- adequate staffing for a call

Sources: USFA NFIRS Run Profile (2020); WI DHS EMS & Falls (2024); WPR survey (2025)

2025 A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wisconsin Paramedic of the Year – Adam Meshak

Life-saving recognition – Thom Bray

Years of Service – 40 years, Ken and Bob Glodowski

Promotions – Captain/Training Officer, Pat Rock

Advancements – **Paramedic**, Lily Ackley, **EMT**, Balin Wojtalewicz, Carmen Schultz, Alyssa Ehr,

Med 2 – Fully stocked with grants and donations.

Grants – FAP \$30,000, DNR \$20,000, PC EMR \$8500

Donations – Total \$91,354

Fundraising – Total \$20,000

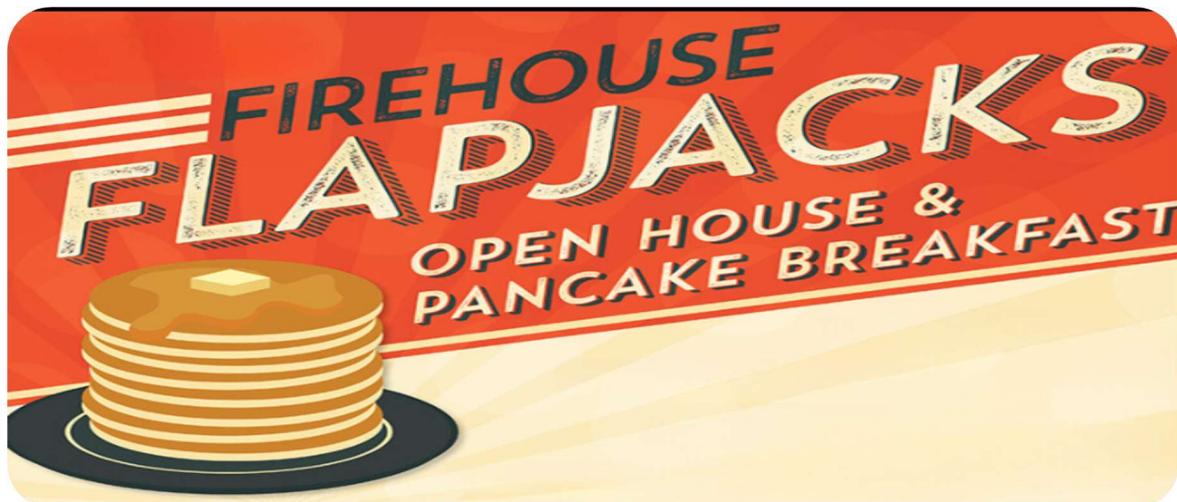
Salvation Army – We raised \$1400.

AED's and CPR – We helped add 11 AEDs to our community and have taught seventy-three people CPR.

Sports Cardiac Arrest Drills – 192 Students and 22 Coaches participated.

Child Safety Programs – Now offering Child seat inspections and other safety programs.

Fire Chief Succession Plan – Completed a detailed succession plan through committee work



2025 OPERATIONS OVERVIEW



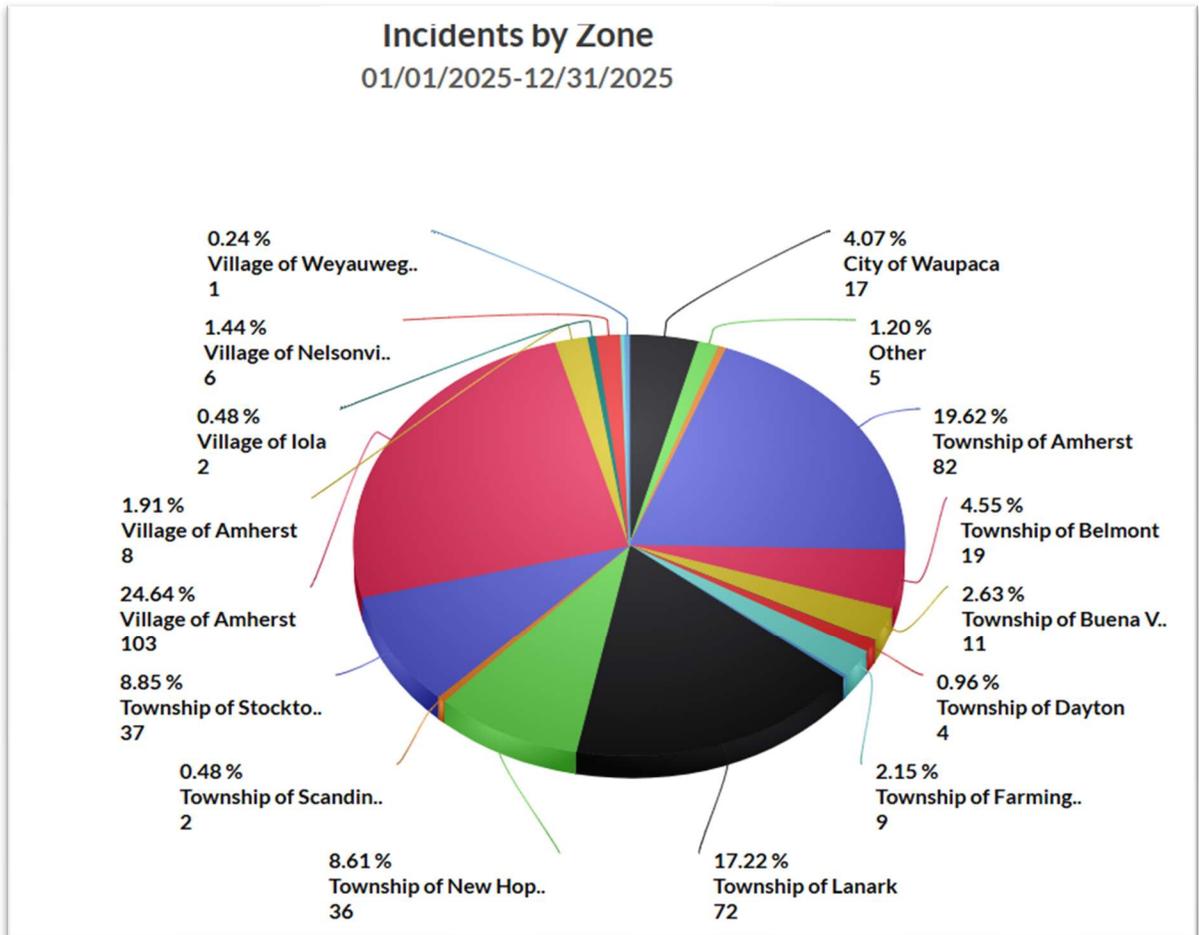
In 2025, the Amherst Fire District recorded 420 incidents. EMS and rescue responses drove most of the service demand, reflecting broader regional and national trends. Fire incidents represented a smaller share of overall activity, while hazardous conditions, good intent calls, and service calls accounted for the remainder of the workload.

