

Burlington Fire Commission Meeting

Tuesday April 14, 2026 08:30-09:38

Members Present: Chair Jake Perskinson, Vice Chair Kevin McLaughlin, Monica Chapman, Linda Sheehey, and Ashley Bond. Deputy Chief Stephen Petit, Deputy Chief of Operations Troy Ruggles, Battalion Chief of EMS Marsha McCombie, Data Analyst Jeff Nicholson, and Administrative Assistant Meghan Sweeney.

Call to Order –

The meeting was called to order and the April 14, 2026 at 08:30 session began with all commissioners present.

Motion to Amend/Adopt Agenda-

The chair asked for additions to the agenda and noted the merit subcommittee needed to discuss a nomination for the awards ceremony during executive session.

Commissions –

Brief commission business included acknowledgments of commissioned individuals to BC Aumand and Captain Burns. Members on shift joined for the commissions.

Public Comment –

No comment from member of public.

Accept Minutes from December Meeting-

Commissioner McLaughlin motioned to accept minutes as written. Commissioner Sheehey seconded the motion. With no objections minutes accepted as written.

Meeting minutes using assistance from AI:

Chief's Oral Report-

Summary:

EMS Introduction and Data Overview

- * Jeff Nicholson was introduced as the city data analyst supporting EMS data and reporting
- * Confirmed drug events trended lower over the winter, around 10–12 per month
- * The EMS division completed required national registry and Vermont refresher training and closed associated licensing tasks
- * A federal grant was submitted for PPE, training mannequins, ventilators, paramedic funding, and stair chairs with decisions expected in December
- * Firefighter Theodore (“Teddy”) has been a strong asset to the EMS Division. He led a comprehensive update of our ballistic gear inventory, ensuring accurate tracking of serial numbers and improving overall accountability. He also conducted extensive research on ballistic gear use within fire/EMS, helping establish a clear path forward for future equipment replacement and positioning our approach to remain distinct from law enforcement. In addition, Teddy evaluated multiple EMS supply inventory software options. As a result, we now have a

viable plan to implement live inventory tracking at the start of the next fiscal year, pending available funding. Most recently, in April, he assisted in drafting a Fire Rehabilitation SOG, which is currently under review and awaiting command feedback.

- * A March 6 critical airway case was presented as a successful, coordinated EMS response with rapid transport and positive patient outcome

- * The situation table is a weekly multi-agency meeting that has reduced risks for several high-need individuals referred by crews. Since January, nine individuals were brought forward with five showing reduced risk following coordinated interventions.

- * The mayor approved an outcomes analysis for the situation table starting with data from 2026, and a list of names/DOBs is being maintained for that analysis

- * EMS leadership and the data analyst are refining cohort definitions to ensure responsible use and public presentation of EMS data

- * The department has used a HIPAA provision to bring forward a few very high-risk individuals for help, with the admin retaining the lead on those cases. It can be noted that most cases brought forward by the department have included signed consent. In select high-risk situations, an allowable HIPAA provision was utilized to connect individuals with needed services.

- * Outreach was made to UVM's emerging street medicine team to explore collaboration, but no reply has been received yet.

Operations

DC Ruggles recognized the members commissioned for their hard work and mentioned how the officers of the department really help the command staff on the day to day operations and the department basically runs itself with their efforts.

- * The department transitioned from NFIRS to NERIS for incident reporting and members are adjusting despite some implementation challenges.

- * New fire apparatus and ambulances now carry multi-year delivery timelines, with a ladder ordered in Oct 2025 not expected until Oct 2028.

- * Ambulance deliveries are scheduled across 2027–2029, forcing a three-year planning horizon for fleet replacement.

- * Sourcewell procurement reduced a quoted \$1.9M ladder truck toward \$1.3M and avoided a competitive bid process.

- * Rapid grant notices require same-day to next-day submissions, which places strain on internal turnarounds for requested projects.

- * The department is pursuing PFAS-free structural turnout gear with an estimated coat-and-pant set cost around \$3,600–\$4,000.

- * Street redesigns and curb changes require ongoing coordination with the Fire Marshal and permit authorities to ensure apparatus access and turning radii.

- * Call volume shows a slight dip of about 5–6% compared with previous months.

Training

- * McNeil training site improvements are planned, including fabrication of an elevator rescue prop to support frequent elevator rescue calls.

- * Five new hires will start the last week of May to address vacancies.

- * The department is holding some vacancies due to budget constraints.

- * Chief Savoy is coordinating onboarding with HR so the onboarding process can run without a single administrator owning every step.
- * Chief Savoy helped launch the annual evaluation process last April and is assisting with current evaluation testing.

Admin

Buildings:

- * Station 1's apparatus floor has been replaced.
- * Station 2 will receive a finished floor product in the first week of May.
- * Station 3 is in initial planning and awaiting pricing for second-floor work.
- * Station 1's windows are slated for replacement pending award and scope decisions.

Old/New Business-

- * A combined tour of the training site and stations was proposed for the next meeting.
- * There are no award ceremony date updates

Executive Session Motion and Close

A motion was made and seconded to move into executive session to discuss matters that would disadvantage the department if discussed publicly. Motion to go into executive session made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Commissioner Sheehey. Meeting went into executive session to discuss award nomination and Chief's annual review at 09:25.

Award nomination submitted by BC McDonough on March 7th was reviewed and accepted by committee.

No action taken regarding Chief's annual review.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner McLaughlin and seconded by Sheehey at 09:38.



