

Dear Williamstown Residents,

I want to first say that the control burn scheduled for April 10th, 2022, will not go on for many reasons. It was my decision to approach Larry Hebert about the opportunity to burn it for training. This was NOT a money saving scam for the Heberts but an opportunity for the Fire Department. Nor was the Fire Department ever going to accept a donation for doing this training but are grateful for their offer.

It was never my intent to cause hate and disrespect towards one another over a fire training. This training was going to be a great opportunity for firefighters to learn new skills and fire behavior for the new members to determine if being an interior firefighter was something they were up for. Not only for Williamstown firefighters but for the surrounding communities and their firefighters as well. However, as firefighters we need to be trusted and respectful to the residents and property in the town. That has prompted me to make this decision. We did submit our applications that were required for the burn. They have all not come back yet saying either way but that doesn't matter anymore. We did not warn the neighbors within the required 1/2 mile yet because of my recent decision. It was never my intent to cause harm to anyone or any property. I had 110% faith in my department and the mutual aid departments to have controlled the scene with a concrete plan in place as we have done in the past. However, I understand where some of you are coming from in regards to the smoke conditions. This is disappointing to miss the opportunity but please know we will continue to provide the best service to this community.

Please know that the Fire Department will continue to use the building for training on Monday evenings until demolition takes place. No smoke will be used during those trainings.

I want to express my thanks to Larry & Jimmy Hebert for all there efforts in helping us get this organized. I also want to thank my department officers, town manager, the mutual aid departments and AOT highway for getting the plan together.

I am not perfect, I am human. Please know that I am extremely proud of the handful of my Fire Officers and firefighters that serve this town of nearly 3500 residents. I am proud to be able to work beside them every time the tone goes out or we do training. They are an amazing group of women and men. I can not thank them enough for helping keep Williamstown fire safe. You can trust that they will work hard to save your life or property if ever needed no matter how you feel about us.

Lastly, I want to apologize to the Heberts and family, Grahams and family, my firefighters and family, the town manager, the residents in the village, and anyone else I may have upset, caused people to be disrespected, bullied and even threatened. It was never ever in my wildest dreams to see this training opportunity come to this. I'm just the Fire Chief but I strongly encourage people to be respectful and treat others the way you want to be treated.

Thank you for your time and I truly hope this will bring calm to the town on this issue.

Respectfully,
William Graham
Fire Chief