

BROOKLYN FIRE AND EMS DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

AUGUST 2021



DRAFT

Strategic Plan Committee approved 8-10-2021

Commission approved 8-11-2021

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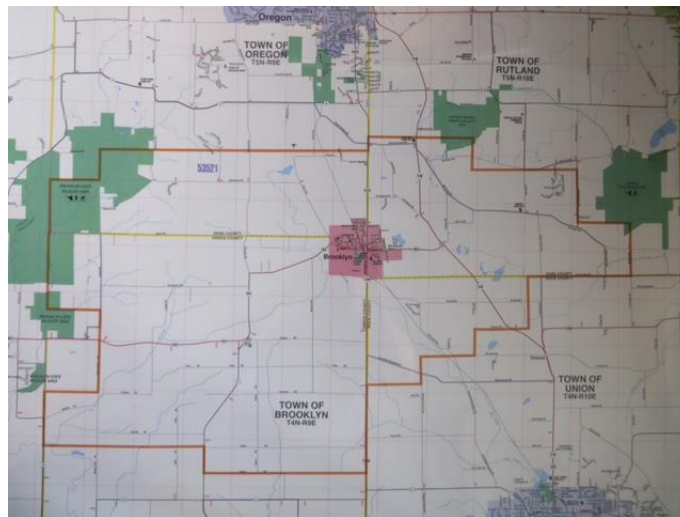
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Strategic Plan Chapter 1. District Profile.

The Brooklyn Fire and EMS District serves approximately 3,400 people in a 47 square mile area. The district includes the village of Brooklyn and portions of the adjacent towns of Brooklyn, Oregon, Rutland and Union. These five municipalities are in Dane, Green and Rock Counties.

The district is managed by a commission with one member appointed by each municipality.

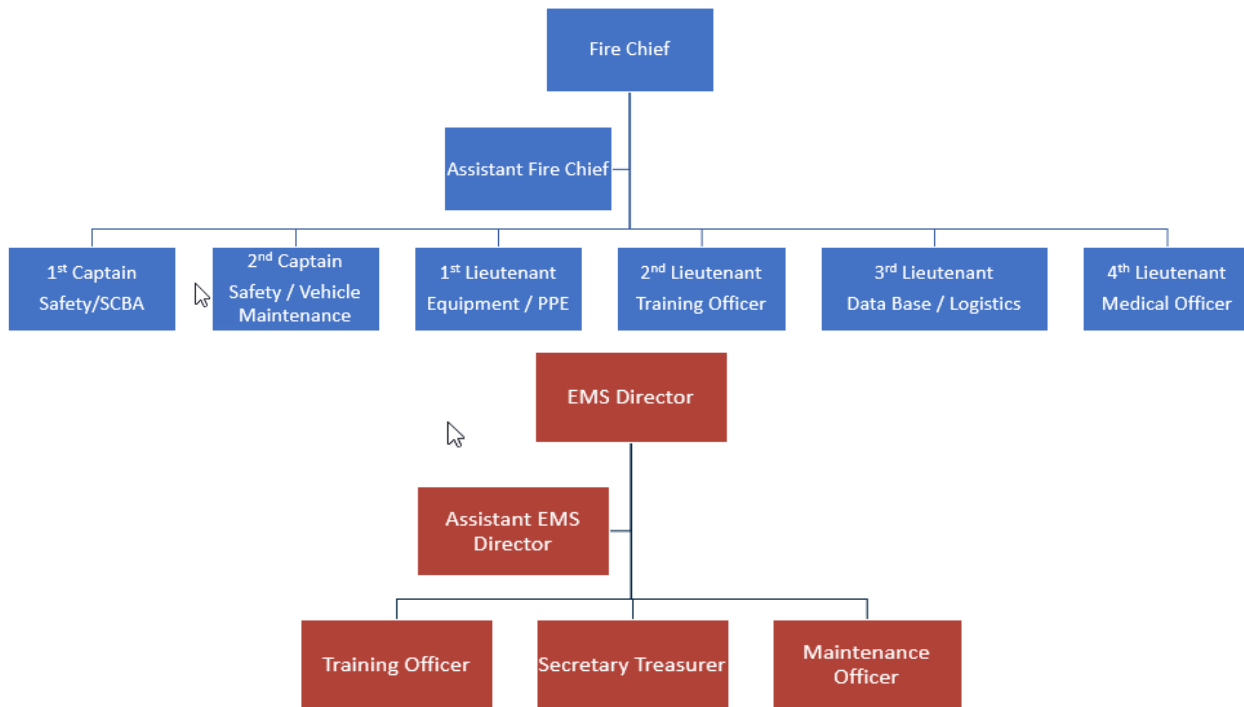


Staffing and Budgets

The district has 55 members. There are currently 27 firefighters and 28 Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Many of the firefighters are cross trained as either EMT's or Emergency Medical Responders (EMRs, previously called First Responders). Several EMTs are also cross trained as firefighters.