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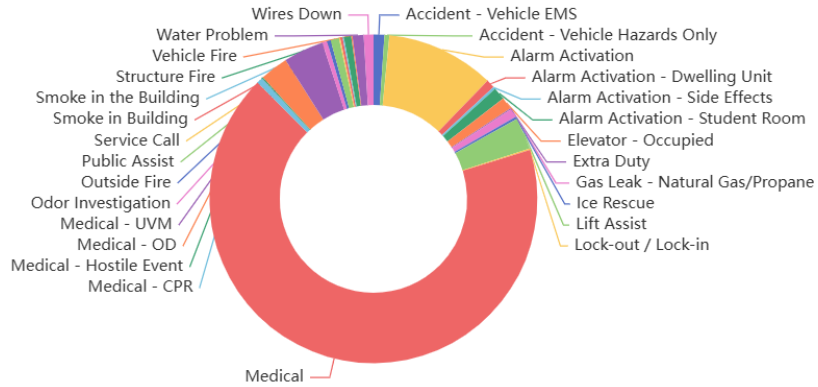
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Chief's Report to the Fire Commission: February Data Points April 14, 2026

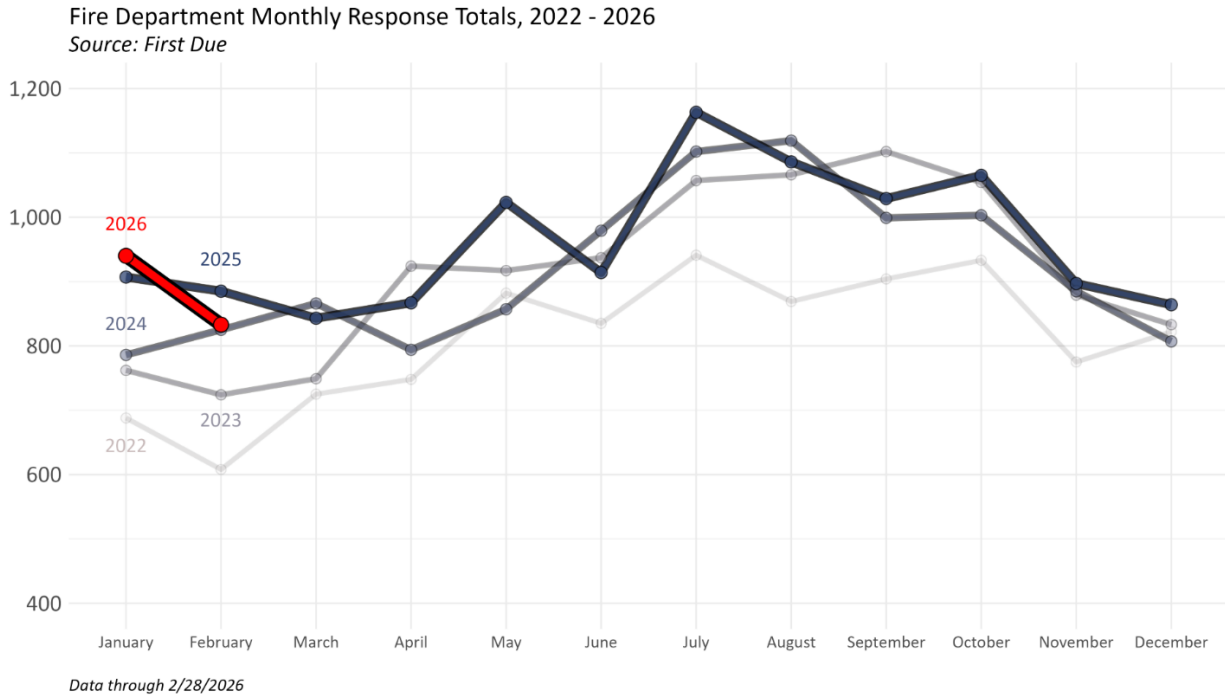
Call Volume & Activity Summary:

Total Incidents for the month of February: **833**
 Total Incidents: (As of 3/1/26) **1779**

- Fire Incidents: **121**
- EMS: **632**
- Hazmat: **7**
- Technical Rescue: **12**
- Significant Incidents:
 1. 2/1 - 1st Alarm Fire 309 S. Willard
 2. 2/6 – Ice Rescue off Leddy Park Rd



During the same period in **2025** we responded to **887** incidents, a **6%** decrease from last year.



