

Bangor considers fee for excessive non-emergency calls

BY NICK MCCREA
OF THE NEWS STAFF

Last year, one Bangor resident called for emergency assistance 171 times. Another person called first responders to their home only to ask the firefighter to hand them an out-of-reach TV remote control.

In response to a growing number of calls for aid that Bangor's emergency responders say shouldn't be necessary, the Fire Department wants the city to start charging fees to people or institutions who frequently call for help when no one needs to be taken to a hospital.

"We're not trying to pe-

nalize these people," Fire Chief Tom Higgins told members of the city's Government Operations Committee during a meeting Monday night. "We're trying to get them to make a more appropriate decision."

Among the most frequent calls for Bangor EMTs and firefighters are lift assists -- situations in which an elderly or disabled person can't get up or move from one location to another under their own power.

"We want to do the right thing by these people, but when we've come 20 or 30 times, it gets to be a drain," Higgins said.

Under the proposal, an individual who requests

help without being taken to the hospital between four and eight times in a year would be charged \$25 per vehicle that dealt with those calls. Once they exceed nine requests, that would jump to \$125 per vehicle. Someone who requests emergency responders three or fewer times without an emergency wouldn't be charged.

There would be larger fees for institutions, such as assisted living complexes, which would pay \$25 per responding vehicle up to the third none-emergency call in one year, and \$125 per vehicle after the fourth call.

Some facilities have "no

lift" policies, which bar employees from picking up people who have fallen or are struggling to move from one spot to another, usually for insurance reasons. That means when someone can't get up, those institutions call Bangor firefighters for help.

"If we get a call, we need to respond," Higgins said, but deploying an ambulance and fire-truck is costly. When a person isn't taken to a hospital, the Fire Department can't bill insurance or an individual for services and has to swallow the costs.

This new fee wouldn't be intended to drive revenue, however, Higgins

said. He hopes the city would never have to leverage these fees against anyone. Instead, the fees are meant to be preventative. If someone is consistently having trouble getting around under their own power, they should be seeking alternative living arrangements where someone -- whether it be a family member or staff person -- is available to help them.

Higgins and Patty Hamilton, director of Bangor Public Health, said they work together to try to ensure that individuals who frequently call on emergency personnel can find access to better living arrangements and not rely

as heavily on EMTs when there isn't an immediate health problem.

"While a need does exist for assistance for those unable to perform certain tasks, the Fire Department is not always the appropriate institution to be filling that need," Higgins said.

For example, the person who called dispatch services for help 171 times last year is now in an assisted living facility.

The Bangor City Council will review the proposed fees and may recommend changes before deciding whether to institute them.

Follow Nick McCrea on Twitter at @nmccrea213.

Orono principal leaving school to take superintendent position in Greenville

BY NOK-NOI RICKER
OF THE BDN STAFF

"Bittersweet" is how Orono High School Principal Jim Chasse describes his decision to leave his current position for a superintendent's job in Greenville.

"It is like sending a loved one away to college. It hurts," said Chasse, who has been a principal for 16 years, the last seven of those years in at Orono High School.

Chasse was hired by the Union 60 School Committee earlier this month and will start the part-time position on July 1. Orono is in the process of searching for his replacement.

"It's exciting, but I'm a little bit nervous," Chasse said Monday of the promotion to superintendent.

He is replacing Superintendent Dave Morrill, who is retiring after holding the post for two years and teaching in Greenville for nearly 40 years. Chasse's salary is \$50,000, and he will get an additional \$12,000 for

being the adult education director.

The list of people and things he'll miss at Orono High is long, he said.

"I'm going to miss the student body," the veteran principal said. "It's been a bit hectic with these talented kids. We have an amazing ratio of 80 to 85 percent involvement in co-curricular activities. It's a 24-7 job. It's event after event."

Orono has "a very skilled teaching staff" and excellent leadership in Superintendent Joanne Hariman and Dean of Students Samantha Runco, Chasse said.

He also is proud of the "phenomenal" athletic program and other recent accolades for speech and debate, drama and performing arts, as well as being recognized by the state and Newsweek magazine as a high-performing school. He said he has worked to increase the number of Advanced Placement classes and doubled the number of students who take them, has improved the

CORE Alternative Education Program, and added an international program, as well as improved the tennis courts.

He said there are a number of reasons for his decision, but the most important is to have more time to spend with his ailing father.

"The change to part-time will afford me the time and schedule to take care of some family details that I have neglected a bit," Chasse said. "I'll only be up there [in Greenville] two or three times a week."

He arrived in Orono after three years at Piscataquis Community High School in Guilford and time at Bangor Christian School and Carmel before that. He also was a teacher and coach for Hermon, Bangor and in Connecticut at the beginning of his career in education. Chasse grew up in the areas of Lewiston, Wilton and Farmington and has his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Maine. His executive

LATE SEASON SKIING



ASHLEY CONTI/BDN

Don McKinnon cross country skies at the Bangor Municipal Golf Course in Bangor Tuesday, March 22.

leadership studies were done at the University of Connecticut.

His wife, Char Chasse, who is a special education teacher at Asa Adams Elementary School, will retain her job. The couple's youngest daughter, who is now a junior, will return in the fall to finish high

school in Orono, Jim Chasse said.

Another advantage of his new job is that Chasse loves the outdoors and is looking forward to the rural nature of the Piscataquis County area.

"It doesn't get any more outdoors than Greenville," he said.

Send us your Calendar item

weekly@bangordailynews.com

TheWeekly

P.O. Box 1329
Bangor, ME 04402
or drop by the front desk
Bangor Daily News
One Merchants Plaza, Bangor

GET STRONGER in 2016 – **GUARANTEED!**

SUPERSLOW ZONE
YOUR PREMIER PERSONAL WELLNESS & EXERCISE STUDIO

OPEN HOUSE
2-4 p.m. Saturday, April 2

Try it for yourself!
Discover the difference of a slow motion workout

Everyone Welcome! Refreshments!

CALL US TODAY: 307-7063



Total Body Workout

- Strength Training with Slow Motion Protocol
- Continuous Coaching with Certified Instructor
- Professional Service (Not a Gym)
- By Appointment Only

MAXIMUM RESULTS • minimum time
IN and OUT in 20 Minutes, 2 X/Week

693 Hogan Road, Bangor • sszbangor.com



WHOOPIE PIE CAFE
SANDWICH SHOP • BAKERY • CAFE

We Offer
SALADS • SOUP • PASTA
BIG SANDWICHES • GRILLED CHEESE

& OVER 30 FLAVORS OF WHOOPIE PIES!



Dinner Special
Dessert is on us.

FREE WHOOPIE PIE
with the purchase of a pasta meal
Valid from 4-7 Mon-Fri. Expires April 30, 2016.

Stop by!

347 WILSON STREET
BREWER
207.307.7433

621 HAMMOND STREET
BANGOR
207.947.6222

OPEN MONDAY – SATURDAY 10AM – 7PM
SUNDAY 10AM – 4PM