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Export date: Fri Oct 30 4:05:21 2026 / +0000 GMT

Shelburne Fire Department receives $5,000 grant to help with firefighter training costs

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Shelburne and District Fire Department received a welcome boost to their training budget on Tuesday (Nov. 19), when Amanda Sexton, the Regional Operations Supervisor with Enbridge Gas Inc, presented Fire Chief Brad Lemaich and Fire Board Chairman Walter Benotto with a cheque for $5,000 to augment their firefighter training budget!.

This is the second time Shelburne has received this grant, and it is greatly appreciated said Chief Lemaich.

The money, comes from Project Assist, a program developed by Enbridge Gas in 2012, to augment the training materials used by firefighters to gain new skills and certifications. Since it's inception, the program has awarded 174 Grants to volunteer and composite fire departments in Ontario.

?Project Assist improves access to training materials for municipal fire departments,? says Jon Pegg, Ontario's Fire Marshal and Chief of Emergency Management.

Chief Lemaich pointed out that through this grant, he can maintain a current and comprehensive library of texts, videos and handbooks to help keep his firefighters up to date and certified. Currently, Chief Lemaich says, 90 percent of the firefighters in Shelburne are Level Two NFPA Certified firefighters. This represents the highest level professional firefighter accreditation, equal to all full time firefighters in Ontario.

The cost of maintaining an up to date library is substantial, with texts averaging $100 each and videos costing several hundred dollars apiece, while handbooks are often $40 to $80 each. With the help of this grant, the department can supply firefighters with the materials they require to further their training. Training, which these firefighters pay for themselves.

A course at a private institute such as the fire colleges in Texas, can cost upwards of $12,000 and take several days, of a firefighter's time. Even here in Ontario at the fire college in Gravenhurst, only accommodation and meals are provided, while the program costs are borne by the firefighters. In the private colleges, costs per course still run $6,000 or more.

For 2019, Enbridge Gas awarded $100,000 to 20 different Fire Departments, under the Project Assist banner.

Manager of Operations for Enbridge Gas Inc, Grant Kilpatrick summarized it best when he said, ?At Enbridge Gas, safety is our priority. We're proud to support Ontario firefighters who share our commitment to keeping communities safe.?

Fire Board Chairman and Shelburne Coun. Walter Benotto was quick to praise the Enbridge award and stated that the board was tremendously pleased to receive the $5,000 Award and to be able to put it to use improving the training library. Fire Chief Brad Lemaich echoed these sentiments and pointed out that being able to purchase the texts and fire codes through the Fire Marshall's Public Fire Safety Council was an extremely beneficial opportunity for the fire training efforts of the Shelburne and District Fire Department members.