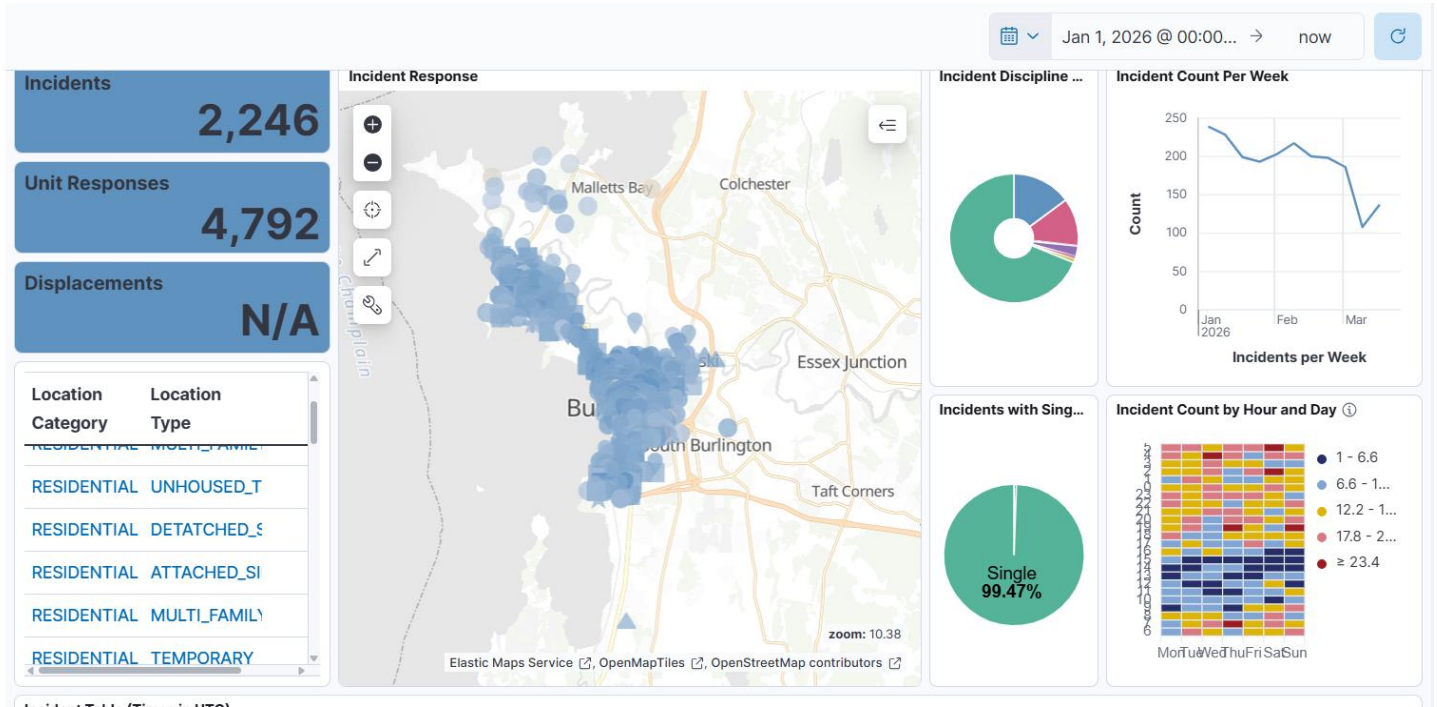


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Department Insights





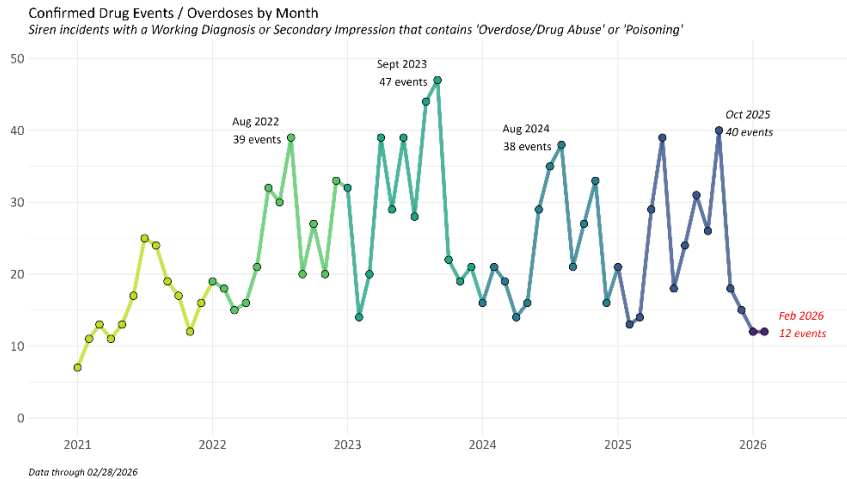
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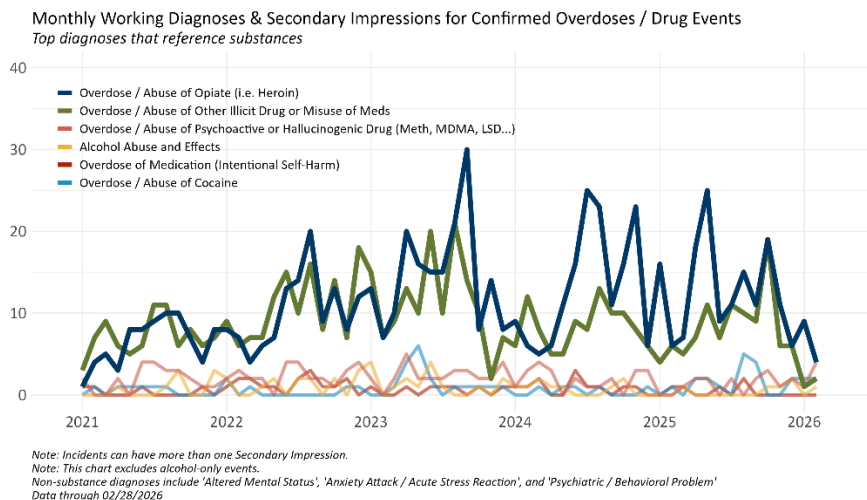
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EMS Data:

The data show a steady rise in confirmed drug overdose incidents from 2021 through a peak period in 2023, followed by a general decline with continued volatility. Monthly events increased from single digits/low teens in 2021 to consistent highs in the 30–40 range by 2023, with a peak of 47 incidents in September 2023. Activity remained elevated but began to moderate through 2024, with another spike in mid-2024 (38 events in August). In 2025, the pattern became more erratic, including a high of 40 events in October, before dropping sharply into early 2026, where February shows 12 incidents. Overall, the trend suggests a surge through 2023, stabilization in 2024, and a potential downward shift entering 2026, though with ongoing fluctuations.



This chart shows monthly trends (2021–early 2026) in confirmed overdose and drug-related EMS incidents, broken down by substance type. Opiates (e.g., heroin) consistently account for the highest volume and show periodic spikes, including several significant surges in 2023–2025. “Other illicit drugs/misuse of medications” is the second most common category, also fluctuating but at lower levels. All other categories—psychoactive drugs, alcohol-related effects, intentional medication overdoses, and cocaine—occur at relatively low and consistent levels with occasional small spikes. Overall, the data highlights that opioid-related incidents remain the dominant of overdose calls.

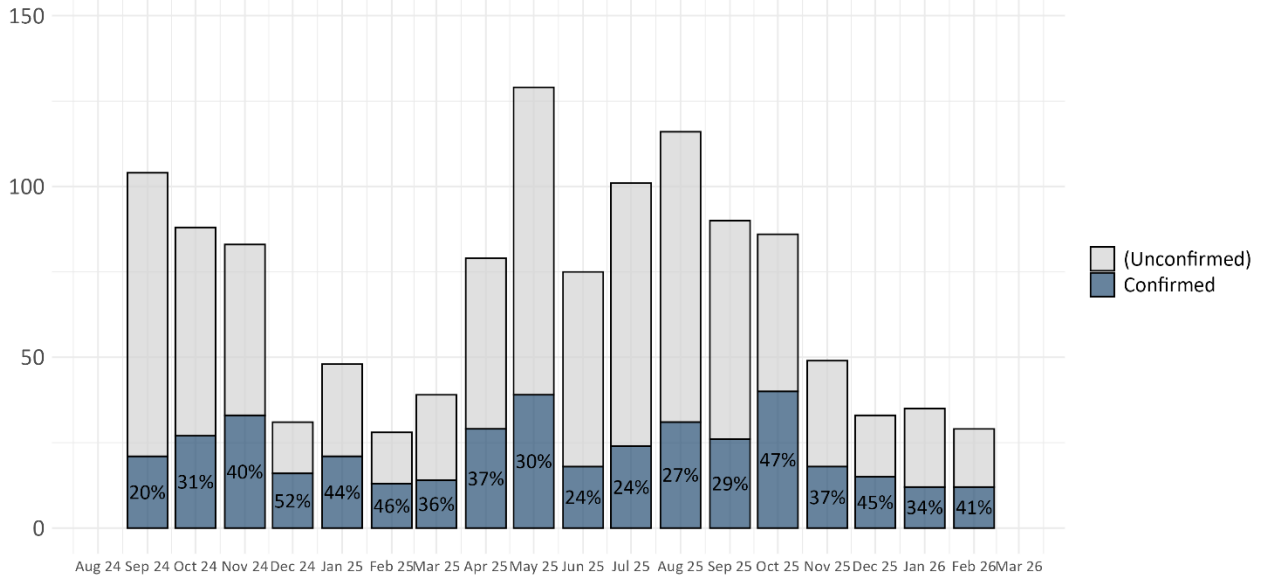




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BFD Events Dispatched as Overdoses
 Confirmed on scene vs. not confirmed on scene



