

Fire Department Task Force Study Committee

The members of the Groton Fire Call Department would like to take this opportunity to extend our full support and gratitude to Chief Steele McCurdy for his on-going effort to provide the community with the highest levels of public safety by developing a well-trained and disciplined fire department.

When Chief McCurdy joined the Town of Groton Fire Department, the Call Department was a fractured unit. They were in the midst of a highly publicized internal dispute that resulted in a lawsuit between some members of the department and the town. This situation not only created a negative perception of the Call Department, it also drove a wedge into a group that was expected to work together in very stressful situations. Chief McCurdy was able to establish himself as a leader; focusing on moving forward, bringing the department together, and not getting distracted by past events. The morale of department increased dramatically as did the skill set of the members who welcomed the change in direction and philosophy with open arms.

Chief McCurdy continues to develop an extremely effective training schedule that allows members to work on practical skills they need to have in order to safely do their job and protect the community. He has also built a very strong leadership team in his officers; both Call and Professional members. The Chief has the confidence in himself and this team to be able to delegate the appropriate responsibilities that are necessary in establishing an integrated department. He has also demonstrated fiscal responsibility by providing the appropriate tools and equipment to assist the department in achieving its goals while working within an increasingly challenging budget. Working closely with town departments, he has built a strategic plan for the future, and through creative pathways, has been able to assure the department will continue to be well equipped in the years to come.

One area that has been much more challenging for Chief McCurdy is in the recruitment of new call members. Statistically, volunteerism in all forms is declining, and coupled with the time commitment that is required for new recruits, it is a very difficult position to fill. Utilizing a number of different recruitment strategies, campaigns have been launched in all forms; from open houses to direct mailing to social media, all avenues have been pursued. Recommendations have come from outside agencies and other town departments that the Chief has implemented, but even these have had a low success rate. For this reason, Chief McCurdy has requested additional full-time department personnel.

Recently, the department has found itself in a position where staffing has been dangerously low, both on the day and night shifts. This is a trend that does not look like it will be improving without changes being made. It has become clear that in order to adequately provide the emergency services necessary to cover the town, additional members will need to be added to the Professional ranks. These new members will be able to cover the understaffed day shifts while helping bolster certain evening hours that have been more challenging to fill through the Call Department. The Call Department will continue to handle the majority of the night-time incidents; the additional personnel will help supplement some of the busier evening hours.

The town is fortunate to have a department leader as dedicated and focused on building a team as we have. We would like to restate our support of Chief Steele McCurdy and his continued work in providing the community with a well-trained and enthusiastic group of individuals that take pride in being part of the Groton Fire Department.

Respectfully submitted,

The Groton Fire Call Department

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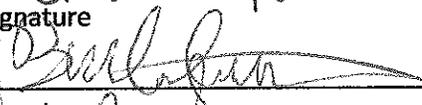
Cody McNay FF/EMT
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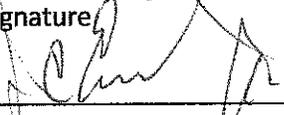
Benjamin D Hatcher FF
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Chelsea R Hatcher
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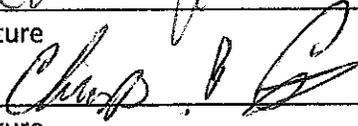
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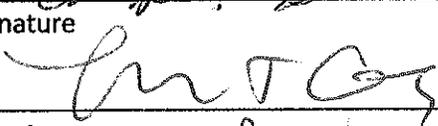
Brian Callaban FF
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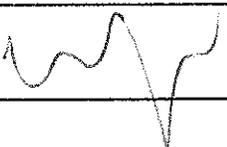
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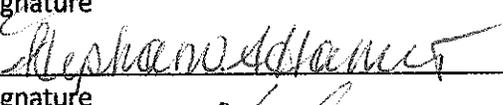
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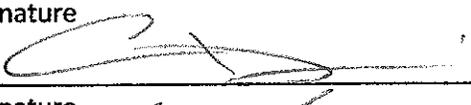
Christopher Hunter FF/EMT
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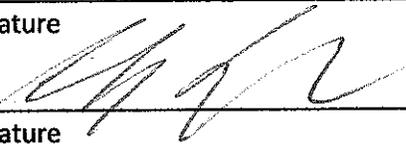
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CHRIS BRAUN
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Bradley Cain - EMT
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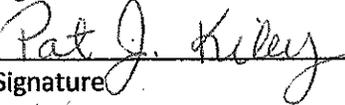
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Kevin Charland FF/EMT

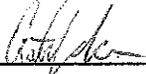
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