We continue to respond to the same types of calls for service and everything else that comes our way. We do this with fewer volunteers than we ever have had. Our roster is strong, and our members are willing and capable, but their availability is reduced.

The future may require us to hire daytime firefighters. The cost of this would be high and needs to be planned.

INCIDENTS BY RESPONSE AREA

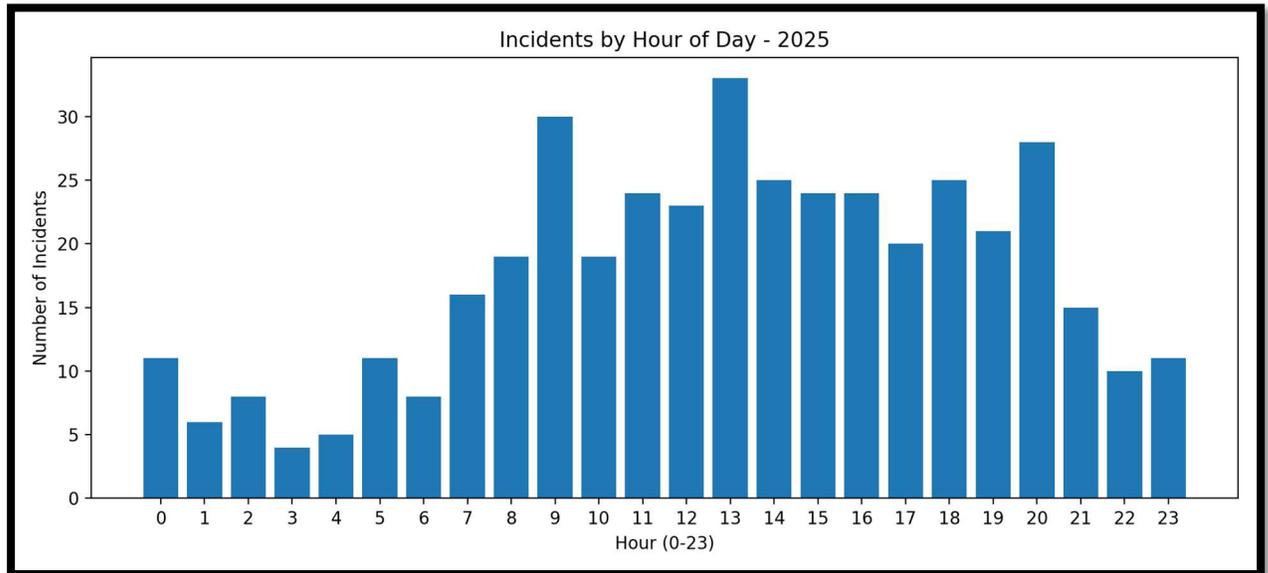
The chart below shows 2025 incident totals by response area, grouped into report-friendly zones representing Amherst, Amherst Junction, Nelsonville, and the surrounding rural areas of the Towns of Amherst, Lanark, and Belmont, including agricultural and low-density residential areas within the district service area.



Area	Incidents
Amherst (Village)	103
Amherst (Town)	82
Lanark (Town)	72
Belmont (Town) (ambulance only)	19
Amherst Jct (Village)	8
Nelsonville (Village)	6

INCIDENTS BY TIME OF DAY

Incident volume occurred throughout the day, with higher activity during daytime and early evening hours. Overnight hours maintained a steady baseline demand, requiring continuous readiness. Unfortunately, the peak times for incidents coincided with the lowest availability of our members.



Core Values:

Trust is the cornerstone of all relationships. We will continue to strive to build and earn trust both within the department and the communities we serve. We will earn trust through:

Integrity – We are committed to the highest standard of moral and ethical conduct.

Dedication – We provide quality service through pride and professionalism.

Compassion – We support our neighbors in their time of need.

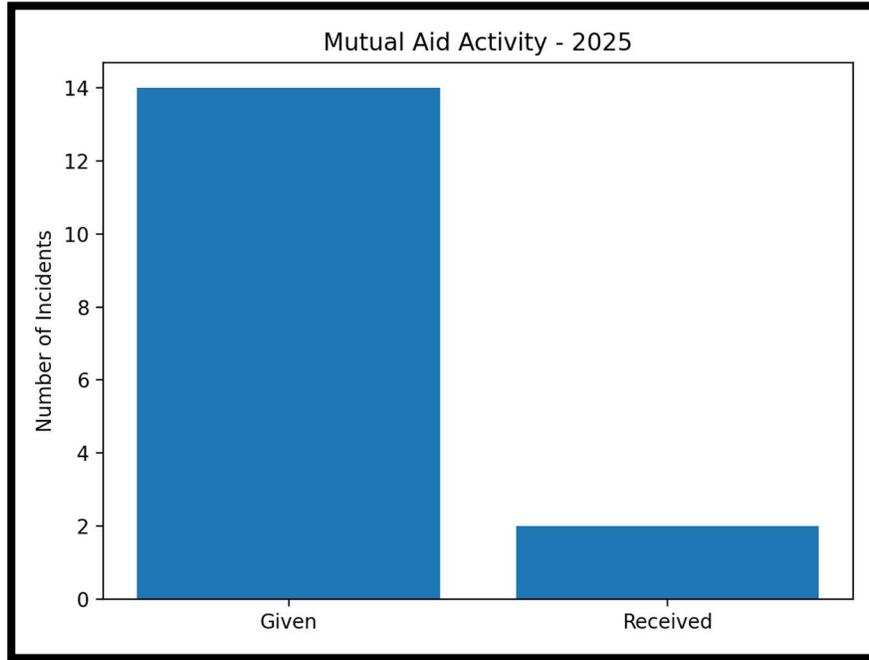
Teamwork – We work together to achieve common goals.

Tradition – We honor the legacy of those who have served before us.

