



“For Immediate Release”

Auburndale Police Department News Release

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Auburndale Police Department and Polk County Sheriff’s Office Investigating Fatal Plane Crash

At approximately 12:25 p.m. on Friday, December 17, 2021, Auburndale Police and Fire Departments were dispatched to a report of a small plane crash on Lake Arietta in Auburndale.

Officers and firefighters arrived to find a small fire still burning on the surface of the lake about 600 feet north of the south shoreline of Lake Arietta near the 2100 block of Kirkland Lake Drive. The plane is an amphibious type private airplane and it is locally registered. Witnesses described the plane as moving toward the south then making a turn toward the west, seeing the right wing dip, and then the plane entering the lake at a steep angle, catching fire when it hit the water.

The fire chief boarded a private boat with a local resident immediately after arriving at the call and attempted to locate survivors in the area of the crash. Shortly thereafter, several members of the fire department boarded the fire department’s rescue watercraft and also attempted to locate survivors. Unfortunately, they were only able to recover the body of a deceased adult white female from the lake.

Polk County Sheriff’s Office marine unit and aviation unit deputies arrived on scene and provided assistance to Auburndale officers and firefighters. As well, detectives from the Sheriff’s Office Homicide Unit provided assistance, assuming the investigation of the incident. They also notified the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board. Members of those agencies are on their way to the scene to conduct their investigations of the crash.

Somewhere around 4:00 p.m., PCSO divers recovered the body of an adult white male from the wreckage of the plane. The police department is not releasing the names of the victims at this time. Their identities must first be confirmed and then next of kin notifications must be made.

Updates will be provided as they become available.

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