Confirmation obtained via responder diagnosis in Siren
 Data through 2/28/26

This chart shows the number of BFD calls that were dispatched as overdoses each month, compared to how many were actually confirmed as overdoses once crews arrived on scene. While the total number of overdose-dispatched calls rises and falls over time, only a portion of those calls are ultimately confirmed by responders. In most months, confirmed overdoses make up roughly 20–40% of the total, with some variation

CRT Data for February 2026:

Staffed 8 days for the month of February

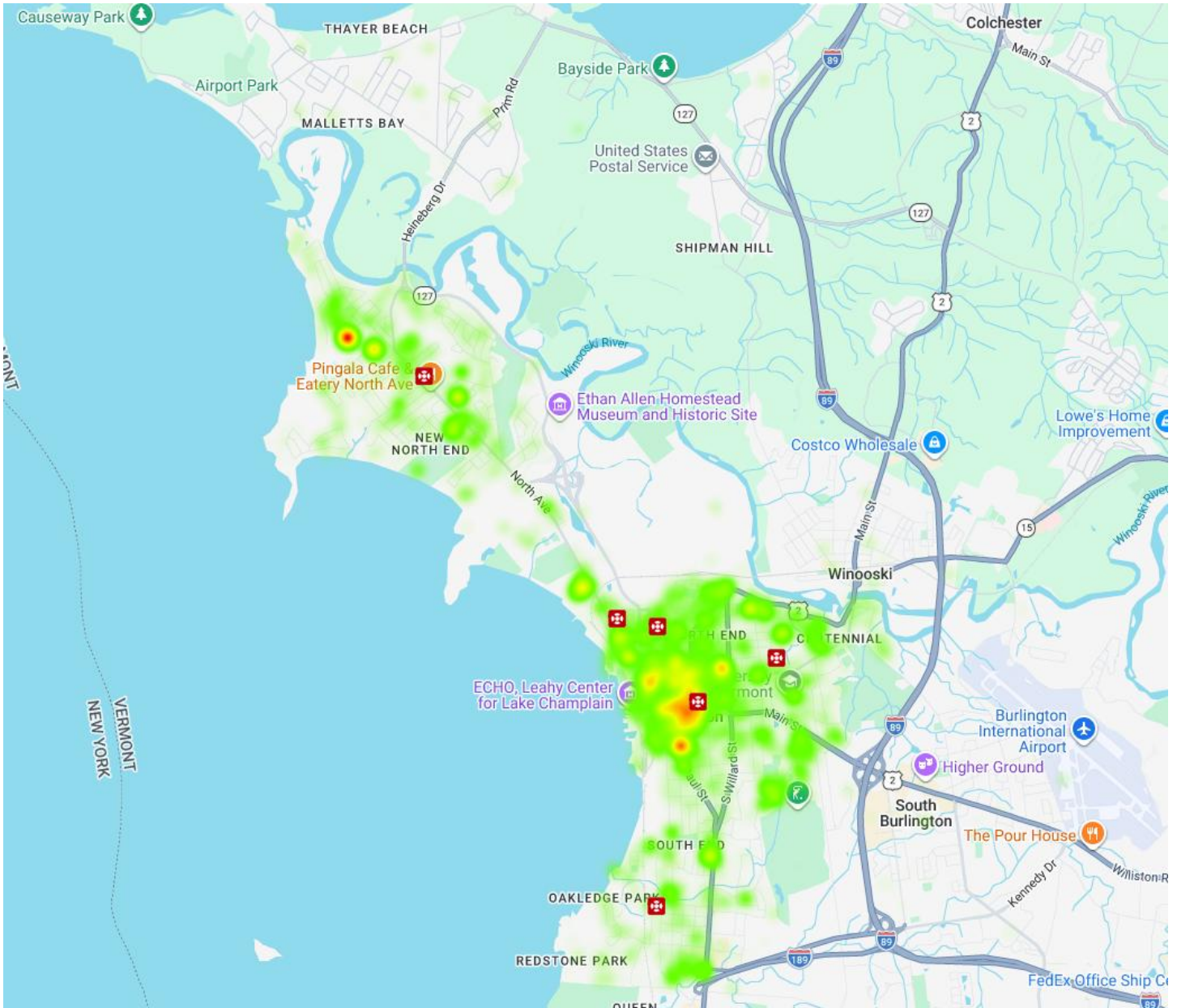
Total Contacts	Narcan Kits	Wound Care Kits	Comfort Care Kit	Referrals
12	0	0	0	0



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Personnel & Staffing

-Lt. Phil Luedee of Engine Co. 3 retired after 25 years of service to the city on 2/11/26. We wish him the best of luck in retirement.

-Ryan Fitzpatrick was promoted to Lieutenant and will serve as a cover officer on B-Shift.

