



BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

A summary of the actions and achievements of some of the finest men and women who volunteer to serve the Municipality of Bethel Park.

Presented By:
Dave Gerber
Fire Chief

Prepared By:
Thomas Kelton
Captain



BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

5213 BRIGHTWOOD ROAD • BETHEL PARK, PENNSYLVANIA 15102

A Message from the Volunteer Fire Chief of Bethel Park



On behalf of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company, it is with great pride that I present to you the 2023 Annual Fire Report. The report provides an overview of our response and accomplishments from 2023 with a look at our goals for 2024. This past year we were again presented with some unique calls and challenges. And, once again, the members of the Volunteer Fire Company rose to the occasion to ensure that our community and its residents were safe and well served.

In 2023 we were fortunate to have 11 new members join. In the next two years, these new probationary members will undergo extensive training in a wide variety of subjects. When this training is complete and they pass their Firefighter I exam, these members will become Regular "A" members of the Fire Company, fully capable of performing all fire and rescue functions. We are fortunate to have this influx of new members. But, like any other organization, we have members "retire," move away or otherwise resign from the Fire Company for various reasons. As such, recruiting and retaining new volunteer firefighters remains one of our top priorities.

The success of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is only possible because of the cooperation we receive from the Mayor, Municipal Council, Municipal Manager's office, Bethel Park Police, Bethel Park Public Works, other Bethel Park municipal departments, Tri-Community South EMS and many other governmental agencies. Most importantly, the accomplishments of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company in 2023 could not have been achieved without the ongoing dedication of each and every member and their commitment to our community. It is to each of them and their families that I extend my deepest appreciation.

Sincerely,

David Gerber

David Gerber
Fire Chief

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BETHEL PARK VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY MISSION STATEMENT

Believing it to be our duty to aid in the protection of the lives and property of our fellow citizens from the ravages of fire, and believing that our exertions to that end can be best directed and accomplished by organized and purposeful effort, we therefore accept and subscribe to the organization of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company, for the purpose of selecting capable leaders, establishing rules, establishing proper training, and establishing a cohesive organization founded upon esprit de corps providing efforts to give our community a successful and efficient organization for fire fighting and any other emergencies. To this end, it is our duty to assist and advance the interests of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company.

OVERVIEW

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is a 100% volunteer fire company providing around the clock services to the community. Since we are volunteer, none of our stations are staffed and we rely on available members to respond to the station when notified.

Services We Provide:

- Fire Suppression
- Vehicle Rescue Services
- Specialized Rescue Services
- Hazardous Materials Operations
- Storm Management Services
- Public Education
- Fire Inspections

Area Protected:	12 sq miles
Population Protected:	33,500
Number of Stations:	3
ISO Classification:	4

Apparatus

Engines	3
Aerial Trucks	2
Rescue Pumpers	1
Utility Vehicles	3
Equipment Trailers	1
Command Vehicles	2

How we Respond:

1. A call is placed to either 911 or 412-833-2000 which is the BP Police Emergency Dispatch center. If you call 911, you will still be transferred to the BP Police dispatch. So, it is faster and more efficient to call the BP Police Dispatch directly at 412-833-2000.
2. Once the BP Police dispatcher determines you need our fire company to respond, they activate our pagers and provide a voice message telling us the location and nature of the emergency. They also send out a notification to our phones via an application called Active 911. The Active 911 application identifies how many and which of our firefighters are responding to the call, as well as to which of our three stations each of the firefighters will respond. This allows our officers to assess whether we have enough responders or if we need to call for more assistance. This application also provides us with a map of the address, nearby hydrants, and other useful information.
3. After we receive notification, any available volunteers will begin to respond. Our Chief Officers may respond to the scene while other Line Officers and firefighters will respond to a station. Depending on the severity of the emergency, some volunteers may use blue courtesy emergency lights in their vehicles to ask other cars to move to the side so they can pass and get to the station quicker.
4. Once at the station, our firefighters will put on their gear, get in the trucks, and respond to the scene. We won't always use the lights and sirens; it just depends on the severity and urgency of the emergency.

