

Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade – 65TH Anniversary

Photos and story by Linda Harrington

By Linda Harrington

On January 28th, 1961 a meeting was held at the Lower Onslow United Church Hall to organize the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade (OBFB) with Keith Hamilton voted in as the first Chief, a position he held for almost 40 years.

A celebration was held January 24th, 2026 at the Onslow Belmont Fire Hall to recognize the 65th Anniversary of the Brigade. Mutual aid partners from surrounding areas, local politicians, Brigade members, past members, honorary members and special guests enjoyed a lovely buffet meal prepared by Sizzler BBQ Catering.

In 1961, OBFB started with four zones to cover- Central Onslow, Lower Onslow, Belmont and Crowes Mills but later in the year Masstown was added as fifth zone, bringing the Brigade's total coverage area to roughly 400 properties.

Harry Elliott started off the fund raising in 1961 by slapping a \$50.00 donation on the table. A house-to-house canvas generated \$2000. The Dept. of Lands and Forest donated 1500 feet of hose. The first truck was purchased on Feb. 11th, 1961 and construction of a 27ft x 30ft fire hall began in the summer, with the official opening held on Nov. 17th, 1961. A fundraising dance was

held that evening. The hall was built almost entirely by volunteer hours, with a total cost of \$1000.00 Penny cans were distributed to homes, asking residents to deposit a penny a day to help the Brigade. 14 calls were answered that year.

In 1962, the first Harvest Sale took place in October, raising \$700 for the Brigade. This popular community event has continued ever since. Other notable fund raising included a booth at the Exhibition (where Fire Dogs and Burgers began), a derelict car program in 1975 where 3000 vehicles were collected, a wood pile project with 100 cords of firewood cut, split and delivered as well as dances, variety concerts and much more.

Several speakers spoke about their memories of the Brigade over the past years. Clair Peers joined the Brigade in 2001 and he displayed some of the historical scrap books detailing the early years of the Brigade. These were prepared yearly by Ellen Hamilton, wife of first OBFB Chief Keith Hamilton.

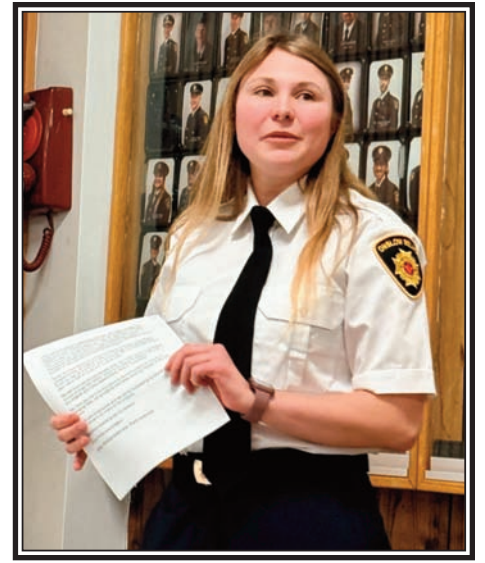
When current Fire Chief Greg Muise wanted to join the Brigade in 1982, he was first put on a waiting list because there were already 82 members. He said once Chief Hamilton new he lived

right next door to the Fire Hall he brought him right into the Brigade so they could put a telephone in his house for emergency calls. Greg joined in 1983 as a Lieutenant for Lower Onslow zone, then Driving Lieutenant, Equipment Lieutenant, Captain, Assistant Deputy, Deputy and eventually Chief. He says he is so proud to be Chief of this Brigade because he has really good members to work with, "You ask them to do something and it is done."

Charlie McKenize joined OBFB in 1970. He had many stories from over the years including one when Bob McLellan and Jack Barley brought two trucks home from PEI but didn't notice a ladder had extended out the side and they took out a ticket booth on this side of the ferry.

Great Village & District Fire Brigade Chief Greg Kinsman presented OBFB with a plaque in recognition of the 65th Anniversary. MLA Tom Taggart, Colchester County Deputy Mayor also presented certificates to Chief Greg Muise and offered their congratulations and appreciation.

Today OBFB has 50 active members, 6 trucks, including 2 pumper trucks, an engine, a rescue, medical and forestry truck, as well as a side by side and a boat. The members respond to over 250



OBFB Lieutenant Erin Richardson was the emcee for the evening and also gave a brief history of the Brigade.

calls/year and over half of those are medical calls. Thank you to all members of Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade both past and present, as well as their spouses and family members. Congratulations on your 65th Anniversary.



District 8 County Councillor Lisa Patton offered congratulations to the Brigade on behalf of herself and District 9 Councillor Marie Benoit.



Charlie McKenize joined OBFB in 1970. He had many entertaining stories from over the years to share.



Sally Jennings asked the blessing before for the meal at the OBFB 65th Anniversary Banquet.



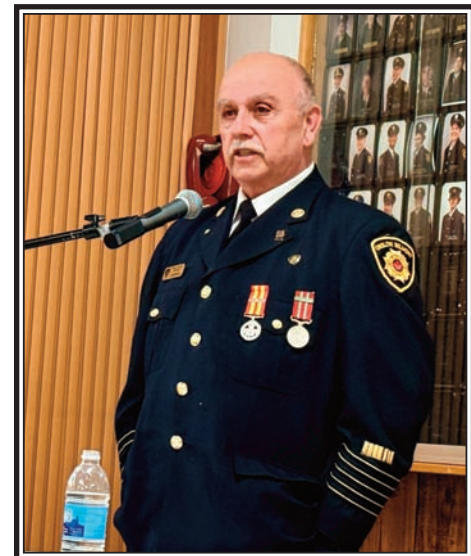
Claire Peers displays one of the many historical scrap books prepared throughout the years by Ellen Hamilton, wife of first OBFB Chief Keith Hamilton.



Colchester County Deputy Mayor Laurie Sandeson presents OBFB Chief Greg Muise with a certificate on behalf of the County.



Great Village Fire Brigade Chief Greg Kinsman presents OBFB Chief Greg Muise with a plaque in recognition of the Brigade's 65 Anniversary.



OBFB Chief Greg Muise welcomed everyone to the 65th Anniversary Banquet and spoke on some of the historical events he had been a part of over the years.



MLA Tom Taggart presents OBFB Chief Greg Muise with a certificate on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia congratulating the Brigade on their 65th Anniversary.



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