

Early History of Public Safety in Center Line (continued)

Early in their first term, the Center Line City Council authorized the purchase of a new 1936 Dodge General fire engine. This apparatus was designated Engine No. 2 and it included a 300 gallon booster tank and 500 GPM pump that was mounted on a 1 1/2 ton Dodge chassis. With the booster tank, this engine could use its own water to quickly douse small fires without needing to hook up to a hydrant or use chemicals.



In 1953, the position of Public Safety Commissioner was created and Dennis Frazier, a former Detroit police officer, was appointed to fill the post, which was responsible for coordinating all police and fire activities. One of the first changes under Frazier was to have the four full-time firefighters also assume desk and dispatch duties for the police department. This practice continued until 1980 when all police and fire operations were consolidated under the current Public Safety Department.

In the late 1950s, the city purchased a 1956 Chevrolet ambulance, a 1956 Ford pick-up rescue truck, and a 1957 American LaFrance 1,000 GPM pumper which replaced the 1926 fire truck.

In 1957, under Commissioner Frazier there were 20 members of the CLPD and 5 full-time and 11 volunteer members of the CLFD. The full-time staff would peak at 12 in 1970, which was also the peak year for the amount of fire losses as well as the peak of Center Line's population. In 1978, the rescue truck was replaced with a GMC combination pumper/rescue vehicle, which had a 500 gallon tank and a 750 GPM pump, as well as room to carry rescue equipment such as the "Jaws of Life" which were donated by the Menge VFW Post.

On July 1, 1980, the CLFD and CLPD were officially dissolved and replaced by the CL Public Safety Department, which continues to this day. Police officers and firefighters were cross-trained to become Public Safety Officers and civilian dispatchers were hired to free them all up for patrol duty. When a fire or ambulance call is received, a PSO returns to the station and drives the needed equipment to the scene. In 1997, the fire and police stations, along with all city hall operations, were moved to their current location at 7070 Ten Mile Road and the 1928-era municipal building was demolished.

The 1926 American LaFrance fire truck is still around today. The Friends of the Fire Truck was formed to raise funds for its restoration. Pictured to the right is Mike Grobbel and his uncle Alton "Oz" Grobbel, who is sitting in the same seat his father Clement Grobbel sat in about 70 years ago in the photo above of the Center Line Fire Department circa 1931.

