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City of Duluth - Fire Department

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DATE: 4/22/2023

SUBJECT: Fatal structure fire at 631 E Third Street

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Fatal structure fire at 631 E Third Street

At 5:59 am on Saturday, April 22, Duluth Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire at 631 E Third Street. Initial arriving companies were on scene in just over two minutes to find heavy smoke and a fire burning in a two-story, eight-unit apartment building. Firefighters rescued multiple occupants from the building both from the interior and from ladders outside the building. Other occupants were able to exit the building on their own. During the rescue efforts one second story occupant was removed from the building out a window and was given life-saving measures. The victim was transported to the hospital but was later pronounced deceased. During a second rescue effort in the same apartment multiple firefighters were forced to exit out a window to escape the room as it flashed over. The occupant they were attempting to rescue at the time unfortunately was later found deceased. Two firefighters sustained burns during the rescue effort and their protective clothing was significantly damaged. The victims' names are being withheld at this time. The building also had several house cats in the apartment units; DFD firefighters were able to rescue some of the cats but some perished in the fire.

The building sustained significant damage and much of the building's roof collapsed into the building during the fire.

Red Cross assisted in the effort to provide resources for those displaced by the fire. Duluth Police Department's D Shift was on scene assisting displaced occupants as well.

The two DFD firefighters that sustained injuries during the rescue effort were transported to urgent care for assessment and treatment and have since been released.

DFD Deputy Chief of Operations Mike Consie said of the effort, “This is a tragic and unfortunate event, and Duluth Fire Department wants to extend its condolences to the families who are displaced and to the family of those who were injured and lost their lives. We also want to thank DFD firefighters and their families for their ongoing sacrifice to the safety of Duluth residents.”

DFD Fire Chief Shawn Krizaj, who was at a training conference today, provided the following comments about the incident: “I would like to thank DFD staff for keeping me updated on today’s tragic fire in Duluth this morning. My condolences go out to the families of people who were injured or lost their home, or lost their lives in this catastrophic event. I am extremely proud of the efforts of our firefighters and all of our partner agencies. I know that we have two firefighters who sustained injuries while making rescue attempts. They were treated and released earlier today. I would like to express my thanks to them and their families for going above and beyond, sacrificing their own safety for service to our community.”

Thanks to the Duluth Police Department, the American Red Cross, the State Fire Marshal’s Office, and the City of Duluth’s Public Works Department for their work in assisting in the firefighting and rescue efforts on scene today.

Damage to the structure is still being assessed. The fire is under investigation by the Duluth Fire Marshal’s office with assistance from the State Fire Marshal’s office.

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