PERSONNEL

OPERATIONS BRANCH

Fire Chief

David Gerber

Deputy Chief

Russ Beeson

Assistant Chief

Rob Uselman

Captains

Thomas Kelton – Captain-1

Jon Mark – Captain-2

Lieutenants

Mike Innocenti – Lieutenant-1

Adam Betzler – Lieutenant-2

Steve McGough – Lieutenant-3

Fire Police Officers

Captain

Al Wright

Lieutenant

Brian Wright

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

President

James Thomas (L)

Vice President

Bob Clark (L)

Treasurer

AJ Mastascusa

Financial Secretary

Jeff Ferencic (L)

Recording Secretary

Ed Schmidt (L)

Board of Directors

Brian Allsopp (L)

Dante Bongiorno (L)

Joe Hartung

David Henney (L)

Michael Pauline

Mark Stabryla

Every December we have elections for our line officers, executive officers, and board of directors. Our Chief, President, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary are two year terms and this year the Chief and Financial Secretary were up for election. These positions, as well as our board of director positions, are longer terms to help with continuity of business. All of the line officer positions have some qualification requirements such as ensuring you attended a certain percentage of calls and drills in the previous year. Members can self-nominate if eligible and all regular and life members are able to vote at the election. After 25 years of service, our members reach a life membership status where they are exempt from regular membership requirements.

All Officers of the Operations and Executive Branches are a Regular Member unless indicated by an (L) for Life Member.

Regular Members

Mark Breier
Joseph Campion
Henry Capozzi
Barry DeLuca
David DeLallo

David Fair
Matt Hirlehey
Dean Huwe
Braden Karolak
John Kuchma

Christopher O'Sullivan
Eva Parker
Joshua Pohodich
Luke Valecko
Eric Yarina

Life Members

David Aubele
Joseph Aubele
David Britton
Robert Brown
Joseph Certo
Michael Dvorsky
Edwin Galambas
Robert Galambas

Jeffrey Gothe
Joseph Heyl
Brent Kimberland
Kevin Kubala
Roger McCuean
Robert McFeaters
Ronald McKenna
Daniel Moore

Gregory Pohodich
Jeffrey Pritchard
James Sell Sr.
Phillip Steigner
Bruce Tracy
William Wiles
Joe Witkowski
Guerrino Virgili

Probationary Members

Steven Britton
Christopher Gioia
Nicholas Grady
Dan Grzybek
Paul Hoppe

David Lahickey
Tonya Lahickey
Christopher Layne
Jared Lukens
Brad Lynch
Donald Roose

Max Siegert
Jarden Trent
Thorin Trypus
Gavin Wagenheim
Aaron Zuknic



2023 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Plymovent exhaust systems were purchased and installed for the apparatus at Milford Station and Clifton Station using grant money that was awarded to us (Brightwood Station already has an Plymovent system). This system removes vehicle exhaust fumes to the exterior of the building so that, among other things, our members are not breathing air contaminated with carbon monoxide and other harmful substances.
- Updated our hi-rise operation hose packs to be more efficient and effective in commercial and high-rise structures.
- Finalized specifications and awarded the bid to Pierce Manufacturing to purchase a new engine which will be placed at Milford Station. This new apparatus will be replacing our oldest Engine which is now 32 years old and has required extensive engine repairs in the past year, and is overdue to be replaced. This is in line with NFPA standards and our internal apparatus replacement plan. This will come with an estimated cost of nearly \$900,000 which will be funded by donations from this year's annual fund drive mailer. The anticipated delivery of the new engine is the Spring of 2025.
- Expanded our social media presence to Instagram to reach more citizens.

2024 DEPARTMENT GOALS

- Place into service a new Freddie the Firetruck animated robot for our outreach and fire safety education program. This was made possible by a generous grant from the Bethel Park Community Foundation.
- Work with the municipality on completing building improvements and renovations to Clifton Station.
- A continued focus on recruitment and retention to maintain, and increase, our number of active firefighters.