Total Department Staff: Uniformed Members **89** / Authorized **95**

- Minimum Daily Staffing: **22**
- Vacancies: **7**
- Injuries/LOA/FMLA: **8**
- Staff Training Hours: **956**
- Company Level Inspections: **1**
- Preplans Completed: **54**

Overtime Type	2025 Hours	2026 Hours	% + -
Minimum Staffing	1002.5	1105	+10.2%
Mandatory	105.5	183	+73.4%
CRT	211	212	+4%
Emergency	0	0	-
Extra Duty Events	30	14.5	-51.6%





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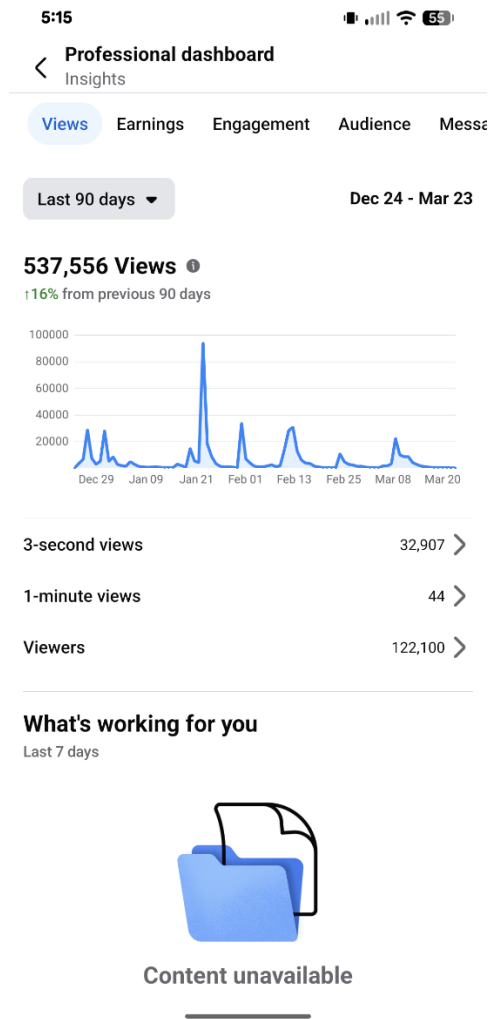
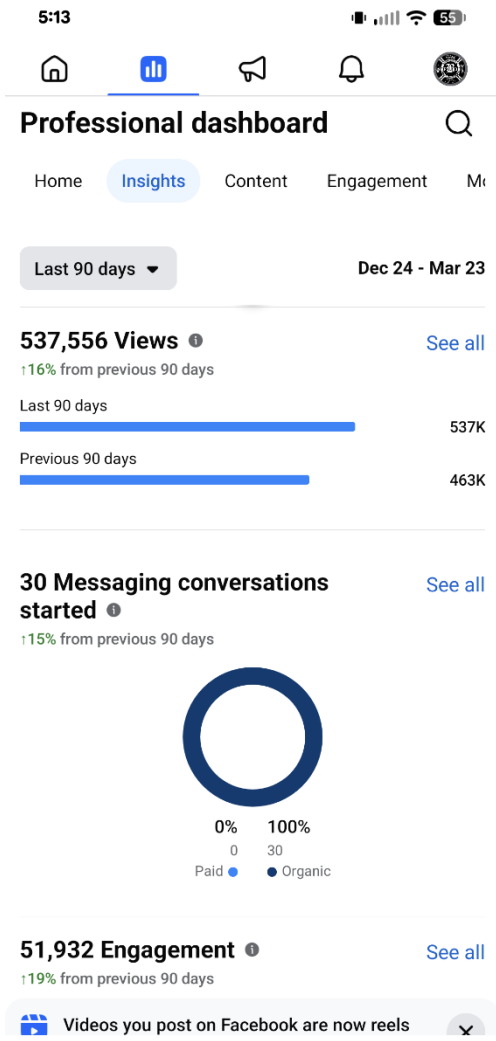
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Community Engagement

- 2/9 Ladder Co. 4 Station Tour



Social Media:





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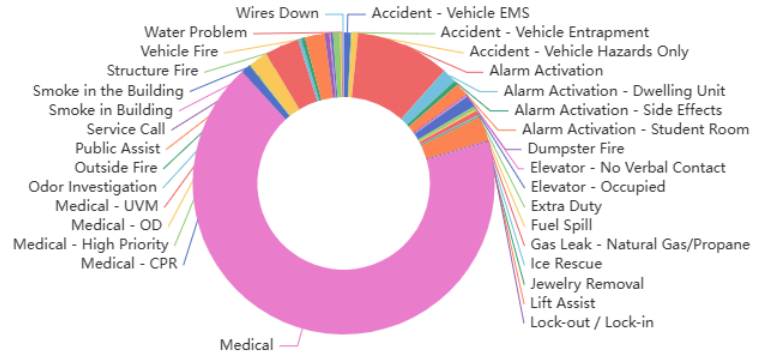
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Chief's Report to the Fire Commission: March Data Points April 14, 2026

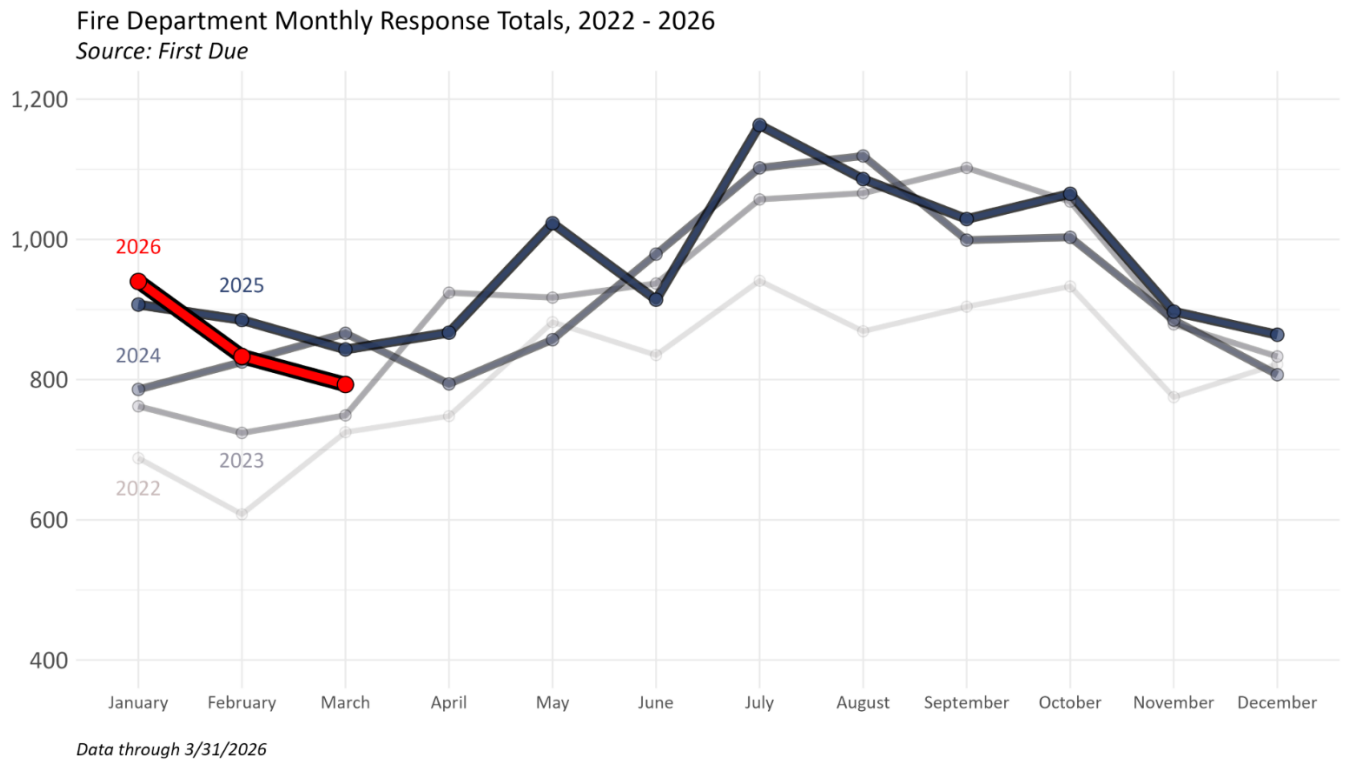
Call Volume & Activity Summary:

Total Incidents for the month of March: **793**
 Total Incidents: (As of 4/1/26) **2574**

- Fire Incidents: **120**
- EMS: **582**
- Hazmat: **4**
- Technical Rescue: **11**
- Significant Incidents:
 1. 3/2 Roland Ct. 2nd Alarm Fire Winooski
 2. 3/16 Significant MVC Main St
 3. 3/31 Main St. Winooski 1st Alarm Fire



During the same period in **2025** we responded to **845** incidents, a **6.1%** decrease from last year.



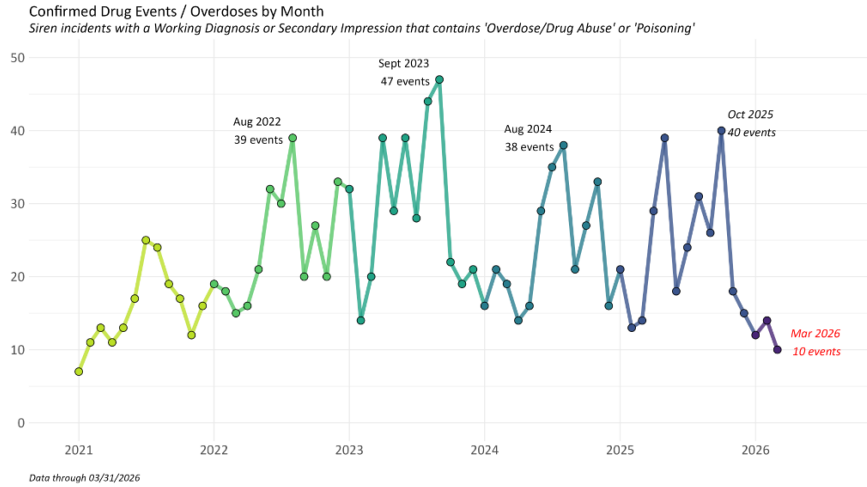


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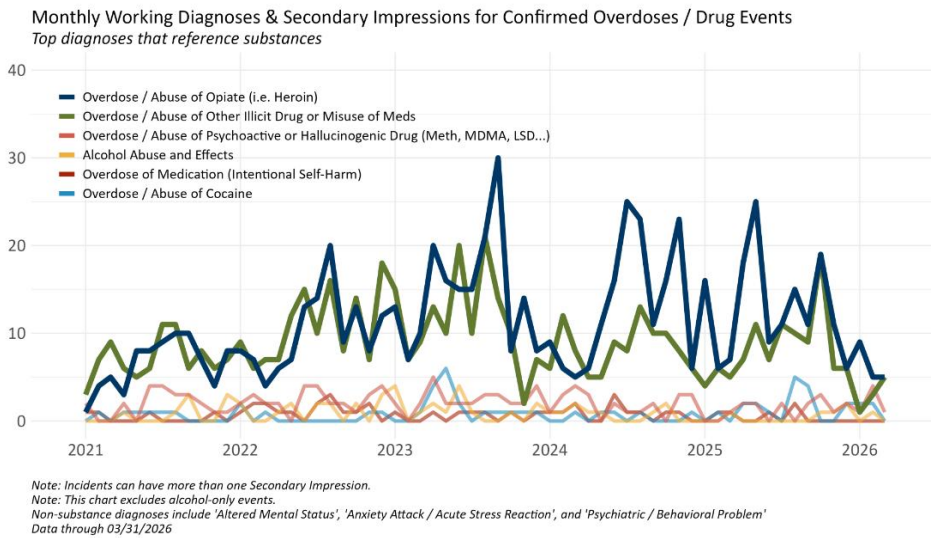
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EMS Data:

The following charts presents monthly data on EMS-confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents in our community from 2021 through March 2026. It categorizes the top types of substances involved, based on working diagnoses and secondary impressions gathered in the field.



This chart above shows monthly confirmed overdose/drug-related incidents from 2021 through March 2026. Incidents climbed notably in 2022 and peaked in 2023, with the highest point in September 2023 (47 events). While 2024 saw some moderation, monthly totals still fluctuated, including a summer spike. In 2025, activity again increased with another peak around 40 events in October before declining. Early 2026 shows a sharper drop, reaching 10 events in March, though it's unclear if this reflects a sustained downward trend or typical variability.