Courage – We do what is right in the face of adversity

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid remains a critical component of regional emergency response. In 2025, the district provided mutual aid on fourteen fire incidents and received mutual aid on two incidents. These events included fill-in/standby coverage, EMS support, and coordinated responses with neighboring agencies.



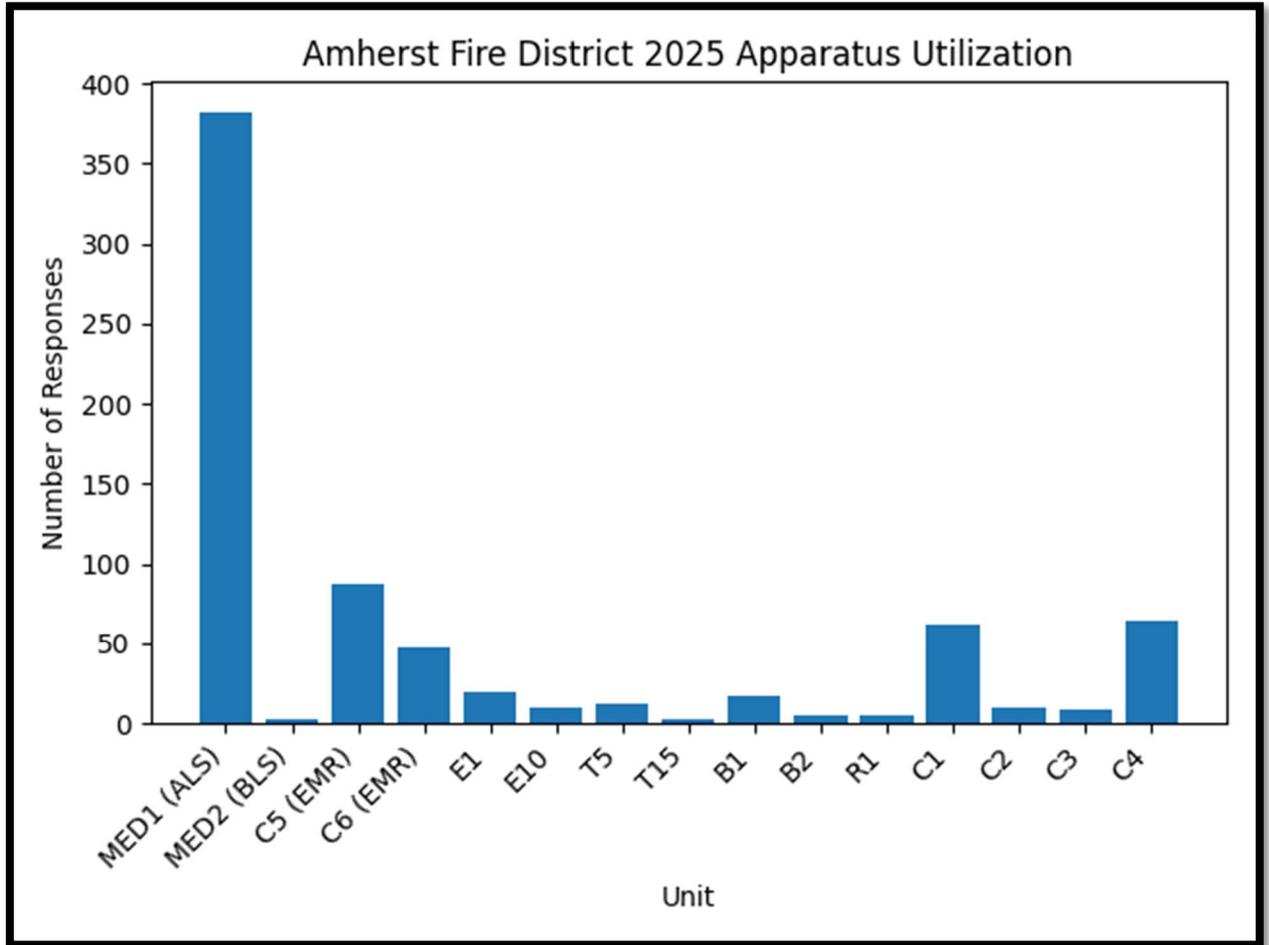
Most frequent mutual aid partners (given):

Almond Volunteer Fire Department	1
Iola & Rural Fire Department	2
Manawa Rural Fire Department	1
Ogdensburg/ St Lawrence Fire Department	1
Rudolph Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1
Scandinavia Volunteer Fire Department	1
Stockton Fire Department	1
Waupaca Area Fire District	1
Weyauwega Area Fire District	3

APPARATUS UTILIZATION

Apparatus utilization is reported for District-owned vehicles. Personal vehicle responses (PVEMS and PVFIRE) and standby firefighter activations (STBY) are reported separately as staffing and coverage metrics. In 2025, the ALS ambulance (MED1) was the most utilized unit, reflecting the EMS-heavy nature of District operations.

As a reminder, C1, C2, C3, and C4 are personal vehicles operated by the fire chief, deputy chief, and assistant chiefs.



PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS

Volunteer members and part-time staff provide essential capacity to sustain 24/7 response coverage. In 2025, documented incident-response hours totaled 741.41 hours. The table below summarizes the **top contributors** by fire incident-response hours.

Member	Incident-response hours
Adam Meshak	83.70
Balin Wojtalewicz	63.87
Robert Smith	63.85
Thomas Bray	56.41
Pat Rock	51.42
Charles Larson	47.14
Mike Klieforth	35.00
Ryan Sundsmo	34.26
Adam Skibicki	31.31
Roy Bohm	28.88



COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION



The Amherst Fire District emphasizes prevention and education as part of community safety. In 2025, members supported fire prevention messaging, smoke detector awareness, and safety outreach at school and community events. The district also promoted CPR awareness, basic first aid education, and EMS outreach to encourage early recognition of medical emergencies and prompt activation of the 911 system.



50% of the time when a person suffers cardiac arrest, an AED shock is advised. 100% of the time, CPR is required.

STAFFING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

The Amherst Fire District uses a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteers with part-time and full-time personnel. Like many rural and combination departments, the district faces challenges in volunteer recruitment, EMS staffing, and daytime coverage. Leadership continues to focus on recruitment and retention, training support, and reducing barriers to participation to maintain a sustainable workforce.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Amherst Fire District operates under a structured leadership and governance framework designed to support operational readiness, accountability, and effective service delivery.

