

Report of the Fire Rescue Department

As we all ushered in the year 2020, no one knew the challenges and changes that would lie ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives and the way we all do our jobs. The members of the Fremont Fire Rescue Department, like all departments across the country, had to change the way we responded to calls, provided service, and adapt to everchanging protocols.

Working with our Emergency Management Director, Mark DeVeber, we were able to purchase necessary supplies, equipment and protective gear, and set up decontamination areas for personnel and equipment. This allowed us to appropriately decontaminate and reuse critical PPE at a time when there was significant shortfall across the country. This innovative planning was timely, organized and thorough.



Being a small department, quarantining just one member put a strain on the entire department. Early on we had several instances of potential exposure, which were handled professionally by all involved. We want to remain healthy to continue to serve you, as well as maintain our own and our family's health!

While many of our members struggled with the tasks of working from home and homeschooling their children, they continued to dedicate their time to participate in training, respond to calls, and serving the residents of Fremont. Training and meetings took on new life via Zoom and other electronic means.

Late in 2019 the Fire Rescue Department converted to the Town's email system and that, combined with our use of the "I AM RESPONDING" system for call messaging has also helped to



improve departmental communications. Especially this year when information was constantly changing and it was imperative to reach staff quickly, this was a big asset, and improvement in our technology!

This year also marks the end of an era for the Department. Our former Fire Chief Richard "Hez" Heselton

passed away on August 21. Hez was a lifelong Fremont resident and Chief of the Department for 32 years; and a member for many more. Dick retired in 2008 and even until his passing, had historical information and tips for all of us! He continued to listen to a scanner and even occasionally attend a call to lend some advice. With his intricate knowledge of the Town, our apparatus and Fremont history in general, his input was as helpful as it was colorful. He is dearly missed.

I would like to thank Firefighter Seth Wood, and his wife Kim, who during the quarantine, built and donated a dryer which will dry up to six sets of firefighting gear at a time, to our Department. This donation, together with our new gear extractor (a special washing machine), will save us the expense of sending gear out to be cleaned and gets it back in service quicker.



Mourning bunting on the Town's newest fire truck the day of Retired Chief Heselton's burial at Village Cemetery.

Seth & Kim Wood with gear drying rack they donated.

Photos courtesy of Deputy Chief Joe Nichols

members who give their valuable time to ensure the safety of others. The Town Hall staff, Police and Highway Departments continue to make our jobs easier with their ongoing assistance and we thank them for this as well.

We are looking for people to join this committed team. If you are interested in becoming a firefighter or EMT, please reach out. By becoming a member of Fremont Fire Rescue Department, you are able to receive the training necessary to help others in a time of need.



Department responses for 2020 are shown in the following chart:

Structure Fire	3	CO Alarm Activation	3
Mutual Aid Provided	6	Public Assist / Misc	15
Fire Alarm Activation	36	Medical Emergency	275
Woods / Brush Fire	4	Motor Vehicle Crash	14
Wires Down	11	Smoke / Odor Inv	15
Assist Ambulance	15		
Chimney Fire	2	Total for 2020	399

Respectfully submitted,

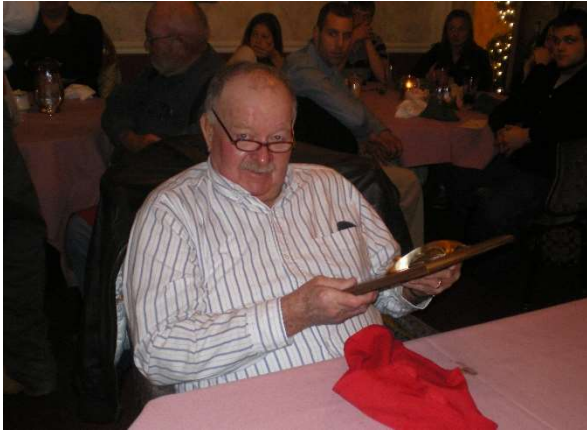
Richard Butler
Fire Chief



Photos courtesy of Jason Schreiber, Union
Leader Correspondent, from the
November 19, 2020
fire that destroyed a Beede Hill Road garage.
This fire went to three alarms.

Other photos courtesy of Joe Nichols, Mark DeVeber, Rich Butler, and the late Bob Rydeen.

Reprinted from the Town of Fremont 2008 Annual Report



Tribute to Retired Fire Chief Dick Heselton

Excerpts from the 1976 Annual Report of the Fremont Fire Department:

"It is with a very heavy heart, that I submit to you my first Annual Report. As you well know, Chief Clarence (Phib) Philbrick passed away while fighting a fire at the Spaulding & Frost Company on August

17, 1976. His passing was a great loss to the Fire Department, and the town in general, but an even greater loss to me, as a good friend and trusted employee, for over forty years. It is pretty difficult to lose someone like that, he is greatly missed."



