

**Peninsula Township Fire Board  
Report to the Community  
June 2010**

In November 2009, the Peninsula Township Board established a fire administrative board (the Fire Board) in accordance with State law. The Fire Board has oversight responsibility for the Fire department including "employing, discharging and disciplining all Fire Department personnel, recommending to the Township Board the number of employees, and for creating and enforcing all policies and procedures related to the Fire Department" - language from the enabling resolution adopted by the Town Board in February 2010. In addition, the Fire Board has responsibility for preparing the annual Budget and the Long Range Plan.

In creating the Fire Board, the Township Board brought together a group of Township residents who work with the Chief and the fulltime and volunteer members of the Fire Department to ensure the highest level of medical and fire service to Peninsula residents and visitors.

**Meet the Fire Board Members**

**Dave Sanger, Chairman**

Dave is a 10 year resident of the Peninsula. He has over 9 years service to the Township as a member of the Planning Commission and member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Dave also has extensive service as a volunteer within law enforcement, including 9 years service as a Reserve Deputy with the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Department. Dave is the Business Manager for St. Joseph Church on the Peninsula.

**Tony Andrus**

Tony is a life-long resident of the Peninsula, growing up on a cherry farm. At the age of 18, he joined the Peninsula Township Fire Department (following in his father's footsteps) and contributed 24 years of service, rising through the ranks to the position of Captain (he is a past member). Tony works for Peninsula Telephone as a Telephone Technician.

**Fred Doelker**

Fred is a 46 year resident of the Peninsula, having graduated from Old Mission School in 1967. He served on the original PDR Committee. Fred recently retired from AAA Michigan after 32 years of service as Manager of Communications Services and Community Outreach and Safety Administrator. Fred is active with many traffic safety groups, including Safe Kids and numerous traffic safety committees.

**John Sprenger**

John is an 11 year resident of the Peninsula and lifelong resident of Traverse City. John is a past member of the Peninsula Township Fire Department. He is the owner of a landscape management and irrigation business.

**Kennard Weaver**

Ken is retired senior partner of Black & Daniels, a large law firm. He lives on the Peninsula, where he has owned a home for 20 years. Ken has extensive experience in serving on Boards of directors and officer with many commercial and industrial firms, as well as many community and charitable organizations.

**Fire Board Meetings**

The Fire Board meets on the first Monday of each Month in the Township Hall. The schedule of meeting dates, Agendas and Minutes are posted on the Township Website. Special meetings are called as necessary; all meetings are open to the public and comply with requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

**Interesting Facts**

Calls for service in 2009: 348; 67% medical, 29% fire  
Calls by day of the week: Mon(15%) Tue(10) Wed(13) Thus(12) Fri(12) Sat(11) Sun(15)  
Calls by hour: Midnight to 8:00AM (13%), 8:00AM to 4:00PM (53%), 4:00PM to Midnight (34%)

## Peninsula Township Fire Department

The Peninsula Township Fire Department is one of 5 fire departments serving Grand Traverse County. The others, with whom our Fire Department has mutual aid agreements are: Grand Traverse Metro (serving East Bay, Acme and Garfield Townships), Grand Traverse Rural (serving 8 townships in the southern part of the County), Blair Township and Traverse City Fire Departments. The Peninsula Township Fire Department has primary responsibility to provide residents and visitors with service for: 1) fire emergencies, 2) medical emergencies, and 3) fire prevention and education.

### Who pays for the Fire Department?

Property owners in the Township fund the Fire Department's annual budget (\$527,600 revenue this fiscal year) through a millage of 0.9 mills. Because the millage is based on taxable value of the property, the assessment varies with property value. For a taxpayer living in a home with assessed value of \$200,000 (market value of approximately \$400,000), the annual assessment for fire and medical services is \$180.00

### Who are our Firefighters?

Historically, members of the Peninsula Township Fire Department were volunteers. Today, the Fire Department has a fulltime Chief and 3 fulltime employees who function as Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). In addition, the Department has 20 members who are "on call" and are paid for responding to calls, meetings and training sessions. These members include 6 certified Firefighters, 4 certified Firefighter/Medical Fire Responders, 7 certified ETM/Firefighters, 2 certified EMTs and 3 are in training.

### When do we have Fire Department Members at the Fire Station?

Beginning June 1, 2010, the main station (Station One) will be staffed with firefighting/medical personnel:

- Monday through Friday: 8:00AM to Midnight (primarily with 2 fulltime members on duty)
- Saturday and Sunday: 12 hours each day (likely 8:00AM to 8:00PM) - this is new June 1st.

On-duty staffing will consist of 2 members of the Department, with at least one certified EMT on duty. These members will respond immediately from Station One to medical or fire emergencies. Other members will be called and asked to respond. Weekend staffing at Station One may consist of fulltime & volunteer members.

During hours when Station One is staffed with on-duty members, all members of the Department are notified to respond to Station One (or Station Two) through a page from Grand Traverse County Central Dispatch.

### Facilities

We have two fire stations that house our fire equipment. Neither facility can accommodate personnel working long shifts (18-24 hours), because of the lack of eating and sleeping facilities. The existing Station One has no showers, decontamination room, exercise room or lounge, or drive-thru-truck bays — all essential and standard features of a modern fire stations. Station Two, near Underwood Farms, has three truck bays, bathrooms and a community meeting room.