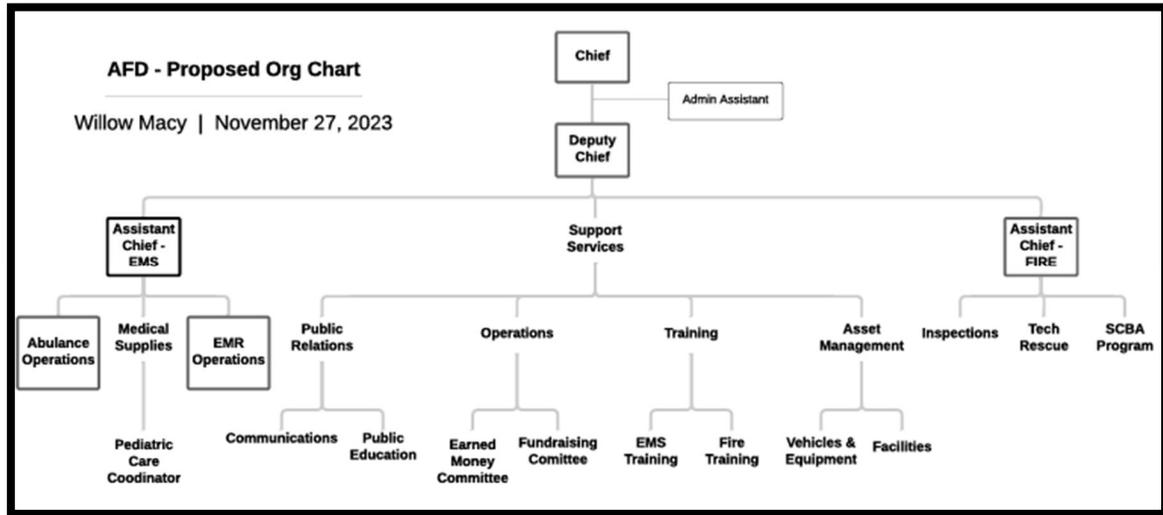
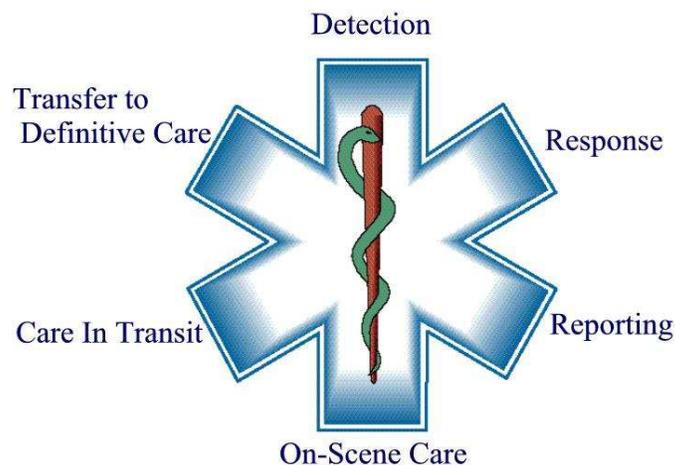


Figure 7: Amherst Fire District Organizational Structure — 2025

In 2023, as part of her Fire Officer certification class, Willow Macy, EMT-P firefighter, mapped our organization as part of her mentorship. This illustrates how our organization is structured. By developing this chart, we can illustrate many of the operational tasks that the department manages. The only positions on this chart that are compensated are the Chief (FTE), Admin. Assistant (PTE), Deputy Chief, and two Assistant Chiefs, who are compensated with annual stipends. All other tasks are done with volunteers, either receiving no pay or the minimum training rate of \$7.25/hour.



HOW THE FIRE DISTRICT WORKS

The Amherst Fire District is a local governmental entity established to provide fire protection, emergency medical services, rescue operations, and related public safety services within a defined geographic service area.

The district is governed by a Board of Commissioners appointed by each owner municipality, which is responsible for setting policy, approving budgets, and providing fiscal oversight.

The Board does not manage day-to-day emergency operations but instead establishes the strategic and financial framework under which the Fire District operates.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Fire Chief, who is responsible for implementing Board policies, overseeing personnel, managing emergency response operations, and ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

The Fire District delivers services through a hybrid staffing model that combines volunteer, part-time, and full-time personnel.

Funding for operations is provided primarily through local tax revenue, supplemented by fundraising, grants, and other limited revenue sources.

The Fire District operates as part of a broader regional emergency services system and coordinates closely with neighboring agencies, dispatch centers, and hospitals.

Before 1992, there were three fire departments in our area. Nelsonville Fire Department, Amherst Jct. Fire Department, and the Amherst Fire Department. There were three fire stations¹, one in Nelsonville, one in Amherst Jct. and one in Amherst.

All three departments worked independently of each other. All three struggled to have enough trained volunteers and usable equipment.

In 1992, the Amherst Fire District was founded with Fire Chief Jay Gordon and members of the newly formed Amherst Fire & Safety Commission. The consolidation of the three departments into one set in motion several changes for our area. The immediate need for a new water tender was filled by ordering a new truck, a 3000-gallon water tender. The need for a new fire station was apparent from the beginning and was planned. In 1994, we broke ground on a new seven thousand square foot fire station and moved in the spring of 1995.

Annual budgets have been created each year to fund the fire district. Contracts with both Lanark and New Hope have existed from the beginning. Trucks have been upgraded as needed; equipment has been purchased through planning, grants, fundraising, and donations. The cost of the fire district is shared by the owner municipalities, the Town of Amherst, the Villages of Nelsonville, Amherst Jct., and Amherst.

¹ All three stations were little more than garages. There were no meeting space, training area, bathrooms, or offices.

THE FORMULA

All costs associated with the fire district are shared between the four owner municipalities. The formula used was developed when the district was formed and has been used every year since. There are two components to the formula.

1. Population – 25% of the formula is based on the population served. This correlates to the idea that on the Emergency Medical side of things, we are treating people. Therefore, as the population changes, our call volume will follow.
2. Personal Property - 75% of the formula is based on the value of buildings in each municipality, as established by the Report of Property Tax of each municipality.

INCOME

The Amherst Fire District also receives income in the form of contracts for services. There are three sources of income.

1. Town of Lanark – the town contracts with AFD for fire and EMS services. The fire response area is about ½ of the township. The EMS response area covers the entire township.
2. Town of New Hope – the town contracts with AFD for EMR services for the southern half of the township.

Portage County – the county contracts with AFD to provide the personnel to staff the ambulance in Amherst. This contract is negotiated to include all costs associated with the ambulance operations.