The Fire department is led by a Fire Chief and an Assistant Chief. The EMS department is led by an EMS Director and Assistant Director. These positions are selected by majority vote of each department's membership. The District Commission reviews the member's selection and, by majority vote, makes the appointments.

The Chief, Director and their Assistants are supported by nine officers with responsibility for training, vehicle maintenance, equipment, safety and other logistical matters. The Fire Department has two Captains and four Lieutenants. EMS has three officers. The positions are shown on the following org chart.



The 2021 district operating budget is \$459,934 of which \$196,876 supports the fire department and \$263,058 supports EMS. These figures do not include the cost of debt service for major capital purchases. Those costs have been transferred to the five municipalities capital budgets. Annual debt service in 2021 totaled \$101,722. The operating budget is funded by the five municipalities as specified in the district agreement. Fire department costs are based on each municipal share of equalized value. EMS costs are apportioned based on the share of population.

In 2018, a committee was formed to consider merger of the fire and EMS departments. In 2019, the committee recommended a reorganization of the officer positions that would reduce the number of officers from 13 to nine and place them under the management of a full-time fire chief. The reorganization is pending and will be addressed in this plan.

Annual Call Volume

Calls for service are dispatched by the Dane County Communications Center.

The Brooklyn Fire and EMS district responded to 283 calls in 2020 with 194 calls being dispatched as medical events, 72 as fire events and 17 as traffic accidents. The Fire department is often dispatched to assist EMS with medical calls; EMS frequently assists at fire calls. Both departments generally respond to traffic accidents.

The district responds to numerous calls outside the district boundaries. Of the 283 total calls in 2020, the district assisted with 59 calls in the village of Oregon and 14 calls in nine other jurisdictions.

Call trends

A review of call volume over four years (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) shows a consistent trend of medical calls leading with a 4-year average of 63% of total calls, fire averaging 26% and traffic accidents at 10%.

| | <u>Medical</u> | <u>Fire</u> | <u>Traffic</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 2020 | 194 | 72 | 17 | 283 |
| 2019 | 154 | 81 | 30 | 265 |
| 2018 | 132 | 64 | 29 | 225 |
| 2017 | <u>144</u> | <u>43</u> | <u>26</u> | <u>213</u> |
| Total | 624 63.3% | 260 26.4% | 102 10.3% | 986 |

Vehicle Equipment Inventory

The district owns 11 vehicles as shown below in order of year of manufacture. Six of the 11 are more than ten years old. In addition to these DMV registered vehicles, the district owns two off-road ATVs which do not require registration plates.

| | | | | | |
|------|------------|--------------|------|-----------|---------------|
| 1994 | Chevrolet | Utility | 2009 | Pierce | Pumper |
| 1996 | GMC | Tanker | 2015 | Ford | Ambulance |
| 1999 | H&S | Trailer | 2015 | Doolittle | Trailer |
| 2002 | Internat'l | Heavy Rescue | 2017 | Chevrolet | Silverado 4x4 |
| 2004 | Ford | Brush Truck | 2018 | Pierce | Tanker |
| | | | 2021 | Pierce | Pumper |

The district has historically replaced vehicles as they age out or when repair costs exceed a level that warrants earlier replacement. The district does not have a formal replacement schedule. Some of the municipalities have expressed a desire to develop a schedule so they can have more advance notice of potential large capital purchases.

Facilities

The district operates out of a single station located at 401 W. Main St., in the Village of Brooklyn. The station construction was completed in 2006.



Brooklyn Fire/EMS District Mission and Vision Statements and Profile

The purpose of our mission and vision statements and profile is to answer the following questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- For whom?

Why are creating a Strategic Plan for the Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District?

The Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District is embarking on a model of continuous improvement. The first step in this process is strategic planning. In doing so, we will connect the current version of our organization to what we believe we need to look like in order to meet the community's expectations. Along the way, goals and objectives included in the strategic plan will help us navigate that path. The fire chief's association and EMS associations universally recommend that ALL Fire & EMS Protection Districts have a strategic plan and continually update it to ensure they are meeting the needs of their residents in most effective way.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide the highest levels of emergency planning, fire protection and pre-hospital care to the residents of and visitors to the Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District. The quality of service will be maintained by strict adherences and dedication to the principles of:

SAFETY

We will make the public's safety and welfare, and the safety of our employees priority ONE.

COMMITMENT

We realize that our personal and professional reputations are evaluated with every call for assistance.

RESPECT

We will maintain respect for ourselves, the organization and the community as well as those in need of services, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, national origin or economic status.

HONESTY

We will exhibit honesty and integrity in all matters.

TEAMWORK

We will conduct ourselves in a professional manner to promote dedication, honor, and loyalty with our chosen profession.

EDUCATION

We will encourage an environment that promotes and emphasizes training, and adapts to ever changing dynamics and that after meeting our core educational and technical training needs encourages advanced education in the fields of fire and emergency medical services.

VISION STATEMENT

It is the vision of Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District Inc. to be progressive in all aspects and to provide the highest levels of service to the residents of and visitors to Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District Inc. by:

- Placement of station, equipment and personnel to meet the growing needs of the community;
- Adopting service standards that incorporate response times comparable to or better than the national average in rural, and suburban areas;
- Providing outstanding pre-hospital care that exceeds the routine standard of care;
- Assuring that residents and structures are safe and meet established codes through an aggressive inspection process;
- Providing the best possible planning, delivery of services and mitigation during times of disaster, either natural or manmade, regardless of magnitude;
- Providing an accurate, rapid and seamless exchange of information between the public and responders.

In order to fulfill this vision, we pledge to learn from our past, train for the present, and plan for the future.

CODE OF ETHICS

The members of the Brooklyn Fire & EMS Protection District Inc will:

Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, honesty, truthfulness and fortitude in all our public activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in public institutions.

Serve in such a way that we do not realize personal gain from the performances of our duties.

Avoid any interest or activity that is in conflict with the conduct of our official duties.

Support, implement, and promote merit employment and assure equal employment opportunity through the recruitment, selection and advancement of equaled persons.

Promote zero tolerance of all forms of discrimination, fraud, and mismanagement of public funds, and support efforts to correct such actions.

Serve the public with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the public is beyond service to oneself.

Strive for personal professional excellence and encourage the professional development of our members and those seeking to enter emergency services.

Approach our organizational and operational duties with a positive attitude and constructively support open communication, creativity, dedication and compassion.

Respect and protect the privileged information to which we have access in the course of our official duties. Promote the public interest.

Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and to administer the public's business with professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency and effectiveness.

Respect, support, study and when necessary, work, to improve federal, state, and local laws that defines the relationship among public agencies, employees, clients and all citizens.

Strategic Plan chapter 2. Survey Results Chapter.

Local Officials Survey

In April 2021, local elected officials were offered the opportunity to rate the Fire and EMS departments, separately, on key attributes on a scale of one to six, indicating poor to good. For planning purposes, an attribute scoring three or less would be considered a weakness; a score of four or better would be considered a strength.

The survey measured 56 fire attributes and 60 EMS attributes organized into 11 general categories: Administration, Organization, Station Facilities, Vehicles, Technology, Training, Response Metrics, Community Support, Personnel, Support Services and Health and Safety.

Of approximately 37 eligible elected officials, eight completed the Fire survey and seven completed the EMS survey.

At least one official chose “no opinion” for each attribute. As many as seven of eight chose that option on some questions reflecting a degree of unfamiliarity with district operation attributes.

Note: Two or more raters was the minimum for counting both poor or good ratings for any attribute. That is, if an attribute was scored either poor or good by less than 25% of respondents, the rating is not included in the summary that follows.

Detailed results are attached in Appendix 3.

FIRE Response summary:

Poor ratings (a score of three or less by two or more officials) were associated with the following attributes and the number of poor ratings: weekday daytime staffing (6); adequate fire crew number (4); base pay (4); incentives (3); appropriately trained crew (3); recruitment (2); staff retention (2); and district board support (2) adequate financial reserves (2); adequate borrowing authority (2). Twelve other attributes received one poor score each.

Good ratings (a score of four or better by two or more officials) were associated with all attributes except base pay, incentives and weekday daytime staffing which received zero good ratings; national support and debriefing, which received one good rating each.

