



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

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Fire Chief Dennis Condon to Retire After 36 Years of Service

NEEDHAM – Wednesday, June 29, 2022 – Fire Chief Dennis Condon, a member of the Needham Fire Department for 36 years, will get one more 4th of July fireworks celebration under his belt before he signs off for good July 5, 2022.

Condon joined the Needham Fire Department in 1986, ascending to Chief in 2014. He wasn't a kid who grew up dreaming of becoming a firefighter; instead he joined the department after learning of the Civil Service test from a friend.

A lot has changed since then, Condon says. "Three quarters of the department in 1986 had never attended the Fire Academy. Many didn't wear SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) in those days. Reports were handwritten. In the winter, snow used to come in through the windows. In the summer it was 500 degrees. Things have changed dramatically."

So dramatically, in fact, that one of Condon's last official duties as Chief will be to preside over the formal dedication of two new fire stations, Fire Station #2 in Needham Heights and the new Fire Station Headquarters on Chestnut Street. Condon was instrumental in securing Town approval for the construction of the buildings and in their design. Both are set to be formally dedicated during ceremonies Thursday, June 30, 2022.

Condon cites the new fire stations as his proudest accomplishment. The buildings come equipped with the kind of safety equipment, training space, and wellness resources that he never could have dreamed of in his rookie years. He [showcases the new headquarters in this piece with the Needham Channel](#).

When asked about the Needham Fire Department's responsibility to provide the Town with Emergency Medical Services, Condon quickly claims that as his second most meaningful achievement. As Fire Union President, he helped secure the support and resources necessary for the Fire Department to take over advanced life saving operations for the Town, rather than rely on the regional service that was available then. As Chief, he was able to expand that service to two full time ALS ambulances.

While he has responded to countless fires and public safety events in his decades in the fire service (he tells of one in particular in which an armored bank truck caught fire, and \$2 million in cash sat idly on the side of the highway while firefighters put the fire out), it is the people Condon says he will miss the most.

"I have loved every single day I have come here," he says. "I thought it was a great job. When I was an officer on the engine company, I was going out and helping people. They called for us when they were having a bad day. We got to respond and hopefully help them have a better day."

As Chief and as a former Fire Union President and President of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts, Condon also relishes the personal connections he has made with other fire chiefs in Massachusetts and people across the country. The Covid-19 pandemic was hard on him in that way, he says, because it limited his ability to interact in person, something he enjoyed most about the job.

"I'm grateful for having this opportunity," he says. "I didn't set out to become a firefighter – it happened by chance. But it was a good job and I am still figuring out what I want to do when I grow up. I have met a lot of people, and that has been a gift to me. I have been wicked fortunate, wicked blessed."

As he leaves the job he's loved for decades, Condon offers advice to current and future Needham firefighters.

"I hope you have a sense of pride in your job. And give more than you take. Because if you give more than you take you end up getting more than you ever thought you would."

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NOTE: Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick has named Tom Conroy Acting Chief of the Fire Department effective July 5, 2022. He is expected to be formally sworn in as Chief in late July.