Volunteer Recruitment Update

In the last year we have gained quite a few new members who have been enjoying the training, camaraderie, and satisfaction of helping others in the community. The sense of pride and accomplishment that being a volunteer firefighter brings is more than many will ever experience. Here in Bethel Park, we continue to remain 100% volunteer thanks to exceptional people who feel the spark and step up to serve. We were fortunate to have 11 new members join in the past year. But, we still need more volunteers to answer the calling. From 2009 to 2013 we averaged 413 calls a year. In the last five years we have averaged 567 calls. The increasing number of calls continues to highlight the need for additional volunteers. The BPVFC takes great pride in the fact that we remain 100% volunteer and we strive to remain that way in the future. If you too feel like trying out a fun and exciting volunteer opportunity, check out more information on our website!

Membership Incentives:

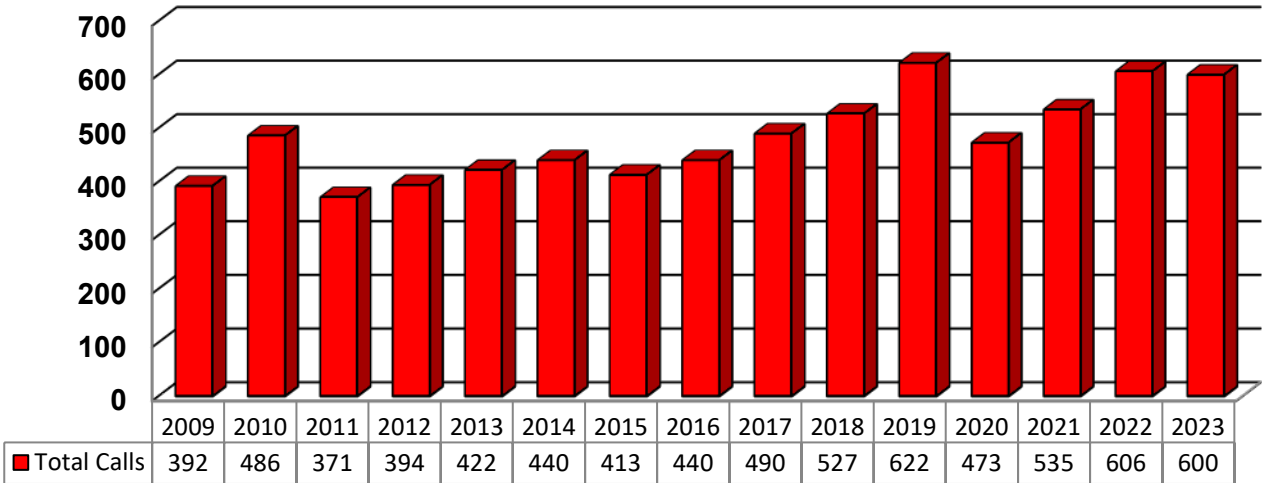
- Free nationally recognized initial and ongoing training
- Free 24/7 gym access
- Quiet workspace in our stations if you work remotely
- Access to 100% free scholarship opportunities at CCAC
- Life insurance
- Social events
- Resume builder



