

# *TOWN OF WHITBY FALLEN FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL*

PROPOSAL



*SUBMITTED BY:  
WHITBY PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION  
IAFF LOCAL 2036*

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

Whitby Professional Fire Fighters' Association would like to propose a Fallen Firefighter Memorial be erected within our Town. This memorial would allow the families of our fallen firefighters, our fire service, and the citizens of Whitby, a chance to memorialize and honour those lost protecting our community.



Whitby Fire & Emergency Services Platoon Chief Randy Tureski

Whitby Professional Fire Fighters' Association would like to acknowledge and thank the Town of Whitby for their recent commitment to commemorate our fallen members through street names in an upcoming Brooklin development. However, through this proposal we hope to share with you the importance of a space to reflect on and recognize our members who have passed serving this Town.

As we continue, this report will provide the necessary information regarding a proposed fallen firefighter memorial.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The Town of Whitby has a strong and long-lasting tradition with its fire service. Since originating in 1851 as a volunteer organization, Whitby Fire & Emergency Services has evolved into a modern department, providing fire and emergency services, as well as public fire and life safety, to residents and visitors of the Town.

Whenever Whitby's firefighters arrive on shift, they and their families acknowledge and accept the risks they may be faced with that day, all in an effort to ensure protection and safety for our citizens. These are risks we willingly accept, to protect those we often do not know.

However, sometimes these risks are too great to overcome, and our fellow brothers and sisters end up paying the ultimate sacrifice for our community.

To date, Whitby Fire & Emergency Services and Whitby Professional Fire Fighters' Association have lost five members in the line of duty.



**Captain Michael Hutchings, 59.** Died February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010, after a ten-month battle with cancer he received serving the Town. Captain Hutchings served the citizens of Whitby for 26 years.



**Captain Michael Klein, 67.** Died February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, following a battle with presumptive cancer he received serving the Town. Captain Klein served the citizens of Whitby for 30 years.



**Platoon Chief Randy Tureski, 55.** Died April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017, following a battle with presumptive cancer he received serving the Town. Platoon Chief Tureski served the citizens of Whitby for 32 years.



**Chief Fire Prevention Officer Nicholas Webb, 57.** Died April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, following a battle with presumptive cancer he received serving the Town. Chief Fire Prevention Officer Webb served the citizens of Whitby for 5 years.



**Platoon Chief Robert Vesey, 87.** Died February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, following a battle with presumptive cancer he received serving the Town.

The loss of these men takes a heavy toll on their families, as well as the members of our Fire Service and Association. These harsh realities act as strong reminders of the potential devastation our profession can take on us and our families. These brave men gave everything for Whitby, and for this reason we believe it is only right to memorialize them for our community to honour and remember.

### 3.0 CONNECTION

A fallen firefighter memorial is an opportunity to honour and remember our Town of Whitby fire service employees, who have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Such a place would carry great significance and purpose, and directly align with our Town's Mission, Vision and Core Value statements.

**Mission:** *"Together we deliver services that make a difference in our community."*

Our Town's Mission Statement epitomizes the duties of our fallen members. Our colleagues provided the highest standard of service, to protect the great people of Whitby. However, regrettably, they died for this cause.

Our Town's Mission Statement also encompasses the importance of a fallen firefighter memorial. The introduction of a memorial *would* make a difference in our community. Having a place for reflection would be momentous to the public, families of the fallen, and our fire service.

**Vision:** *"Inspiring excellence through a culture where everyone is valued and respected."*

A fallen firefighter memorial also aligns with our Town's Vision Statement. The creation of a memorial publicizes the value and respect the Town of Whitby has for its fire service and their fallen members. By creating a fallen firefighter memorial, the Town would be announcing their appreciation for these brave firefighters.

**Core Values – W**hitby **E**mployees  
**C**ollaborate**A**ccountable**R**espectful**E**ngaged

The creation of a fallen firefighter memorial adheres explicitly to the Core Values our Town strives to epitomize.

**Collaborate:** *“Working together to achieve better outcomes.”*

Collaboration is a necessity as we continue our pursuit to eliminate line of duty deaths (LODDs). However, collaboration is also essential between our organizations as we endeavor to honour our fallen.

**Accountable:** *“Being responsible for my actions and for living our values.”*

Every firefighter who joins Whitby Fire & Emergency Services (WFES) and Whitby Professional Fire Fighters' Association (WPFFA) understands the risks involved with our profession. For this reason, WFES and WPFFA have created a culture of accountability and professionalism of the highest standard. However, these risks cannot always be evaded, and because of this, sadly, our members pay the ultimate sacrifice.