This chart shows monthly confirmed overdose and drug-related incidents from 2021 through March 2026 and highlights that opioid-related overdoses are consistently the most common and volatile driver of events, with sharp spikes—especially in late 2023, 2024, and mid-2025—followed by cases involving other illicit drugs or

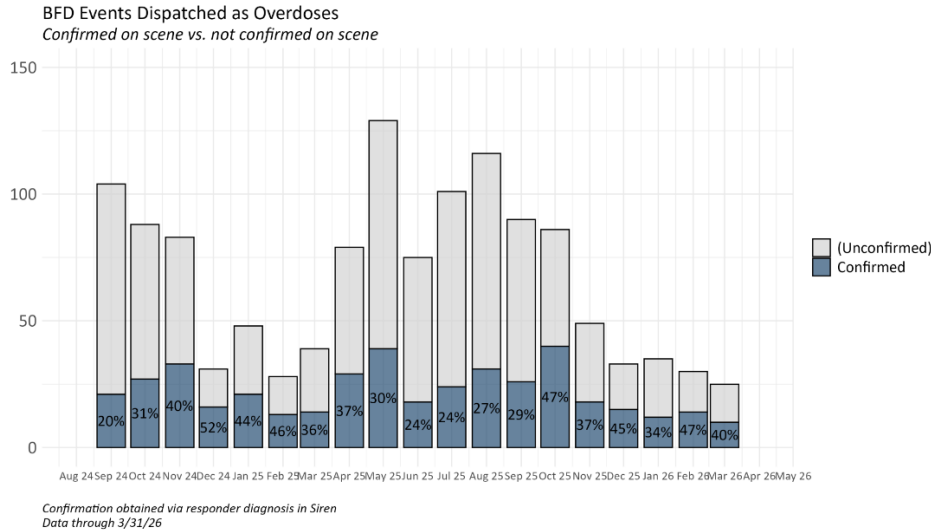


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misuse of medications, which often rise and fall in parallel and likely reflect polysubstance use; all other categories (meth/psychoactive, cocaine, alcohol co-use, and intentional medication overdose) remain relatively low and stable by comparison, indicating that while multiple substances may be involved in individual incidents, the overall overdose burden and operational impact are overwhelmingly driven by opioids and complex drug combinations rather than single-substance events.



This chart shows the number of BFD calls that were dispatched as overdoses each month, compared to how many were actually confirmed as overdoses once crews arrived on scene. While the total number of overdose-dispatched calls rises and falls over time, only a portion of those calls are ultimately confirmed by responders. In most months, confirmed overdoses make up roughly 20–40% of the total, with some variation.

CRT Data for March 2026:

Staffed **8** days for the month of **March**

Total Contacts	Narcan Kits	Wound Care Kits	Comfort Care Kit	Referrals
27	0	0	0	1

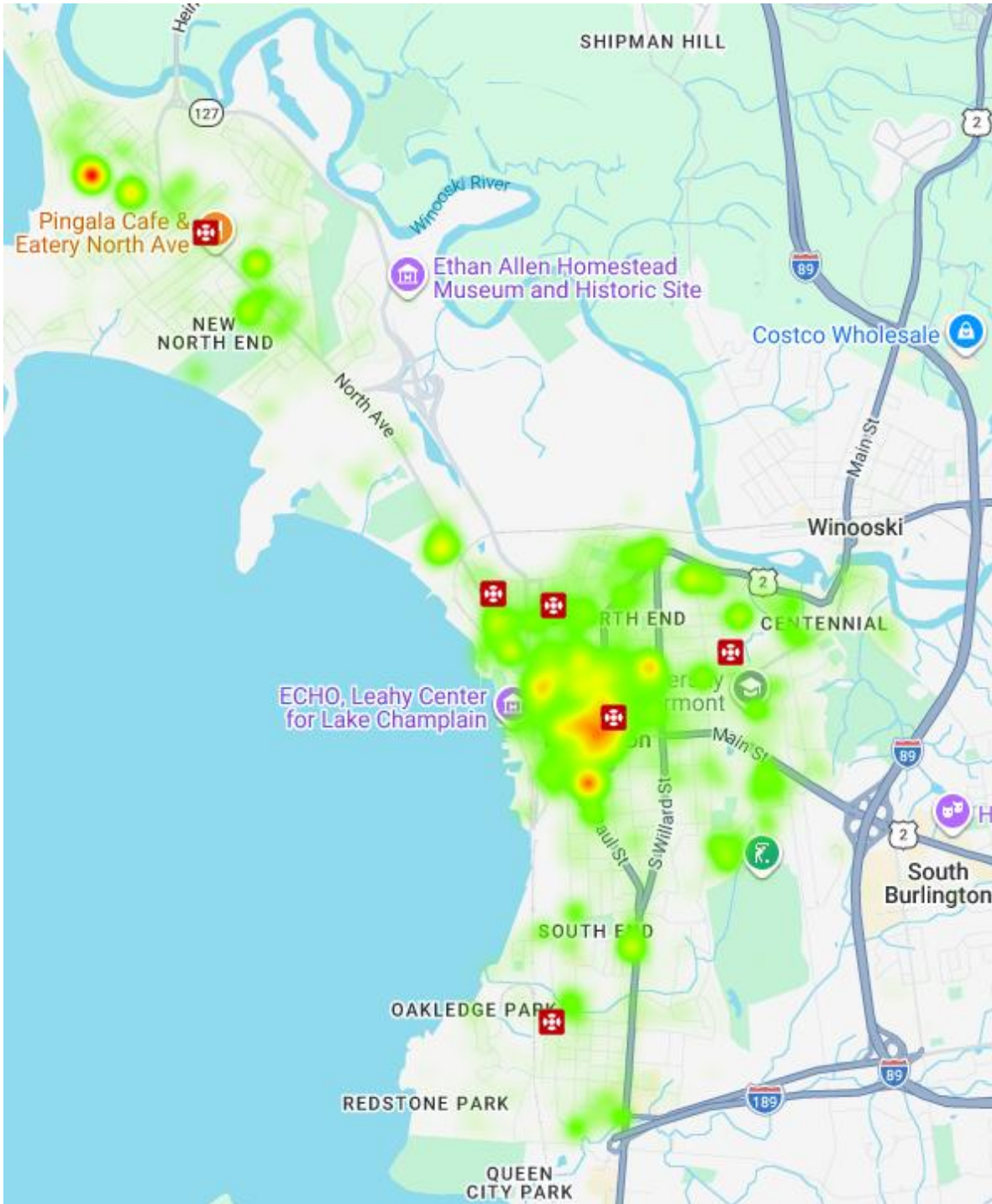




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Personnel & Staffing

Total Department Staff: Uniformed Members **90** / Authorized **95** (4 recruits came to the floor 1/26)

- Minimum Daily Staffing: **22**
- Vacancies: **7**
- Injuries/LOA/FMLA: **9**
- Staff Training Hours: **949**
- Company Level Inspections: **2**
- Preplans Completed: **112**

