

# WHITEFIELD FIRE & RESCUE

## Monthly Report for September 2022

Dear Residents of Whitefield

During the month of September Whitefield had a total of 21 emergency calls. Of these nine or 43% were medical calls. Of the 12 fire department calls, nine were for traffic accidents. The remainder included one structure fire (mutual aid to Jefferson), one fire alarm sounding, and one “other”.

Whitefield Fire & Rescue (WFR) has mutual aid agreements with the neighboring towns of Jefferson, Somerville, and Alna, in Lincoln County. What this means is that when the Lincoln County Emergency Center pages out a structure fire in Whitefield our mutual aid neighboring towns are automatically paged out at the same time. Response time and manpower are two of the most critical components for success in firefighting and in our rural environment, where distances can be great and populations spread out, these reciprocal mutual aid agreements can make the difference between a “save” and disaster. Or, to put it in more personal terms, if Whitefield firefighters are toned out to a house fire, perhaps in the middle of the night or perhaps in the middle of a weekday when many people are at work, we know that our brother and sister firefighters in mutual aid towns are coming up behind us --as they know that we are coming if they are toned out in a similar situation.

All of us at WFR are proud to serve the people of Whitefield and surrounding towns. Right now, however, we are experiencing a critical shortage of personnel that threatens our ability to continue the protection and coverage that we want to provide and which you the townspeople have a right to expect. There are currently 16 people on the books of WFR. What with one thing and another some of these often find it difficult to respond. We have a core group of approximately seven people who are in a position to respond regularly. Many of them work outside of town, meaning that the number of available firefighters during a week-day can be quite small.

The situation with respect to medical first responders is even more critical. Right now, Whitefield has only two medical first responders and they both work outside of town many days. Last month we came close to losing the Whitefield first responder service completely. The situation was saved when the head of Whitefield Emergency Medical Service (Fire 3) was brought on to work at the station for 24 hours per week and when two firefighters and one of their wives signed on for the very rigorous first medical responder training. They will not be able to begin responding to medical calls until after the New Year and even then, numbers will be very tight.

The WFR is urgently looking for new volunteers – of all ages and both sexes. Emergency response can be challenging but it is also incredibly rewarding – as those of us who have been doing it for decades can testify. We can use people of any background and skill set. There are many requirements on an emergency scene. Not all of them require suiting up in protective gear and air packs and charging into a burning building – although if that is what you want to do we will see that you get the training to do it safely. What we need is volunteers and if you want to join us, we guarantee to find a way to use you – and to provide an experience that you will never forget.

Whitefield EMS is grateful to the people of Whitefield for the support you have shown over the years in many ways, for example in voting to provide funding for firetrucks and other equipment needed to fight fires and protect lives in the modern era. On Halloween night WFR will host a holiday event for children and their families, starting at 5 PM. Please come to join in the festivities and the treats – and to get a look at our trucks and other cool gear.