



# Bartlett Fire Protection District History

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On Wednesday, December 22, 1897, a group of Bartlett citizens gathered together for the purpose of forming a volunteer fire department. Twenty-six men, all over sixteen years of age, signed the by-law and constitution of the new fire department which were drawn up by George Struckman.

Mr. A.C. Schick was elected the first chief to the department at the first meeting on January 10, 1898. From that time on the department functioned well according to records, even though the chief was known to report at meetings, "that the engine was in working order, but leaks worse than ever."

The department continued its operations until the middle of 1901, when it apparently disbanded. It was reorganized on July 11, 1910 with many of the same men as members. This organization apparently continued until sometime in 1915, there are no records documenting this after November 7, 1911.

A third and final reorganization of the department came on November 16, 1925. At this time twenty-nine men became members of the department, many of them are well known in town today. H.C. Thurnau was elected Chief of the new department.

This group not only functioned as a firefighting unit, but soon became the center of social activity in the community. Dances, picnics, and grand and glorious 4th of July celebrations were held. The 4th of July celebration in 1926 had a parade that contained thirty-one floats, there were fireworks, dancing, and games of chance. It was so successful that they quickly planned another picnic in August. This was the forerunner of the former Firemen's Picnic.

Sometime in 1930, the boys became movie stars. The Atlas Educational Film Company wanted some shots of the volunteer department in action, so our boys gave a demonstration of how it should be done. Unfortunately this film is no longer available.

Throughout its existence, the department has always had cordial relations with the village board. Realizing that cooperation and understanding were essential to a smoothly operating partnership, the department held a special meeting on December 6, 1936. The minutes of this meeting read as follows:

"Meeting called to order by President H.E. Schnadt. Roll call showed twelve members present, none absent, and all members of the village board present. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with the board members the activities of the Bartlett Volunteer Fire Department. The Chief addressed the members present and also the board about the duties, requirements, and services necessary to maintain an efficient operation of the volunteer fire department. The President of the village board gave a short talk expressing the board's appreciation for the manner in which the fire department has maintained an efficient operation and service, and assured the board's cooperation was welcomed at any time. After adjournment, a social evening was had at the village hall, refreshments were served and a good time was had by all."

As a fire department, this group did their usual fine work during this period, and they also played a large part in building the community. The department, along with other civic groups in town, was largely responsible for the formation of our present town parks and field house. On April 12, 1948, a special meeting for the fire department was called by Chief Bull. The order of business for this meeting was to discuss purchasing six lots from Mr. H.W. Schnadt to complete the park. Motion was made to buy this land and turn the property over to the village. Mayor Thurnau, who was Village President at the time, thanked the fire department for their action and said he was sure the village board and the rest of the people in town would be very thankful for what the department had done.

Much time, work, and money went into building the present field house. At their meeting on July 13, 1948, the department voted to donate their share of the annual Firemen's Picnic for the purpose of building the field house. At this time, the Rural League also donated their share of the picnic to their worthy cause.

On August 31, 1956, the department and the village formally joined the Hanover-Wayne Fire Protection District. New equipment had been purchased, more was on order, and more would be added as the needs of the department increased. A new siren was installed in order to improve the alerting system, so that the boys could get out even faster than before. From the humble origin in 1897, the department had become a strong modern fire fighting unit.

A complete mobile radio system was installed late in 1960, and has been upgraded on a regular basis. A numbering system for the rural area of the district was approved in 1965, and was installed shortly thereafter. This system makes the reporting of a fire location an easy, simple matter.

The department has kept up its interest in the community, and has been a regular contributor to various youth activities, charities, and has been the sponsor of the Bartlett Babe Ruth baseball games. When the new village hall was built, the department donated the public address system for the hall. A sizable cash donation was made to the library when they first opened their doors.



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In June of 1968, Elmer Hecht was appointed the first full-time Fire Marshal of Hanover-Wayne Fire Protection District.

During 1969, the Village of Streamwood decided to disannex from the district and become a municipal fire department. In January, 1971 the name of the district was officially changed to "Bartlett and Countryside Fire Protection District." In July of that same year, new "Rules of Conduct and Operation" were established and a point pay system of reimbursement for services rendered for the employed Paid-On-Call firefighters was incorporated.

A Cadet program for Firefighters was put into effect in July of 1974, and an agreement was drawn up to participate in dispatching by Du-Comm in March of 1976. Insurance Services Office surveyed the village and fire district fire defenses and declared that the village shall keep its Class "5" fire insurance rate.

In April of 1980, a second ambulance tax referendum was held and passed by 447 votes, giving the Trustees of the Fire District the mandate to provide the best ambulance service that money could buy. In May an agreement was signed to participate in the Greater Elgin Area Mobile Intensive Care Program and Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service. Later in November of 1980, a contract was signed with Paramedic Services of Illinois to provide the paramedics to staff the Advanced Life Support Ambulance. By December, the residents and taxpayers of the Bartlett and Countryside Fire Protection District had an Advanced Life Support Ambulance Service.

The Trustees considered the hiring of seven full-time firefighters in August of 1989, however no decision was made as to how the hiring was to be done. In April of 1990, the Trustees adopted an ordinance to establish a Fire Commission. The first Fire Commissioners appointed were Arthur Regal, Albert Mategrano, and Norman Weaver. In September of that same year, notice was published in the local newspapers that the fire district would be accepting applications for full-time firefighters - 246 people applied.

Commissioners advised the Trustees that they had their full-time candidates established in December of 1991, and were ready to have the top seven of that list report for active service. On January 2, 1992, seven firefighter candidates started full-time employment on a 40 hour per week basis. Four of the firefighters were assigned to the station and three attended classes for seven weeks at the Elgin Fire Department Academy. Fire Chief Hecht tendered his resignation as Chief Officer of the Fire District, effective January 1, 1994. His resignation culminated 42 years of service to his community. Chief Steve Figved led the department from 1994 to 2002.

The Fire District Trustees voted to increase the size of the Board of Trustees to five in January of 1995, and in July of 1996, approved the change of the name of the department to the Bartlett Fire Protection District.

On May 10, 2001 the department launched its web site, [bartlettfire.com](http://bartlettfire.com).

On November 1, 2002 Chief William O'Boyle took charge of the department until May, 2005.

In April of 2004, the new and improved Squad 3 was put into service....with more room for personnel and equipment.

2004 also saw the creation of the Bartlett Fire Protection District's Photo Unit and twelve Bartlett residents completed a very successful Citizens Fire Academy, led by Assistant Chief Kevin Heine.

In May of 2005, Chief O'Boyle tendered his resignation and soon thereafter, Kevin Heine was named Chief of the Bartlett Fire Protection District.