EMS SYSTEM ROLE AND REGIONAL MEDICAL INTEGRATION

The Amherst Fire District provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) care and coordinated prehospital medical response. District EMS operations include rapid first response, cardiac and trauma care, advanced airway management, and medication administration. The district works with neighboring agencies, dispatchers, and regional hospitals to support coordinated responses, ALS intercepts, and efficient transfers of care.

HOW THE AMBULANCE SERVICE WORKS

Before 2008, all Portage County Ambulances were in Stevens Point. It was common to wait over 20 minutes for an ambulance to arrive in the Amherst, Amherst Jct., or Nelsonville area. In the towns of Lanark and Belmont, the wait was even longer, sometimes over 30 minutes. At that time, I was the fire chief and was responsible for the Amherst Area First Responders. These response times were unacceptable for our community, and something needed to be done to better the service. Extensive work was done to establish an ambulance in Amherst, and it was approved in May of 2007 by the county board.

On January 1, 2008, the Amherst Fire District began staffing a full-time ambulance at our fire station in Amherst. This was a major accomplishment for both Portage County and us. This meant that response time from the time a 911 call was received until an ambulance arrived was cut to an average response of 5 minutes. The Amherst Area First Responders became Emergency Medical Responders and increased their license to EMT Basic or higher.

Over the years, we have negotiated a number of contracts with Portage County. These contracts are quite simple.

- The County provides all the equipment, including the ambulance, the cot, the supplies, the fuel, and more. The contract also provides the wages and benefits for the full-time and part-time employees. There are also funds for training and uniforms for the staff.
- We agree to manage the ambulance, to staff it appropriately, to house it, to maintain the equipment in a ready state, and to respond to calls wherever needed.

Why does this work? It works because we are part of a regional (county-wide) service. When you regionalize services, it spreads the costs out across a region, making it affordable for everyone. The county manages the finances, including collecting the revenue from the billing. The county levies the additional funds to maintain the entire system. In 2019, the county added another ambulance to the system and entered a similar contract with the Plover Fire Department. So together with Plover, Stevens Point, and Amherst, we are now part of a very well-organized countywide system. The residents and visitors to our county receive Paramedic care within a very reasonable time when 911 is called.



SERVICES WE PROVIDE

The Amherst Fire District is a leader in the area for expertise and services offered. Our team is trained and equipped to respond to and mitigate many distinct types of calls for service. This sets AFD apart from most other departments in the area. This diverse list of capabilities is one of the key elements to attracting new firefighters.

1. **Advanced Life Support ambulance** – through our contract with the county, we schedule, staff, train, and employ about twenty part-time employees and five full time employees. The ambulance is licensed as a one-paramedic unit with the other provider at least at the EMT level. Also on our roster are a number of Registered Nurses and even a doctor who can function at the Paramedic level.
2. **Emergency Medical Responders (EMR)** – formerly known as first responders, our EMR group is made up of paid per-call employees who respond to medical calls in our entire response area. We utilize two response vehicles that carry life-saving equipment. The EMR also attends local events and provides up to an ALS service.
3. **Fire Response** – our department operates two fire engines, two water tenders, one reserve engine, and two brush fire trucks. Our communities have excellent fire response capabilities as indicated in our Insurance Standards Office (ISO) Community Risk Rate. On a scale of 1 -10, the Village of Amherst is rated at a 3, the Villages of Amherst Jct. and Nelsonville are rated a 6, and the Town of Amherst is rated at a 7.
4. **Technical Rescue** – our department is trained and equipped to respond to the following technical rescues (many of these hazards are found on farms)
 - a. High Angle/Rope rescue – getting people down from high places like silos, grain and fertilizer elevators, roofs, etc.
 - b. Trench rescue – getting people removed from collapsed trenches and holes in the ground.
 - c. Grain Bin rescue – getting people removed from grain bins when they have become engulfed in grain.
 - d. Ice Water rescue – getting people out of the water when they have fallen through the ice.
 - e. Building Collapse rescue – building stabilization and entry to rescue people from collapsed or partially collapsed buildings.
 - f. Extrication rescue – both heavy and medium duty extrication of people from vehicles involved in accidents, farm equipment, and industrial accidents.
5. **Traffic Incident Management (TIM)** – we are one of two agencies in the county that are trained and designated as an official TIM team. We provide traffic management on any road, when necessary, for several reasons, such as traffic accidents, downed power lines, road failures, road blockages, etc.
6. **Landing Zone management** – our firefighters are also trained to manage landing zones for medical helicopters that are called into our area.
7. **Medical Assists** – fire personnel are trained to do CPR, use AEDs, and use much of the equipment carried by the EMRs and ambulances. They provide lift assistance, patient access, ambulance drivers, and more to support patient care.



Car 5 and Car 6 – These two vehicles are equipped with advanced life support equipment and supplies. They are primary vehicles for Emergency Medical incidents.

Our department responders can use these vehicles when they are “on call” for medical emergencies. These vehicles are often seen in the community and are staffed with paid-on-call members.



When seconds count, we want our “first responders” available and able to respond directly to the incident or medical situation. These cars give us flexibility and response.

These cars were purchased and equipped with grants, fundraising, and some budgeted items.



Med 2 – Our department purchased this ambulance to serve our community. We are in the process of stocking and equipping it to provide Advanced Life Support. This vehicle, along with the equipment carried, was fully funded through local donors and grant funding. There is currently no cost to the local district budget, and the secured funding will cover the cost for at least 5 years. Currently, we are using Med 2 for event standbys and to respond to emergencies with our

community. The long-term goal will be to use it for interfacility transfers and as a backup for our primary ambulance.

We are not allowed to transport patients YET.



Med 1 – Through our service contract with Portage County, we are assigned an ambulance. The county owns the ambulance and equipment carried. Our contract with them is to staff it 24/7/365. We always do this with at least one Paramedic and another care provider from EMT, RN’s or Physicians. This ambulance has a primary response area including the towns of Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, Belmont, and Buena Vista. It also includes the Villages

of Amherst, Amherst Jct, and Nelsonville.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – PPE

PPE includes all the following pieces of protective clothing.

Fire Helmet - \$400

Particulate Flash Hood - \$120

Turnout Coat - \$1500

Turnout Pant/Suspenders - \$1200

Fire Boots - \$350

Traffic Vest - \$45

Wildland Fire Coat - \$150

Fire Gloves - \$95

Rescue Gloves - \$15

Current standards call for the replacement of all of this in a 10-year cycle. AFD does go beyond 10 years based on the condition of the individual pieces.



