

Knoxville County Commission resolves a man who saved two children from a house fire

The small assembly room in the Knoxville City Council building was packed with citizens and public figures for the Knoxville County Commission meeting on February 22, 2022, at 5 p.m. The agenda was full this Thursday evening, discussing the future of the city, a Rural Metro fire department update, K-12 education plans and protocols, and the public's outward expression to lift the mask mandate in Knoxville schools.

Mr. Jeff Bagwell, the Public Information Officer for Rural Metro, delivered the update. Bagwell provided the monthly layout of all the types of cases the departments responded to in January 2022. The update also covered property loss percentages, the number of responses from some stations in Knox County, and education on fire safety through their YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRmakFcYO-7Vs7eggD7ar3g>.

Bagwell also touched on a statement made by Assistant Fire Chief, Rick Herrell, at the Powell Business and Professional Association luncheon. Herrell explained how overworked and tired the department was along with all other emergency services. Bagwell did note how much Rural Metro loves serving the Knoxville community, despite these hard times.

County Commissioner, Mrs. Terry Hill, expressed some solutions regarding the issue of the overworked fire department like as the push of firefighter training at the earliest age applicable.

“We are taking a lot of this training into our trade schools and our high schools now. We’re trying to have more of our students by the time they turn 18 or 21, whatever the age requirement may be, to have their certification to become a certified firefighter,” Hill said. “We also have to hire outside contractors to come in too and that’s not easy because everywhere is having a hard time.”

During the meeting, a few honorary resolutions were handed out to deserving community members. Mayor Glenn Jacobs and County Commissioner Hill made statements about why Mr. Mike Laws was being honored as a local hero.

On January 23, 2022, a fire started in the home of John and Melissa Cox where 7-year old, Eva Cox, and 14-year old, McKinley Cox were home alone. The girls were stuck in an upstairs bedroom where McKinley wrapped her younger sister in a blanket to protect her from the flames. The Karns fire department was called as several neighbors gathered around to try and see how they could help.

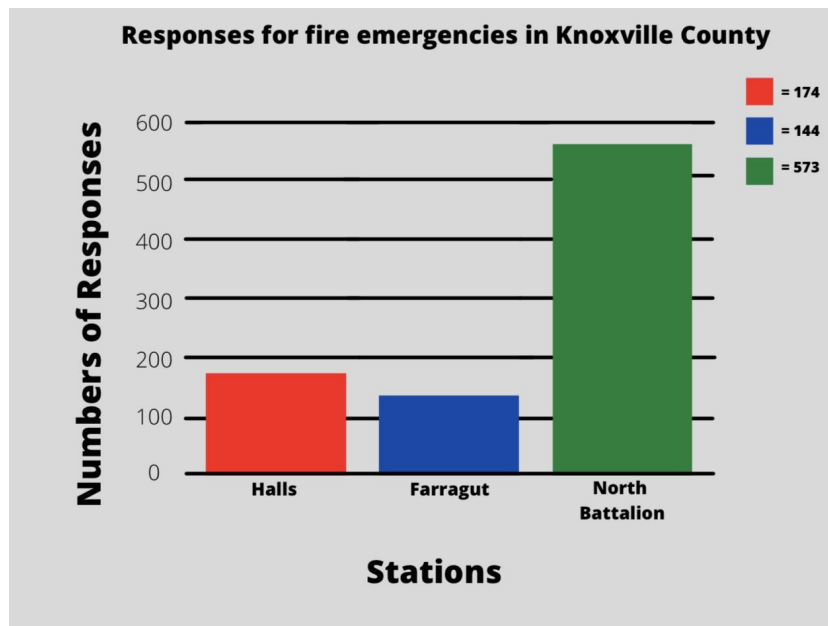
Notably, Laws put forth his best efforts to try to get the girls out by attempting to enter the house through the front door. He failed due to the immense amount of smoke and flames, but he was able to get a ladder from his garage and climb up to the second-floor bedroom window. The girls made it out safely thanks to Laws' bravery.

The Cox family, some of the neighbors present at the scene, and the Chief of the Karns fire department attended the meeting to present themselves. County Commissioner Hill read a statement from the [resolution](#) for Laws in order to commend him for his work.

“The Knox County Commission hereby honors Mr. Mike Laws for his courageous and heroic actions in rescuing two children from a burning home and extends its sincerest gratitude for his exceptional service protecting the lives of others.”

While Laws could not attend the meeting, Commissioner Hill was told by one of his friends that Laws is humbled and grateful for the recognition he received from the meeting and the Knoxville community.

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The number of responses to fire emergencies in Knoxville County in January 2022. Information provided by Mr. Jeff Bagwell.

