

ANNOUNCEMENT

October 25, 2021

Westbrook, ME – Last week we received notice from Westbrook Fire & Rescue Chief and Local Health Officer Andrew Turcotte outlining his intent to resign from the Fire Department, effective December 3, 2021. Chief Turcotte has served the Department for nearly eight years. He was appointed as Deputy Chief in early 2014, and quickly rose to the rank of Chief later that same year. We have been blessed with his dedicated service to our community, especially during this difficult time navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chief Turcotte has consistently demonstrated the knowledge, courage, and compassion that he inspires in those around him. The legacy of his administration will be found in the growth that has occurred in this department during his tenure and its focus on public health. This growth mindset and emphasis on public health has been integral to the daily operations of the Fire & Rescue Department, and in the professional development of the firefighters he has led. In addition, his support for his team members has carried our department through a particularly challenging time for anyone in this field. He inspires us all to do our absolute best. He has truly been an outstanding Fire & Rescue Chief and community leader for our City.

During his tenure, Chief Turcotte grew the department as a professional agency, and expanded the workforce with the introduction of eight new firefighters to help remedy chronic staffing shortages and overtime demands. These new firefighters were funded with the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These funds, among the many grants Chief Turcotte has secured through the years, helped to grow the department with critical staff, training, and equipment, while reducing the financial impact to the City. Lastly, Chief Turcotte advocated for growth within the department's leadership team through the addition of a Deputy Chief of EMS & Training. This was included in the American Rescue Plan Act budget to help address Public Health, which was approved and is currently in the recruitment stage.

Chief Turcotte has been monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic since December 2019 when it began, keeping City leaders apprised of developments. Being informed early, he was ready to lead and participate in the Citywide development of COVID-19 policies and responses, working directly with City leaders to ensure the safety of our community and its employees. Throughout the pandemic, he has been a point of contact for residents & businesses with health questions and those seeking direction.

In an effort to keep all employees educated on COVID-19, Chief Turcotte spent considerable time and effort informing City employees and leading workgroups to keep employees informed. He worked with the Maine Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Maine Emergency Management Agency to secure over \$500,000 in grant funds to combat COVID-19 through Federal, State, and private sources, ultimately reducing the financial impact to the City of Westbrook. Chief Turcotte worked with the Department of Health & Human Services to implement the first municipal COVID-19 testing site in the state, managing that operation to this day, and even planned and operated a municipal vaccination site. For his tremendous leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, he was recognized as Manager of the 2nd Quarter for 2020 and Manager of the Year for that same year.

Despite the increased workload and the stress of keeping the community, its employees, and the City of Westbrook safe and healthy, Chief Turcotte remained welcoming, attentive, and ready to assist and serve.

On behalf of the City of Westbrook, I wish to express our sincere and heartfelt appreciation for everything Chief Turcotte has given to our community. We wish him success, health, and happiness as he looks to spend more time with family, work with a nearby agency, and support others in a consulting role.

The Fire & Rescue Chief's position along with the Local Health Officer is a critical role for our City. To provide stability to the Department through this transition, I will appoint Assistant Chief Stephen Sloan to the role of Interim Fire & Rescue Chief and Local Health Officer effective October 29, 2021. Chief Turcotte has committed to leading the Department through the end of this week and will be available as a resource on a consulting basis until his last day of employment on December 3, 2021.

To backfill the void created with the interim promotion of Assistant Chief Sloan, we will seek the interest of the Captain ranks to fill the role of Interim Assistant Chief until these positions have been filled on a permanent basis at a later date.

We thank Stephen for his willingness to provide continued leadership to our Fire & Rescue Department through this transition.

With the greatest admiration and respect,



Mayor Michael T. Foley