\$3875 per fire fighter

SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)

SCBA is the single piece of equipment we must have to protect ourselves from heat, smoke, toxic gases, carcinogens, and much more. An SCBA allows us to do our job when the air is not safe to breathe. We cannot fight fire, rescue people, manage hazardous materials, or much of anything else without these tools.

Our SCBAs were purchased in 2013, complete with new harnesses, cylinders, and facepieces. The harnesses are recommended to be replaced as the version of the standard is updated. Historically, it has been acceptable to be within two standards of the current, or about 20 years. In 2013, we were compliant with the 2012 standard. Facepieces are also affected by the harness upgrades and typically must be replaced when the harness is replaced.

Cylinders fall under another standard, which only allows for a 15-year life cycle. At the expiration of the cylinder, they must be removed from service and destroyed. Our cylinders were purchased in 2013 and will expire in 2028.

SCBA Harness - \$5500 x 16 (\$88,000 estimate)

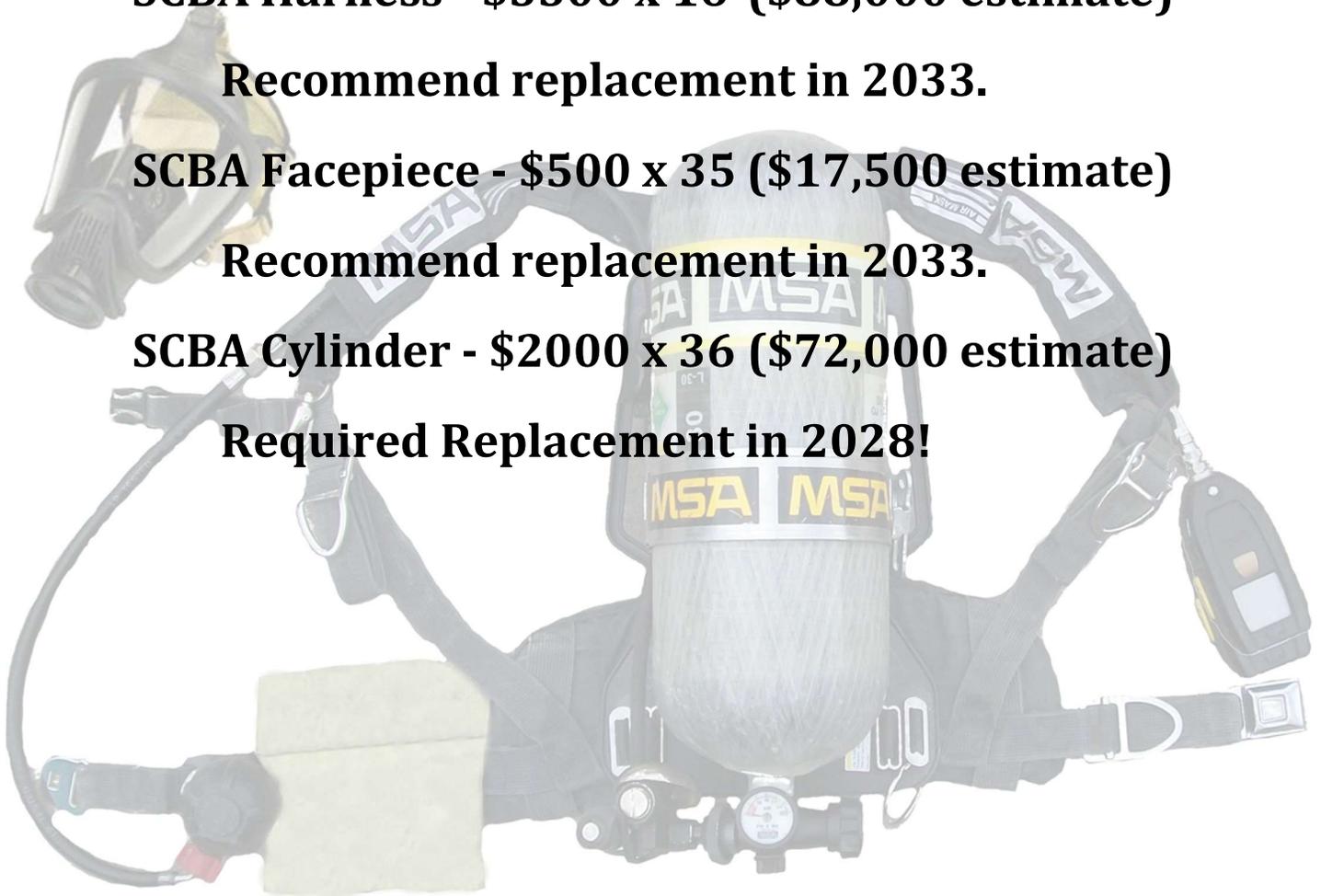
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Facepiece - \$500 x 35 (\$17,500 estimate)

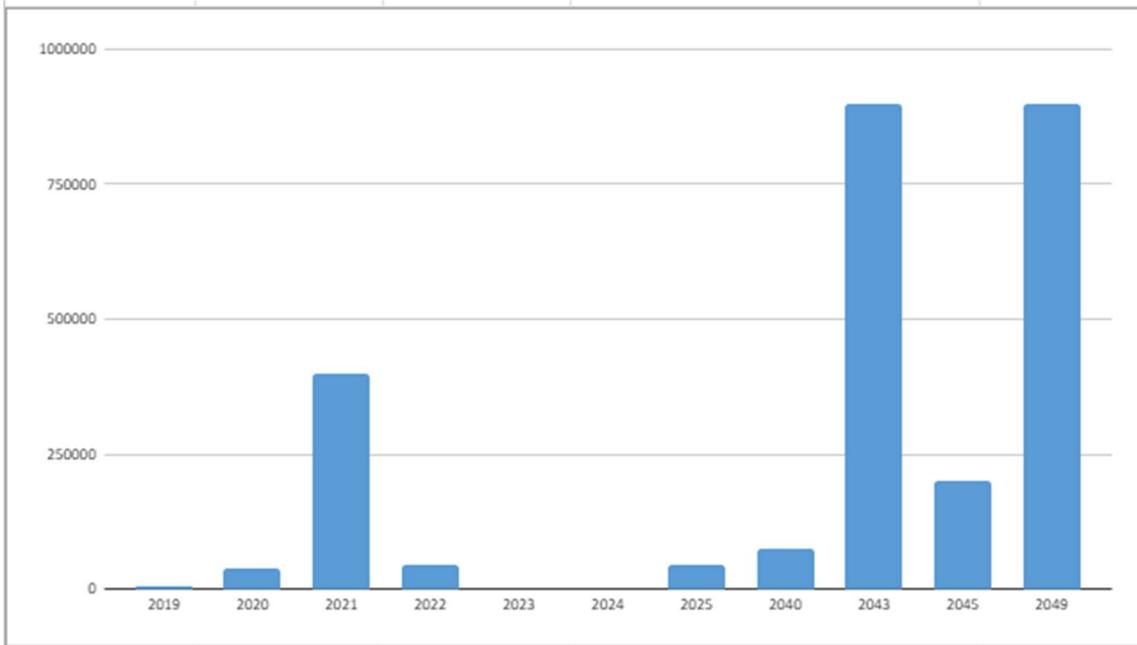
Recommend replacement in 2033.

