

# Berwick Fire Department



P.O. Box 696  
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12/23/2011

To the Citizens of Berwick;

Over the last several years the town has been lucky enough to receive multiple grants that have assisted the citizens of Berwick in offsetting costs to the town. These grants have helped us in providing a quality service to the town using safe and reliable equipment. Since the federal contribution of these grants comes from federal money (taxes) that the citizens of this town have no direct control over and have already paid, the pursuit of federal grants such as these helps to bring some of that money home that would otherwise be spent elsewhere.

There are several grant programs through the federal government in the area of fire and emergency services that are managed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

One of which is the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant which we were awarded in 2007. This is a 5 year grant. During the term of this grant the Federal Government contributed \$210,850.00 towards the salaries of 2 additional fulltime staff. The remainder of their salaries and benefits were paid for by the town. The two positions will remain as part of the town budget after the end of the grant in 2013. These positions have dramatically helped to provide much needed personnel at emergency scenes and cut the response times for medical related calls roughly in half. It has also allowed us to increase fire prevention and inspection efforts and significantly improve our department wide training program.

Another federal program is called the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) of which we have received several listed below. The AFG is designed to assist fire departments, non-affiliated EMS (emergency medical services) organizations, and regional projects with funding that is in line with FEMA's outlined priorities. So far as a fire department we have been successful in obtaining funds in their priority areas of: Firefighting Equipment, Personal Protective equipment, and Firefighting Vehicles.

We have also submitted applications for several grants that were unsuccessful over the years. One of which was for funds to build a new fire station that would have offset the cost away from the residents of Berwick. Unfortunately, that grant was only offered for one year and the only FEMA grant program that still deals with fire stations is to install life safety devices such as sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems or to install equipment that helps with providing a safer work place such as vehicle exhaust filter systems. This program specifically prohibits funding of new stations or station repairs.

As holds true with everything in life, nothing lasts forever. Equipment must be maintained and periodically replaced. Traditional routes of funding come directly from the tax payers of Berwick through the use of capital improvement programs, bonds, or one time

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appropriations of large amounts of money. In a good economy these methods all have a significant impact on the taxpayer. In a bad economy, these methods are almost impossible. The result is aging equipment that is sometimes unable to perform like it once could and also causes an increase in maintenance costs. Many times older equipment might perform well as it was originally designed, unfortunately the design unable to perform as well as it should against the ever changing challenges faced in the field of emergency response. In an effort to help reduce the impact that these inevitable purchases have on the citizens of Berwick, this department has worked diligently to secure as many federal funds as possible to offset the costs.

Since we began applying for FEMA grants in 2003 Berwick has seen a significant benefit in grant awards. The following are successful grant applications that we have been awarded. Along with each is a broad description of what was included in the grant funding. Some of the grant purchases came in under budget. In those cases the excess funds were utilized in accordance with strict FEMA guidance which in most cases limited our use of the extra money for fire prevention only. In one case, being the purchase of the tank truck, the amount that we requested was \$385,000. We were awarded \$200,000 (including our 5% contribution of \$10,000). Luckily we had already been planning for the replacement of the tank truck and had sufficient money in a capital improvement account to make up the difference of the final purchase price being \$342,665.00

<b>Assistance to Firefighter Grants (AFG)</b>				
<b>Grant Application Year</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Federal Contribution</b>	<b>Required Town Contribution</b>	<b>Date in service</b>
2008	<b>Tank Truck</b> -Toyne custom built 3000 gal tank truck	\$190,000.00	\$10,000.00	late 2009
2009	<b>Air Packs (SCBA) and Fill Equipment</b> -Breathing air fill station and compressor -Upgrade 15 existing airpacks to current standard -purchase 10 new airpacks meeting current standard	\$133,433.00	\$7,022.00	late 2010
2010	<b>Structural Firefighting Gear and Gear Cleaning Equipment</b> -Gear washer/extractor -Gear Dryer -15 complete sets of turnout gear (coat, pants, boots, helmets) -29 sets of various other ancillary items (gloves, flashlights, traffic vests, etc.)	\$55,827.00	\$2,938.00	Mid 2011
2011	<b>Forestry</b> -In the process of developing specifications for a forestry truck.	\$118,750.00	\$6,250.00	Projected late 2012
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>\$498,010.00</b>	<b>\$26,210.00</b>	

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The following are the grant funds that we applied for since the beginning of the FEMA program that were unsuccessful.

<b>Unsuccessful Grant Applications</b>		
Organized By Category Listed With Year and What Was Requested		
<b>AFG</b>	<b>SAFER</b>	<b>Other Categories</b>
2003 SCBA (air packs) and fill station	2005 Staffing	2008 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant (FP&SG) - High visibility Address Signs for all residents at no cost
2004 Personal Protective Equipment and Firefighting Equipment	2006 Staffing	2009 ARRA Assistance to Firefighters Fire Station Construction Grants (this was the only year they offered this grant)
2005 Tank truck		
2006 Tank Truck		
2007 Tank Truck		
2008 SCBA (air packs) and fill station		
2010 Brush Truck		
2010 NFPA Certified Fire Inspector Training		

We have also applied for grants through other agencies. One of which we were recently successful in was through the the Maine Volunteer Fire Assistance Program. This funding allowed us to purchase new and replacement forestry fire fighting tools and protective equipment. The total project cost was \$5,309.21 where the state contributed 50% and the other 50% came from the department operating budget.

The Berwick Fire Department has been and will continue to be committed to serving the citizens of Berwick to the very best of our ability. In our continued effort to provide quality, dependable service, we work diligently to find alternate funding methods. These are primarily in the form of grants that will help to offset the costs to the town. The grant request writing process is very in depth and difficult. There are countless policies, regulations, standards, and guidelines that must be followed from the application process through the bidding process as well as very specific ways that funds can be spent once awarded. The people that have been, and continue to be, involved in this process are to be commended for their hard work

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and attention to detail. Their efforts enable the Town of Berwick to continue to successfully receive these funds.

The equipment purchased is necessary to the delivery of service and the safety of department members. The funds received are immensely helpful in offsetting costs to the residents of Berwick. This letter has been written to give some background on the process behind receiving grants and also to announce that we have successfully received another award for a new forestry vehicle. The vehicle purchased will replace our current forestry unit which is a 1987 Military surplus HMMWV (Humvee). The current unit has served us extremely well over the years and has been the envy of area departments. However, as stated above, nothing lasts forever and the maintenance costs as well as parts availability for the vehicle are beginning to become cost prohibitive. It is also showing the signs of its age in performance and safety. The cost to the town for this new grant is \$6,250.00 with the federal share being \$118,750. This money will allow us to not only buy a replacement vehicle, but a vehicle with outstanding performance and safety characteristics. One that is specifically designed for the task of forestry firefighting, and all for a cost to the town of roughly a quarter the price of a new pickup truck without any equipment that would then have to be completely outfitted.

I would personally and on behalf of the Berwick Fire Department like to thank everyone involved in the painstaking process of procuring and administering these grant funds. I would also like to invite every citizen of Berwick to stop by the station and see what has been accomplished through this funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Plante", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dennis Plante  
Chief of Department  
Berwick Fire Department