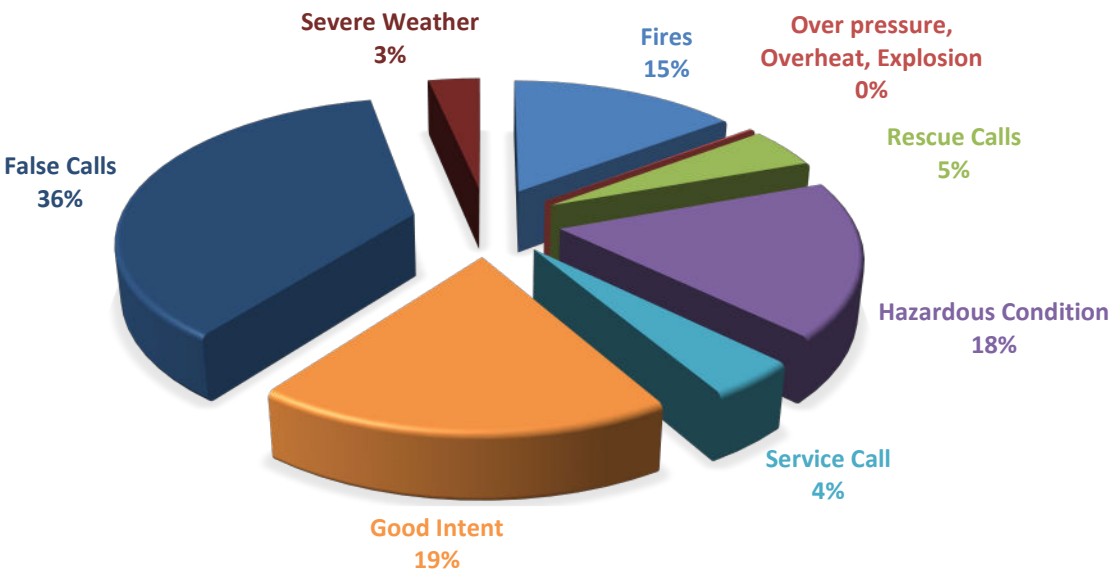
2023 STATISTICS

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 600 calls in 2023.

Total Calls Over the Last 15 Years



2023
FIRE CALL TYPES



Calls by Nature of Incident for 2023

Fires		88 Total
	Fire, other	1
	Building Fire	44
	Fires in structure other than in a building	1
	Cooking fire, confined to container	7
	Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	2
	Trash or rubbish fire, contained	1
	Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other	2
	Passenger Vehicle Fire	3
	Natural Vegetation Fire	2
	Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	15
	Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	1
	Special outside fire, other	1
	Outside Equipment fire	2
	Cultivated vegetation, crop fire, other	6
Overpressure, Rupture, Explosion, Overheat (No Fire)		1 Total
	Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	1
Rescue / Medical Call		28 Total
	Rescue, EMS incident, other	1
	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	3
	Motor vehicle accident with injuries	3
	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	4
	Search for person on land	2
	Extrication, rescue, other	1
	Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	3
	Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	8
	Trench/below-grade rescue	1
	High-angle rescue	2
Hazardous Condition		107 Total
	Hazardous condition, other	1
	Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	1
	Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	43
	Oil or other combustible liquid spill	1
	Chemical spill or leak	1
	Refrigeration leak	1
	Carbon monoxide incident	10
	Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	11
	Overheated motor	7
	Power line down	11
	Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	9
	Building or structure weakened or collapsed	2
	Vehicle accident, general cleanup	9