SCBA Cylinder - \$2000 x 36 (\$72,000 estimate)

Required Replacement in 2028!



FIRE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT YEAR AND COST

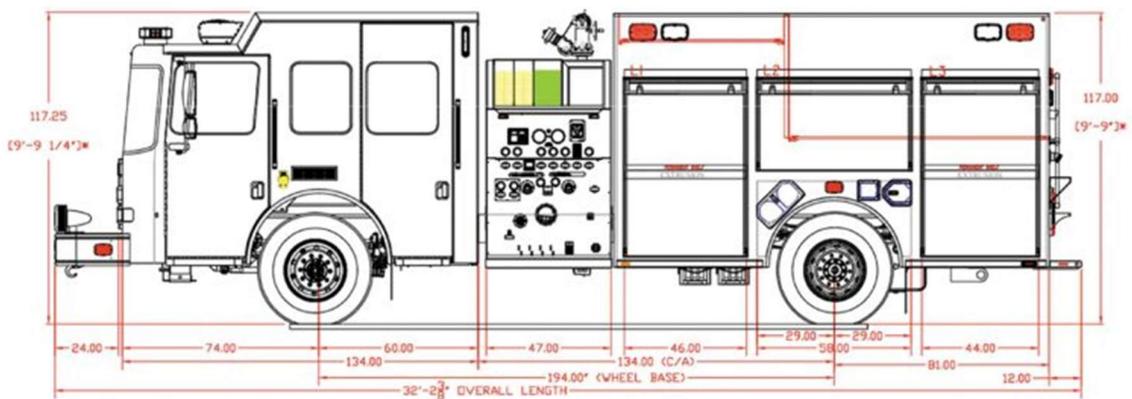


The cost of a fire apparatus varies, but one thing is certain: the prices are not going down.

There are many reasons to purchase a new custom fire engine, and unfortunately, the biggest reason not to is the cost. Every fire engine is custom because every fire department operates in a custom way dictated by its department and the community's needs.

Our current fire apparatus is in excellent working order. Other than some corrosion, wear, and tears, they are in incredibly good condition. This allows us to plan for their eventual replacement. AFD has an apparatus replacement schedule that has many data inputs to give a best guess as to when an apparatus should be replaced. The chart above graphically shows this. 2043 and 2049 are the years when our current Engine 1 and Engine 10 should be replaced. Each of these truck replacements is expected to be more than \$1 Million.

There is a strong possibility that Engine 10 could be refurbished sooner for a lower cost, and a new Engine 1 would be purchased. These conversations will happen soon.





Engine 1 – This is our primary apparatus for all fires and rescue incidents within the district. This apparatus features scene lighting and a traffic control board. It has the “jaws of life” and an onboard breathing air supply. It was purchased, used in 2011, fully equipped.

This apparatus today would cost \$900,000. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2049.



Engine 10 – Although it looks like a ladder truck, it is not. The aerial boom is designed to provide up to one thousand gallons of water per minute when needed. The device also allows us access to places where ground ladders do not work. This apparatus is our first out engine for all mutual aid requests and high-angle rope rescue incidents.

This truck was custom-built for our department in 2002. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2043 or refurbished sooner.



Tender 5 – Rural water supply is necessary, and our two tenders are key components to our fire response in rural areas. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis for our department in 2022. Its primary role is to shuttle water from a source to the fire scene.

This tender has a capacity of 2400 gallons of water and it carries two portable pumps.



Tender 15 – our second water tender. This truck was custom-built on a commercial chassis in 2000. It is overdue for replacement and has a number of deficiencies. Plans are being developed to reuse the chassis and have a new body built on it.

This tender has a capacity of 2000 gallons of water, and it carries two portable pumps.



Brush 1 – This truck was donated to us by TC Energies. We then had it custom-modified for our use. We used both equipment reserves and grants to build this truck.