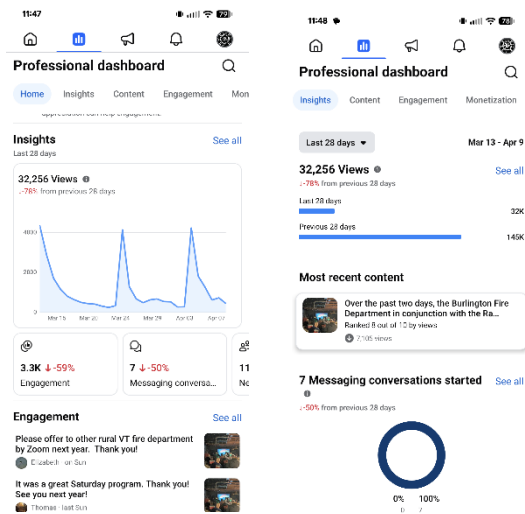
Overtime Type	2025 Hours	2026 Hours	% +/-
Minimum Staffing	340.75	1403.75	+311
Mandatory	79.5	186	+133
CRT	457	197	-56
Emergency	0	12	+120
Extra Duty Events	70.5	29.5	-58

Community Engagement

- 3/1 Joint Training with UVM Rescue
- 3/9 AC Hotel walk through
- 3/14 Penguin Plunge
- 3/24 Mater Christi fire drill / public education
- 3/24 Smoke alarm education on Cliff St
- 3/25 Ladder 2 / Ambulance 2 station tour Sustainability Academy
- 3/30 Fire safety public education with FMO



Social Media:





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DIVISION UPDATES:

Training Division

One member completed Preparation for Initial Company Operations through the Vermont Fire Academy

- Two members completed Ice Rescue Operations through Lifesaving Resources LLC and Grand Isle Volunteer Fire Department
- Nine members attended the Northeastern Fire Summit through the New England FOOLS
- Completed Department training on Ice Rescue operations and Firefighter Safety and Survival
- Participated in both phone and panel interviews
- Working with McNeil plant on allowing live burn training at training site
- Working with Lt Charest on getting elevator car parts to include at McNeil training site
- Scheduling Instructors and VFA training props for Academy class 26-01 scheduled to begin the end of May

Operations Division:

Participate in regular meetings with BC EMS, Training & Fire Marshal

- Participate in new Ladder 2 pre-build meeting in Ocala Florida 2/15-2/17. Meeting went well with adjustments made to the specification. Anticipated delivery October 2028.
- Attend CISA tabletop Exercise at city hall. This is related to Cyber threat to the city.
- Meeting with Sourcewell regarding funding mechanism for equipment/apparatus.
- Worked on Incident Response Updates and brought through to completion.
- Met with Knox Box representative for department updates.
- Regular meetings on our Fleet replacement schedule. Prepping for new Battalion 1(Shift Commander) and new ambulances. Current schedule for new Ambulances: May 2027, August 2028 & April/May 2029
- Completed FEMA class on large area/function evacuations.
- Attend IED class from FEMA
- Attend Funeral Service Retired Member Billy Sears
- Participate in oral board review for City of Lebanon NH Fire Captain
- Attend the Northeast Fire Summit in Wells Maine
- Training and meetings related to UAS program
- Continue to work on grant opportunities to improve department safety and operational readiness. As well as applying for funds to replace all PPE with PFAS free PPE for all members.
- Attend a very successful BFD Lessons Learned Seminar.

FMO Division:

The FMO meet with DPW about greet street projects continuing on Cherry St. We surveyed the areas to determine continued fire department access during construction. Burlington High School has started final testing of fire safety systems. Working with UVMCM to streamline permit inspections to avoid continues fire alarm sounding. Writing policy and working with DPI to correct apartments with life safety violations that received housing board review approval. These units were primarily approved in the 1980's when there was a housing crisis.



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EMS Division Update:

- Training: Successfully completed in-house NREMT and Vermont EMS refresher training for all members requiring recertification. March focused on preparing and scheduling EMS training for the remainder of the year.
- Interdisciplinary Training: Partnered with the Fire Training Division in February to deliver hypothermia and cold weather injury training, followed by ice rescue operations on Lake Champlain.
- Data & System Improvement: Continued collaboration with the City's data analyst, Jeff Nicholson, and Captain Blake to refine EMS data and begin identifying trends to inform future decision-making and system improvements.
- Grants & Strategic Planning: Submitted a federal HRSA grant request supporting paramedic training, PFAS/PFOS-free PPE replacement to reduce long-term exposure risks, simulation equipment, ventilators, and powered patient movement equipment. The Division continues to explore additional funding opportunities.
- Operations & Equipment: With support from FF Theodore Epidy, the Division has advanced inventory management efforts, evaluated tracking software, and completed a comprehensive review of ballistic gear to support long-term planning.
- Notable Incident: On March 6, EMS crews successfully managed a critical call resulting in a life saved. Recognition to Captain Perkins, FF Paul, FF Doig, FF Fiske, and Probationary FF Piazza for their exceptional performance.

Administration Division:

- 5 recruits scheduled to begin on 5/26/26
- Station 3 Bunkroom Remodel Project is in the planning phase
- Station 1 Window Replacement Project – project to be awarded soon
- Station 2 – Apparatus Floor – obtained updated pricing. Waiting on timeline.
- Station 1 – Stair treads were lost in transit. Replacements have been ordered by the contractor.
- Policies: Several new or revised SOGs recently issued including a Pre-employment Drug Screening Policy and a Reimbursement Policy. In the process of updating remaining administrative SOGS.
- UKG Employee Appraisal Process in test phase with a few members.
- Please submit year end station requests by 5/1/26.



Fire Commission
 Tuesday, April 14, 2026 08:30
 Fire Station #1
 136 South Winooski Avenue
 SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	EMAIL
LINDA SHEEHY	LSheehy@gmail.com
Monica Chapman	mchapman@puroclean.com
Jeff Nicholson	jnicholson@burlingtonvt.gov
Stephen Petit	spetit@burlingtonvt.gov
Roy Reeves	royreeves@burlingtonvt.gov
ASHLEY BOND	abond@burlingtonvt.gov
Jacob Perkins	jperkins@burlingtonvt.gov
KEVIN McLAUGHLIN	COUNTYOWE@AOL.COM
MARSHA MCCOMBIA	mccombia@burlingtonvt.gov
Meghan Sweeney	msweeney@burlingtonvt.gov

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