

# Acushnet Fire Chief Gallagher: "We can never lose sight of the reality that the pandemic did not treat all residents equally."

"A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF:

*"At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer, we remember them."- Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Reimer.*

"Sixteen months ago, a state of emergency was declared due to a novel virus spreading quickly across the world, country and state. In a few short weeks this virus made its way to Acushnet. There has been so much we lost, some things minor, some things major. No one was spared some direct impact from Covid 19.

"We can never lose sight of the reality that the pandemic did not treat all residents equally. Some became ill, many didn't. Some recovered quickly and completely, many haven't.

"And, fifteen residents of Acushnet, Massachusetts, died.

"The Acushnet Town Clerk, Pamela LaBonte, has received death certificates for 15 residents for whom it was determined that Covid was the cause of death. In the early days of the pandemic some death certificates cited pneumonia and other respiratory illnesses as the reason for death. All we are certain of is that, as of today, the official records show 15 residents lost to the virus.

"Acushnet is known as a close community. Our population of slightly more than 10,000 residents accommodates friendships,

strong neighborhoods and a sense of a really big extended family. We celebrate community successes and mourn community losses. We are, quite simply, aware that we are in this, that, and the other thing, together.

"The members of the Acushnet Fire & EMS Department want to do something that demonstrates our deepest sympathies, and that of this community, to the families of those local lives cut short by Covid. We want the families of our lost neighbors to know that we share in their grief. We want the families to know that we care.

"Beginning tonight, and lasting at least for the next few days, we will be illuminating 16 lights on the lawn of Fire Station #1. These lights represent the lives of the 15 known Acushnet Covid victims as well as one light for those whose Covid deaths are not officially documented.

"This temporary memorial is designed to be a simple, quiet and respectful reminder of the members of our community, all of whom had so much more to give to their families, their friends and neighbors, and their community. Their light was taken too soon.

"We hope the families and friends of those lost take comfort in knowing that all of Acushnet shares in their grief."-Chief Kevin A. Gallagher.