### Emergency Calls and Response Times

Prompt response is essential for both medical and fire emergencies. In Peninsula Township, over 67% of the calls for service are for medical emergencies. Fast response time is important in saving lives and property.

<u>Type of Call to the Fire Department</u>	<u>April 2010</u>	<u>March 2010</u>
Medical emergencies	16	20
<b>Average response time (mins)</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Fire emergencies	6	1
Mutual Aid—other jurisdictions	1	3
Non-emergency calls	1	4

#### Faster Response Times

In March and April, 60% of the medical calls occurred when Station One was manned only on weekdays. Beginning June 1, with Station One manned by 2 members on Saturdays and Sundays, we estimate that 80-90% of the medical calls will occur when the Station is manned by 2 members. This should result in faster response times beginning June 1.

## **Fire Board Work Plan Here's What we are Working On**

### **Safety of our Personnel—Medical Testing and Evaluation**

The Fire Service is extremely difficult and stressful work. It is important that employees performing the tasks of fire fighting and emergency medical service be in excellent medical condition. In accordance with the recommendations of the National Fire Protection Association and upon Resolution from the Township Board, the Fire Board has arranged for Munson Occupational Health to conduct medical tests and evaluations on our fulltime and volunteer employees to ensure their safety and the safety of their associates. This testing began in May and will be completed by the end of June. Fire Department members who are identified with medical conditions that will limit their activities will be assigned to duties in line with their capabilities.

**Response to Medical Emergencies.** Presently, we use a two-tier system for medical response. For all medical calls, Peninsula Township Fire Department members who are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) respond to the scene with an ambulance owned by the Township. For medical calls involving the higher level of treatment called Advanced Life Support (ALS), usually involving heart or breathing problems or severe trauma, Central Dispatch also sends Northflight (operated by Munson) whose personnel are Paramedics. Our EMTs work with Northflight Paramedics in providing care, including transport to Munson in our ambulance if required. The Fire Board is evaluating if our Fire Department members should be trained to provide Paramedic (ALS) level of response at all times. The issue is of interest because of the unique geography of the Peninsula and the fact the Northflight Paramedics usually arrive after our EMTs.

**24 Hour on-site Staffing.** Beginning June 1, we will have 2 members on duty at Station One seven days a week, with 18 hours covered weekdays and 12 hours on the weekends. Analysis indicates that having 2 people on duty at Station One will reduce response times. The Fire Board is evaluating on duty staffing at Station One for the other unmanned times (primarily, Midnight to 8:00AM). During all times, all other firefighters and EMTs, not on duty, would still be paged by Central Dispatch and asked to respond to the emergency.

### **Financial Issues**

Peninsula Township, with its current millage of 0.9 mills for fire and medical services, is one of the lowest millage rates in the area; most other communities levy at least 2.0 mills. The Fire Board is working on a five-year financial plan to provide faster response times (with around the clock staffing of Station One), upgrade fire and medical vehicles and equipment when needed and provide improved facilities for Fire Department members — without increasing taxes. Options being discussed include implementing fees for some services (medical transport, for example) and issuance of general obligation bonds for improvements or replacement of the existing Station One (to provide dormitory rooms for 24 hour staffing).

### **Survey of Residents**

The opinions and recommendations of residents are important to the Fire Board; public input is valuable in planning the future of the Fire Department. Beginning in June, Northwestern Michigan College, Research Services Office, will conduct a survey of a sample of residents. The survey will tell, within a confidence level of 95%, what Township residents expect from its Fire Department's fire and medical services. If you are selected, please share your thoughts with the interviewer. Your thoughts, opinions and suggestions are vital.

### **Long Range Plan for the Fire Department**

Primary issues involve: 1) adequate staffing for medical and fire emergencies, 2) facilities and equipment; 3) level of service for medical emergencies, 4) public communications, 5) financing and funding sources, 6) rescue operations on the bays, 7) staffing and personnel policies (including options for the use of full time personnel, part-time personnel, and volunteers who are paid for each call); we also expect to discuss citizen participation in non-certified support services for the Fire Department.

### **Other Ideas being Discussed**

The Fire Board is evaluating the recommendations of Peninsula Fire Department Committee (made in December 2008). Also, the Town Board has asked the Fire Board to evaluate the concept of creating a Public Safety Department (providing combining police, fire and emergency medical services).

# Inside—Information from the New Peninsula Township Fire Board

## Important Information—stay in touch with the Fire Board and Fire Department

### Attend Meetings of the Fire Board

First Monday of each Month at 7:00PM in the Town Hall

### Visit the Peninsula Township Web Site

[www.PeninsulaTownship.org](http://www.PeninsulaTownship.org)

Click on “Emergency Services”, “Fire Board” & “Fire Dept.”

Click on Agendas and Minutes for the Fire Board



### Contact members of the Fire Board

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### Fire Board Regular Meeting Dates 2010

June	7
July	12 (2nd Monday)
August	2
September	13 (2nd Monday)
October	4
November	1
December	6

## Report to the Community June 2010

Fire Administrative Board  
Peninsula Township  
13235 Center Road  
Traverse City, MI 49686



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