Accountability is also imperative for the Corporation of the Town of Whitby. The dangers of firefighting are well known, and so our Town is also responsible for the actions which take place within our fire service. It is understood that sometimes the dangers are too great to overcome, and for this reason, it is rightful to honour the employees that sacrificed all.

**Respectful:** *“Treating each other with mutual respect.”*

Respect is the foundation of a fallen firefighter memorial. A demonstration of gratitude is a must for our fallen firefighters. A fallen firefighter memorial is a chance for our Town to signify and publicize the respect it has for these members.

**Engaged:** *“Being an active participant to make this a great workplace.”*

Engagement applies to our current fire service. Through the creation of a fallen firefighter memorial, the Town would be showcasing their support for our fire service. A strong bond between a Town and its firefighters is essential for morale within its fire service. The creation of a fallen firefighter memorial would continue to strengthen this relationship.

Finally, the acronym **WE CARE** emulates the purpose of a fallen firefighter memorial. A demonstration of care for our fallen members and their families is precisely what we hope to achieve.



## 4.0 APPROACH

Throughout Ontario, councils, fire services and their firefighter associations have come together to erect memorials to honour their fallen. Examples of many of these memorials can be found throughout this proposal. These memorials showcase and legitimize the strong bond communities share with their fire service.

Often, these memorials are based on pre-existing fallen firefighter memorials, such as the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Fallen Firefighter Memorial, located in Colorado Springs, CO, or the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association (OPFFA) Fallen Firefighter Memorial, located in Toronto, ON.



IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial



OPFFA Fallen Firefighter Memorial

The Regional Municipality of Durham is unique in Ontario, as none of its cities with fulltime fire services have a memorial for their fallen firefighters. This is despite the fact there have been many LODDs across our region. Therefore, this gives Whitby the exclusive opportunity to be the first in the region to showcase their honour for these brave firefighters.

Prior to constructing a fallen firefighter memorial, there are many details to consider.

## 4.1 LOCATION

The right location of a fallen firefighter memorial is crucial to ensure the fallen receive the honour they deserve. A memorial of this kind would be ideally located in a secluded location, to allow for solemn and peaceful contemplation of those we have lost. We would want to keep the memorial to Town owned land, to keep the costs at a minimum. To do this, we could either add it to existing land, or partner with new land in current or future developments.

After reviewing our Town, some potential locations that could provide this solitude include:

### Whitby Town Hall

Whitby Town Hall offers the opportunity for solitude within the large green space behind the building. The Town Hall also offers great access and parking availability. This is our preferred location choice for the memorial. Council has recently invested in the site, with the previous renovations and expansion. Therefore, this demonstrates their desire to stay at this property, and so there would not be a need to move the memorial once built.



### Grass Park

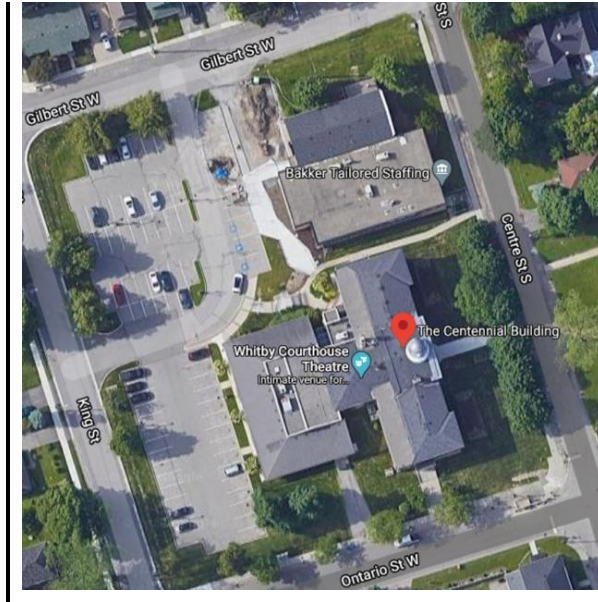
Grass Park offers a unique opportunity to construct a fallen firefighter memorial right in the heart of Brooklin. Erecting a memorial in Grass Park would allow for greater public attention, while still being secluded under the trees.





### Centennial Building

The Centennial Building offers solitude to the east, under a canopy of trees, and next to a quiet residential street. The Centennial Building is also very accessible and provides ample parking.



### Whitby Waterfront

The Whitby Waterfront offers many possible locations along Lake Ontario's shores, while still providing the solitude appropriate for the memorial. The waterfront also offers a wonderful natural backdrop in the form of the lake.



