



# TOWN OF VERNON

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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**Daniel A. Champagne**  
*Mayor*

**Michael J. Purcaro**  
*Town Administrator*

**Dawn R. Maselek**  
*Assistant Town Administrator*

**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **VERNON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES DEDICATION AND SERVICE** *Annual Awards Ceremony Held February 24<sup>th</sup>*

The Town of Vernon Fire Department honored the dedication and service of its volunteer firefighters and emergency medical response staff at its Annual Awards Ceremony on Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The event, held at Rockville High School, was open to the public. State and local elected officials were in attendance to support the event.

The annual ceremony recognizes all members of the department and provides special awards to those performing exemplary service in response to life threatening circumstances. Award categories include Unit Citation Medal of Valor, Firefighter of the Year, Officer of the Year, and Years of Service Awards.

Major highlights of the event included presentations to Lieutenant Todd Black, recipient of the Firefighter of the Year award, Captain Jack Fisher, recipient of the Fire Officer of the Year award, and Engineer Richard Bowman, for 50 years of service.

Vernon Mayor Daniel A. Champagne congratulated all award recipients and presented Bowman with a Mayoral Proclamation. "On behalf of the Town of Vernon, we thank you for your selfless service to the residents of our Town. Yours is a shining example of what a civil servant is, and certainly of the quality and caliber of which we all aspire."

Engineer Bowman began his career in September 1969 and served four years, reaching the ranks of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and Secretary. He transferred to Rockville Fire Department in 1974 achieving the ranks of Engineer and Lieutenant. He is a Charter Member of the Town of Vernon Fire Department (in 1980 Rockville and Vernon Fire Departments merged), and was an active and significant contributor to the By-Laws Committee and various coordinating functions. He also serves as the Good and Welfare Chairman of the Vernon Volunteer Fireman's Association. Bowman retired January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

Lieutenant Black joined the Town of Vernon Fire Department in 2015 and in January 2019 became Company Lieutenant. He averages more than 300 service hours a year and is also a member of the Connecticut Fire Police Association.

Captain Fisher started with the Department in 1986, assigned to Tower 141, where he attained the position of Lieutenant. In 2007, he was appointed Staff Captain for Communications and served until 2016 when he took on the role of Finance Officer. Currently he handles all aspects of the Fire Department's radio communications equipment and fiduciary duties for both the Fire Department and EMS Division. He has been a member of the Board of Directors for The Tolland County Mutual Aid System for 30 years.

Vernon Fire Chief Stephen Eppler congratulated Department staff saying, "Words cannot express our gratitude for your loyalty and commitment to volunteer service on behalf of our community. You along with our civilian award recipients represent the very best of our town's spirit; charity in action and others before self."

In his program remarks, Michael J. Purcaro, Vernon's Town Administrator and Emergency Management Director said, "On behalf of Mayor Champagne and the Vernon Town Council, we express our deepest thanks to all of our fire department volunteers and emergency medical personnel for the work you do. We are forever indebted to you and your families for your public service."

### **Town of Vernon Fire Department 2019 Awards Ceremony**

#### **Length of Service Awards**

#### **5 Years of Service**

Matt Lattimer, *Firefighter*  
Katherine Scibelli, *EMT*  
Sheila Taridona, *Firefighter*  
Dan Wasilewski, *Fire Marshal*

#### **10 Years of Service**

Cory LaFontaine, *Lieutenant*  
William Meier, *EMT*  
Ronald Scussel, *Engineer*

#### **15 Years of Service**

Michael J. Purcaro, *Emergency and Risk Management Director*

#### **20 Years of Service**

Jeff Bifolck, *Engineer*  
Jared Galica, *EMT*  
Scott Shephard, *SCBA Coordinator & Engineer*

#### **25 Years of Service**

Sandy Manseau, *Lieutenant*

#### **30 Years of Service**

Bob Turkington, *Captain*

#### **35 Years of Service**

Jeff Schambach, *Lieutenant*

#### **45 Years of Service**

David Goric, *Captain*

#### **50 Years of Service**

Richard Bowman, *Engineer*

<b>Achievement Awards</b>	Jack Fisher, <i>Captain</i> Ray Tautic, <i>Engineer</i>
<b>Unit Citations</b>	Jeff Schambach, <i>Lieutenant</i> Bert Lessard, <i>Lieutenant</i>
<b>Personal Citations</b>	Todd Black, <i>Lieutenant</i> Chris Thompson, <i>Captain</i> Cory LaFontaine, <i>Lieutenant</i> Kevin Bowman, <i>Engineer</i> Bryan Bifolck, <i>Firefighter</i> Jeff Schambach, <i>Lieutenant</i> Walter Hampton, <i>Engineer</i>
<b>Unit Citation Award for Valley Falls Cliff Rescue</b>	Robert Babcock, <i>Assistant Chief</i> Alan Arel, <i>Assistant Chief</i> Jon Lucas, <i>Captain</i> Octavio Muniz, <i>Lieutenant</i> Todd Cascario, <i>Lieutenant</i> Walter Seifert, <i>Firefighter</i> Andre Lisee, <i>Firefighter</i> Nick Bartos, <i>Lieutenant</i>
<b>Certificate of Recognition for Drone Support of Valley Falls Cliff Rescue</b>	Rob Marra, <i>Vernon Police Dept. Sergeant</i> Steven Langlais, <i>Vernon Police Dept. Officer, Retired</i>
<b>Personal Citation Award for Valley Falls Cliff Rescue</b>	Jeff Schambach, <i>Lieutenant</i> Walter Hampton, <i>Engineer</i>
<b>Medal of Merit Award for Valley Falls Cliff Rescue</b>	Bob Turkington, <i>Captain</i>
<b>Pre-Hospital Code Save Awards</b>	John Towler, <i>EMT</i> Kerry Reynolds, <i>Vernon Police Officer</i> Mike Colt, <i>EMT</i> Dale Lagace, <i>Vernon Police Officer</i> James Grzegorek, , <i>Vernon Police Officer</i> Andrew Bass, <i>Off Duty Windsor Police Officer</i>
<b>Citizen Award for Valley Falls Cliff Rescue</b>	Jeff Boudle
<b>Citizens Life Saving Award</b>	Jayden Thompson
<b>Firefighter of the Year</b>	Lieutenant Todd Black
<b>Fire Officer of the Year</b>	Captain Jack Fisher



**Left to Right: Health & Safety Officer Chris Hammick, Assistant Fire Chief Alan Arel, Lieutenant Todd Black, Assistant Fire Chief Rob Babcock, Fire Chief Steve Eppler**  
*Photo Credit – Duncan Stewart, TVFD*



**Left to Right: Health & Safety Officer Chris Hammick, Assistant Fire Chief Alan Arel, Captain Jack Fisher, Assistant Fire Chief Rob Babcock, Fire Chief Steve Eppler**  
*Photo Credit – Duncan Stewart, TVFD*



**Left to Right: Junior Firefighter Adam Bowman, Engineer Kevin Bowman, Engineer Craig Bowman, Health & Safety Officer Chris Hammick, Assistant Fire Chief Alan Arel, State Representative Michael Winkler, Engineer Dick Bowman, Mayor Dan Champagne, Assistant Fire Chief Rob Babcock, Fire Chief Steve Eppler, Town Administrator Michael Purcaro**  
*Photo Credit – Duncan Stewart, TVFD*

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