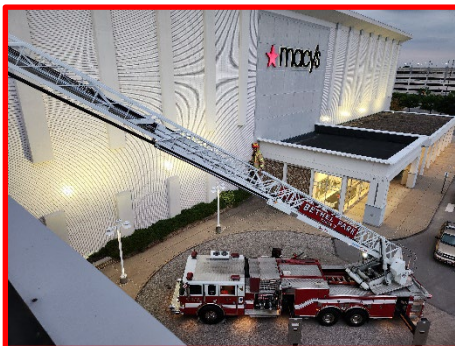
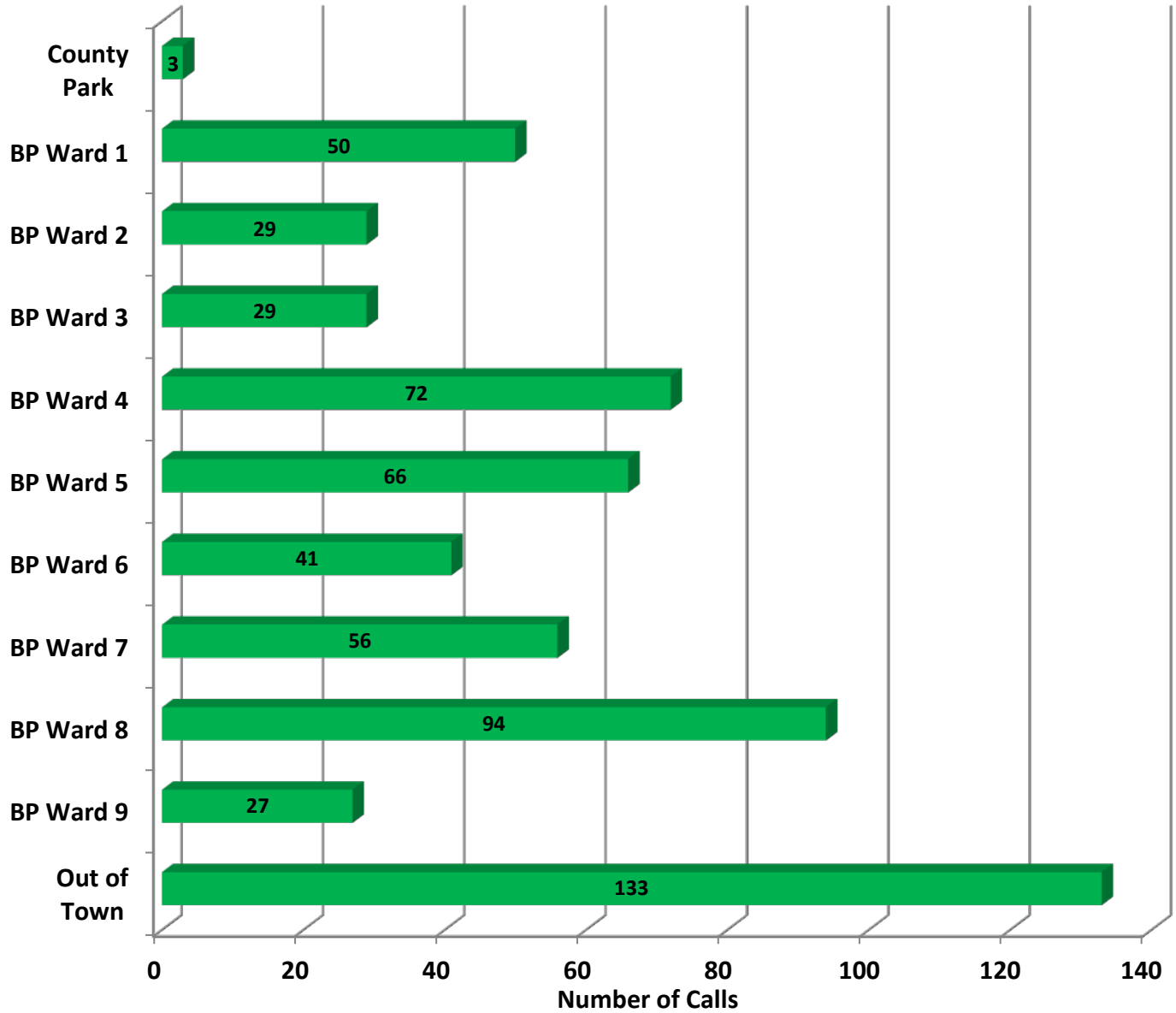
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Calls by Nature of Incident for 2023

Service Calls		25 Total
	Service Call, other	1
	Water problem, other	5
	Water evacuation	1
	Water or steam leak	1
	Smoke or odor removal	5
	Animal rescue	2
	Public service assistance, other	1
	Assist police or other governmental agency	7
	Police matter	1
	Unauthorized burning	1
Good Intent Calls		113 Total
	Good intent call, other	8
	Dispatched & cancelled en route	81
	No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	2
	Smoke scare, odor of smoke	18
	Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	1
	HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat	3
False Calls		218 Total
	False alarm and false call, other	1
	Malicious, mischievous false alarm	11
	System or detector malfunction. Includes improper performance of fire alarm system that is not a result of a proper system response to environmental stimuli such as smoke or high heat conditions.	110
	Unintentional system or detector operation (no fire). Includes tripping an interior device accidentally.	92
	Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	4
Severe Weather & Natural Disasters		20 Total
	800 - Severe weather or natural disaster, other	1
	812 - Flood assessment	5
	813 - Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment	13
	814 - Lightning strike (no fire)	1
TOTAL		600



Call Volume by Location



2023 RESPONSE STATISTICS

- **Calls:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 600 incidents ranging from false alarms to structure fires. This is almost identical to the previous year, but a 53% increase from fifteen years ago. On 38 different occasions, we were challenged with handling multiple calls at the same time.
- **Response Times:** Our average response time for the first fire company official on scene in Bethel Park was 7 minutes and 24 seconds. This average includes non-emergency responses which take longer. The fire company spent an average of 35 minutes on scene and the longest incident was over 7 hours long.
- **Personnel:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company had an average of 11 volunteer personnel respond per call. This is up from the average of 9.5 personnel responding during 2022. During the daytime hours this number is typically lower as the majority of our members are working.
- **Structure Fires:** The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company responded to 55 structure fires in 2023. This is any incident where there is some type of fire inside a building at that address.
- **Response Area:** We have many mutual aid agreements with local departments. When necessary, we will respond into other communities to provide additional manpower and support for larger incidents. These same departments will often respond into Bethel Park to provide the same level of assistance to us when needed. In 2023, we responded to a total of 133 calls in 15 different communities outside of Bethel Park. In return, we had 19 calls where we requested assistance during 2023.