We have not included fire halls as a proposed option, due to the emotional connection tied to visiting a memorial. Hosting a fallen firefighter memorial at a fire hall may incite unwanted feelings for the visitors. As well, due to concerns regarding potential station relocations over time, as districts and service areas realign through Master Fire Plans, we would want to avoid the need to move the memorial.

## 4.2 DESIGN

The design of the memorial also influences its effectiveness. Included below are different design options to consider when erecting a memorial. A more visible location may increase the chance of attracting a prominent artist or design school to conduct the project at a lower cost, to increase their own publicity. However, the location and allocated budget would be the greatest factor in deciding what direction can be taken.

### 4.2.1 MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTION

There are many examples from neighbouring communities across Ontario of fallen firefighter memorials we can utilize to begin the design phase. Typically, these monuments are built using stone, cast brass or cast bronze.

#### Stone

Granite and marble are the most commonly used stone. They are both often used in cemeteries as grave markers with inscribed the names of those who have passed. These stones are instantly reminiscent of mourning and loss.



Kitchener, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### Cast Brass/Bronze

Cast brass or cast bronze is used more often when constructing an artistic scene and a 'larger than life' depiction of firefighting.



Ottawa, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial



### Combination Stone and Cast

Finally, both mediums used together can be very visually appealing.



North Perth, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

### 4.2.2 MEMORIAL HARDSCAPING

A memorial is more than a statue. The type of hardscaping that will surround the focal point should also be considered. Interlocking pavers and poured concrete are materials often used, and they allow for creativity in the design process. Often, the Maltese Cross, a symbol synonymous with the fire service, can be found under a memorial.

#### Poured Concrete



London, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### Pavers



Niagara Falls, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

### 4.2.3 MEMORIALIZING THE FALLEN

As our fallen firefighters' names are added to the memorial, they will need to be remembered individually. Commonly this is done by inscribing their name on the memorial. Additional details could include: years of service, date of passing, rank and/or age.



Welland, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

Additional ways of remembering our fallen firefighters can include:

#### Cast Helmet for Fallen Members



Kitchener, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial



#### Individual Plaques/Stones



Toronto, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial



Other design elements could also be added:

#### Lighting



Ottawa, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### Benches



Thorold, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### 'Last Alarm' Bell



St. Catharines, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### Flag Poles



Gravenhurst, ON Fallen Firefighter Memorial

#### Gardens



Sarnia, ON Fallen Firefighters Memorial Garden

### 4.3 THINGS TO CONSIDER

All aspects of the memorial will need to be maintained and material considered. Depending on the design of the memorial, this can include:

- Tending to gardens, trimming trees, cutting grass and clean/polishing the memorial.
- Possible graffiti concerns.
- The lifespan of the materials chosen.

## 5.0 COST

If this proposal is to be accepted, a location would have to be determined, followed by a budget, and finally a design. This could be completed by a committee struck together containing Town of Whitby, Fire Service and Fire Association members.

As Whitby is a smaller fire service, in comparison with some others across Ontario, it would not be expected to build an outlandish memorial. However, the budget allotted will dictate its scale. A detailed design and tender would be required before the true cost could be determined.

Cost arrangements between the Town of Whitby, Whitby Fire & Emergency Services, and Whitby Professional Fire Fighters' Association would also have to be agreed upon prior to purchasing.

Possible private monetary, land, memorial design, and landscaping donations would help to offset the cost of this project. As well, if a memorial were to be built on, or tied into an existing Town location, maintenance/upkeep may be negligible.

These are all conversations and arrangements which will need to take place should the decision be made to move ahead with our proposal.



## 6.0 SUMMARY

As the Town of Whitby and its fire service continues to grow, and the untimely passing of our brothers and sisters continues, a need for a fallen firefighter memorial is paramount. A place of refuge to memorialize, honour, and remember our members who have sacrificed everything for our community is deserved.

The citizens of Whitby, the families of the fallen, and our fire service brothers and sisters are in need of a space to reflect and bestow their respect to those who gave all.

Erecting a fallen firefighter memorial in Whitby would give our Town the unique opportunity of being the first city with a fulltime fire service, in the Regional Municipality of Durham, to have a memorial. This showcases to the public, Region, and Ontario, the respect our Town has for its fire service.

In closing, the chance to erect a fallen firefighter memorial in the Town of Whitby offers a special opportunity to display support, respect and offer commendation to our members and their families who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.



Whitby Fire & Emergency Services Chief Fire Prevention Officer Nicholas Webb