These are the first official written words to the Fremont Community of Richard Heselton as he took over the position of Fire Chief. He had been the Deputy for several years prior, but assuming the role of Fire Chief is an immense community responsibility.

In the 32 years that followed, Dick has seen immense changes in the make-up of the Fremont Community, his Department, and the complex nature that is emergency services. This small writing is intended to serve as a tribute to Dick and the many accomplishments of the Fremont Fire Department during these years.

Early records estimate that Dick joined the Fremont Fire Department in 1954 after serving his Country in the US Air Force. Through these years he responded often from his local business (Fremont Motor Sales) in the Town's time of need. He answered calls at the garage and at home, and until only very recently, still had the "red phone" in his home!

The Department has purchased several new pieces of apparatus, from the first piece he recommended, to be in service by 1981, to the 1988 Tanker; a new Engine 1 in 2001; and the utility truck in 2005. Dick did most of the maintenance on apparatus himself at the garage, and in later years, did some of it in the new fire station. He prided himself on equipment being in top-notch condition and always clean as a whistle.

Dick was always frugal, looking for the economical way to fix things that were broken. The technology has changed, but Dick still has an old-fashioned remedy



to many a project in need of fixing. His Yankee ingenuity has solved many problems.

In 1976 he reported that the Department responded to 47 calls, which was an increase of 5 from the prior year; and in 2007, the first full year of a combined department, they responded to 318. This now includes all of the Town's medical aid calls as well as fires.



He saw the advance of equipment to include the Department's Jaws of Life, Thermal Image Camera, and CO Meter. His early days of firefighting were without today's SCBA air packs and gear consisted of hip boots and an overcoat, when budgeted funds allowed. We have surely come a long way!

The combination of the Fremont Fire Department and the Fremont Rescue Squad (formerly the FAST Squad) was a tremendous effort on the part of the Department members.

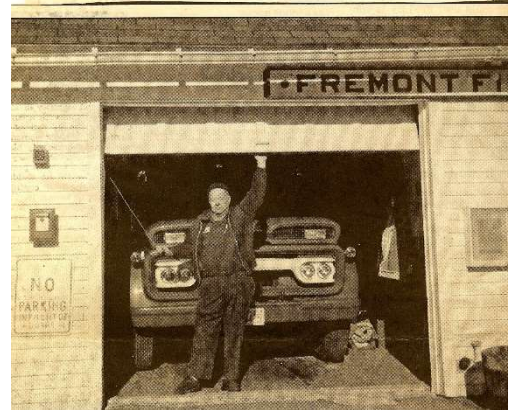
Chief Heselton recognized that it was time for this change to occur. The transition speaks highly of the Department, its members, and all of the Officers in leadership positions.

In 1997 Dick was part of the project resulting in construction of the Fremont Safety Complex. He can be seen here in a photograph of that era, highlighting the need for additional space. The old fire station was located on the site of Spaulding & Frost Cooperage, which also saw significant activity during Dick's tenure.

Over the years, Dick has seen a wide variety of tragedy; and been a part of many important and wonderful things in the Fremont Community. He is to be commended for his dedication and service to the Department and to the Town of Fremont.



Fremont Officials Say Quarters Are Too Tight



You will still hear him say he is "old and foolish" when you ask how he is, trademark words that we have all heard many times! It is the end of an era to have Dick retire, but he should look back at a notable career in the fire service with pride and an extreme sense of accomplishment. We have all learned from him, in a variety of ways, and owe a great debt of gratitude for his taking on the challenging task of being Fremont's Fire Chief for 32 years.

And, to close, as Dick began, "...a good friend and trusted employee for more than 50 years..." We miss your day to day interaction with the Town but wish you every hearty congratulations for a job well done! Best wishes for a healthy and enjoyable retirement!



Annual Fire Rescue Department Dinner
December 2008
with a plaque to commemorate Chief Heselton's years
of service to the Fremont Fire Department and the
Town of Fremont.

Photos courtesy of Brett Hunter, Joel & Jode Lennon;
and Richard Butler from the Department Scrap Book.
Thank you to Meredith Bolduc for her assistance in
photo layout! Information compiled by Heidi Carlson.

"There is no friend like an old friend."

~ Author and Physician Oliver
Wendell Holmes

*"Yes'm, old friends is always best, 'less you
catch a new one that's fit to make an old one
out of."*

~ Maine novelist Sarah Orne Jewett



In loving Memory of Richard C. Heselton
August 4, 1936 ~ August 21, 2020

Godspeed Hez, we will miss your many contributions to this community, the Fire Service, and
so much more.

Rest in Peace.