FIRE PREVENTION & PUBLIC EDUCATION

Fire Prevention and Community Outreach

This year we participated in dozens of block parties, neighborhood parades, station tours, and daycare/school visits. These are a great opportunity for us to connect with and educate our youth on not only fire safety tips, but also how to become a volunteer firefighter when they are old enough. We also participated in dozens of community events and events at local businesses and organizations. Some of the highlights this year were participating in the BPPD National Night Out, BP Summer Fireworks, and BP Community Day. We are always looking for opportunities to educate the public on what our organization does and what our needs are. We also appreciated all the support and encouragement we received while at these events.

Open House

The Fire Company usually hosts an annual open house in October. This year we were again able to hold our Open House and opened our doors to hundreds of citizens to come tour and learn about who we are and what we do. During the open house, we had displays and activities for adults and children. One of our goals for this year is to provide a virtual tour of all 3 of our stations and 12 apparatus.



TRAINING

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company makes training a top priority and we ensure that we offer our volunteers the same opportunities and training that would take place in a large scale paid city fire department. Our members are trained in many different aspects of firefighting and rescue specialties including structural firefighting, trench rescue, aircraft crash rescue, structural collapse, large animal rescue, and swift water rescue to name just a few. We have members that are on the County Hazardous Materials Team, members that are certified as EMT's, along with members that are certified Vehicle Rescue Technicians. Many of our members are Pro Board Certified at the Fire Fighter I & II Level. Some of these are international certifications that are transferrable around the world.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company holds training drills on Monday evenings. Along with this training, the members of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company are encouraged to attend state-sponsored training classes at the numerous fire training academies throughout the state and beyond. In 2023, the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company members participated in classroom and hands-on training totaling over 2,000 combined hours.



ADMINISTRATION

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company is a large organization and has a lot of behind the scenes work being done every day. In 2023, our volunteers contributed over 4,000 combined hours to running the fire company. These hours are in addition to the hours spent training and responding to fires. Some of these tasks include fundraising, recruitment, fire reports, grant writing, finances, equipment and vehicle maintenance, and all of the other monotonous paperwork that comes with any large organization.

FINANCES and FUNDRAISING

We are grateful for the stability the municipal fire levy provides, which pays for our three stations, including utilities, maintenance, and repairs to the buildings. However, it is your donations that help pay for the operating expenses of providing emergency services to Bethel Park. Donations pay for everything inside of these stations: the purchase, repair and maintenance of vehicles, protective gear, masks and air cylinders, firefighting and rescue tools, plus the training and classes needed to use all of these items. Simply put, without your support we could not afford the vehicles, tools and equipment needed to deliver the quality of fire protection you deserve and have grown to expect. Running any large organization such as ours also has the usual expenses such as IT equipment, administrative supplies, and insurance.

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to acknowledge that this economy has been incredibly difficult and challenging. With that thought in mind, the members of the Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your support over this past year. As your neighbors, we know that many of you have been greatly affected by the ongoing economic status. The fact that you have given financially to support your 100% volunteer fire company despite your personal challenges makes us appreciate you even more!



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Bethel Park Volunteer Fire Company would like to thank the following organizations for their ongoing support and partnership to ensure the best possible fire protection available for the citizens of Bethel Park

Bethel Park Municipality

Bethel Park Police

Bethel Park Municipal Council

Tri-Community South EMS

Bethel Park Public Works

Citizens and Business owners of Bethel Park

Bethel Park Community Foundation

Bethel Park School District

South Hills Area Council of Governments

The Salvation Army

Mutual Aid Fire Departments

American Red Cross