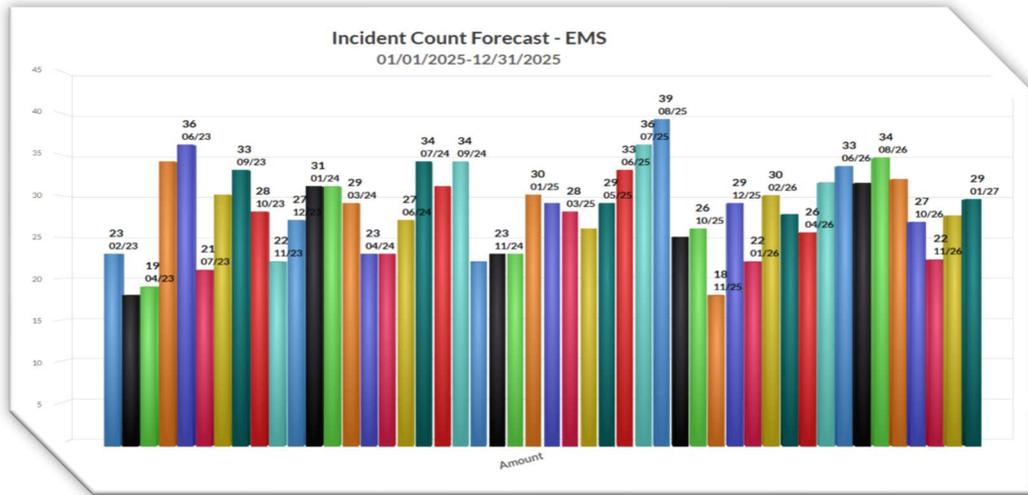
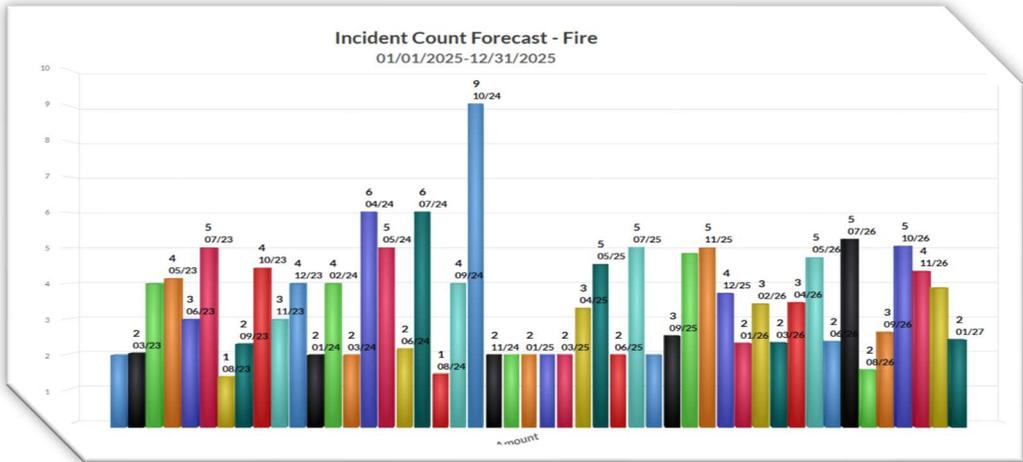
It is our primary vehicle for wildland fires (grass) and traffic incident management (TIM) incidents. It features on-board water, a pump, hoses, traffic control signs, and cones.

LOOKING AHEAD

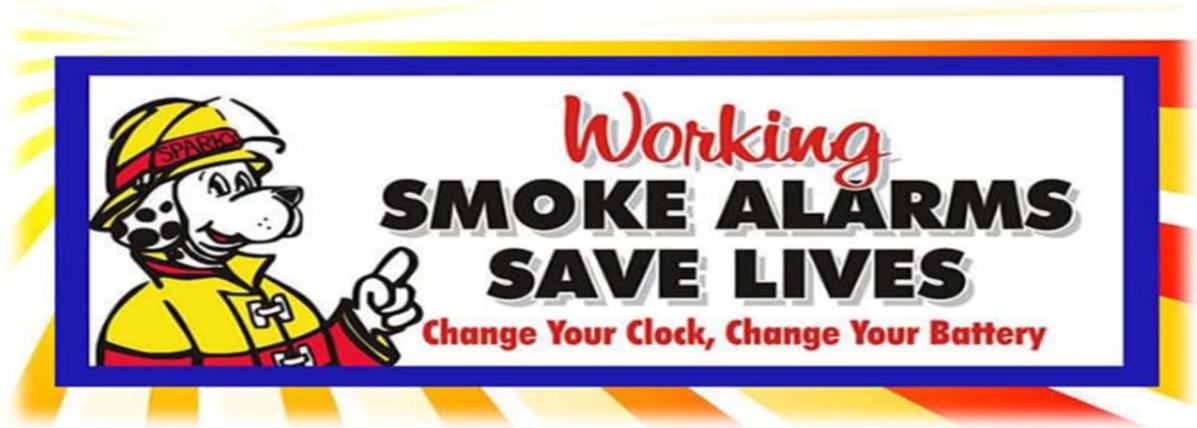
In 2026, the district will continue focusing on operational readiness, personnel development, and long-term planning for apparatus and equipment needs. Priorities include maintaining ALS coverage, strengthening recruitment and retention, and expanding prevention and outreach efforts.

Vision Statement:

The fire service is constantly evolving. Technology and data continue to guide our future. We aim to be leaders in this new fire service. We are committed to staying relevant and purposeful. Our members will be the leaders of our communities. Our department will be a leader for other departments. Our commitment to this vision is strong.



Working Smoke Detectors will save your life long before anyone else will.



SUMMARY

I hope that, as you have read this report, you take away some key points.

- The Amherst Fire District is not separate from the community or the municipalities we serve; the fire district is integral to the quality of life in the community.
- Our staff, full-time, part-time, and paid on call (volunteer) are professionals in the delivery of services. Pay status does not automatically equal professionalism and service excellence.
- Our staff are members of this community; they live, work, and play here. They care about the quality of life here. They are your neighbors and friends.
- We do a lot with what we have.
 - We need more help from you. The number of paid-on-call firefighters able to respond regularly is at the ***lowest level in history***.
 - We are so fortunate to have the support we have. Donations and our Budget make us the envy of many departments. It opens the doors for us to provide a service like no other in a community like ours.
 - We are creative and conscientious with your tax dollars; we pay taxes, too.
- We follow our Mission.
- We have identified our Core Values and embraced them.
- We have a vision for the future.
- The requirements imposed on us, the unfunded mandates, and the continuously rising costs of equipment and personnel safety clothing are creating challenges we will need to solve.
- Paid on-call (volunteer) staff may not be enough in the coming years. The risk and possibility that the day will come when no one is available is real.
- Our fire station is YOUR fire station. If you have never been here, you should come and see us. We are always happy to show off what we have and do.

In closing, as the longest-standing Fire Chief in our history, I give credit to many people for our successes. Previous Fire Chiefs, Fire Commissioners, municipal leaders, and volunteers built the foundation that we stand on today.

The members of the Amherst Fire District have signed up to provide services to you when you need them most and often at their detriment or personal cost. They assess risk differently from most people and act in ways most would not. We tell people to run out of burning buildings while racing each other to run in. What can I say? We are weird like that. You can be too.

Victor

MORE INFORMATION

Our website – www.amherstfd.org

HOME ABOUT US TRAINING PROTOCOLS PUBLIC EDUCATION

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AMHERST FIRE DISTRICT
ENGINE 1

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SERVICES
FIRE/RESCUE
AMBULANCE
EMR

EQUIPMENT
FIRE APPARATUS
EMERGENCY VEHICLES

MEMBERSHIP
MEET OUR MEMBERS

JOIN OUR TEAM
JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Fire Chief Voss ext. 2

Deputy Fire Chief Bray

Assistant Chief Swan

Assistant Chief Meshak ext. 3

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