EMS Response summary:

Poor ratings (a score of three or less by two or more officials) were associated with officer selection process (2); EMS out of service hours (2); base pay (3); weekday daytime staffing (3) and district board support (2).

Good ratings (a score of four or better by two or more officials) were associated with all attributes except: human resources, complaint and suggestion processing, reporting software, mentoring [all respondents expressed no opinion], hazmat, hazards, ISO rating, base pay, incentives, state support and national support.

District Fire and EMS Member Survey

The April, 2021 survey was also provided to firefighters and EMT personnel. Responses were received from 19 EMS members and 9 Fire members. Ratings by fewer than 25% of members were not included; a minimum poor score by 5 of 19 EMS members and 2 of 9 Fire members was required.

EMS Response summary:

Poor ratings (a score of three or less by five or more of 19 members) were associated with the following 13 attributes and number of poor ratings: experienced membership (5); mentoring (6); regional training (7); EMR (5); Out-of-service hours(5); national support (5); recruitment (6); retention (5); base pay (7); incentives (8); weekday evening staffing (6); weekend staffing (10) and medical director involvement (7).

Good ratings (a score of four or more by five or more members) were received for each of the 60 attributes.

No Opinion scores by 5 or more members were received for 15 of 60 attributes.

Fire response summary:

Poor ratings (a score of three or less by two or more of nine members) were associated with the following attributes and number of poor ratings: Weekday Staffing (7); Recruitment (6); Incentives (5); Storage (4); Officer Selection, Mentoring, Adequate Crew, Base Pay and Weekday Overnight Staffing (3 each); Human Resources, County Time Protocol, Weekend Staffing and Wellness Program (2 each).

Good ratings (a score of four or better by two or more of nine members) were associated with all but one of 60 attributes (Weekday Daytime Staffing with only one member rating it good).

No Opinion scores by 2 or more members were received for 12 of 56 attributes.

WIORH Survey

In 2015, the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health (WI-ORH) convened a national group of EMS leaders to create a mechanism to assess the operational capacity of EMS agencies. The goal was to create an assessment tool that could be used to identify needs so that resources could be targeted most effectively.

The mechanism became the “Attributes of a Successful Rural Ambulance Service”. In 2016, the WI-ORH implemented the assessment, measuring 18 operational traits that contribute to an effective and efficient service. The assessment was completed by 176 EMS services in Wisconsin. The results were organized in peer groups reflecting the size of the services assessed. Brooklyn EMS would fall in the category of Small Urban, defined as being less than 25 miles from a population center and having a population under 9,999.

While Brooklyn EMS was not part of the 2016 assessment, it is appropriate to make a current assessment based on the WI-ORH attributes. The assessment completed in February 2021 showed that Brooklyn EMS met or exceeded peer agency ratings in each of five main categories and 13 of 18 operational traits. The table below shows the results. Note the WI-ORH did not provide a grand-total tally the ratings for the main categories or operational traits. They did however provide average rankings for regional and statewide groups. The attributes are not weighted.

Attributes of a Successful Rural Ambulance Service. WIORH

Small Urban Category

| | Brooklyn EMS | South Central | State Wide |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Operations | 17 | 14.8 | 14.8 |
| Written call schedule | 4 | 4.2 | 4 |
| Continuing education | 3 | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Written policy and procedure manual | 5 | 4 | 3.9 |
| Incident response and mental illness | 5 | 2.9 | 3.1 |
| Financial | 9 | 8.8 | 8.5 |
| A sustainable budget | 4 | 4 | 3.8 |
| A professional billing process | 5 | 4.8 | 4.7 |
| Quality | 13 | 14.1 | 14.7 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Medical Director Involvement | 2 | 3.3 | 3.9 |
| A quality improvement/assurance process | 3 | 3.5 | 3.7 |
| Contemporary equipment and technology | 4 | 3.8 | 3.6 |
| The agency reports data | 4 | 3.5 | 3.5 |
| Public Relations | 14 | 11.8 | 11.7 |
| Community-based and representative board | 4 | 3 | 2.9 |
| Agency attire | 4 | 4 | 3.8 |
| Public Information, education and relations | 3 | 2.3 | 2.4 |
| Involvement in the community | 3 | 2.5 | 2.6 |
| Human Resources | 11 | 9.8 | 10.6 |
| A recruitment and retention plan | 4 | 2.6 | 2.5 |
| Formal personnel standards | 3 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| Identified EMS operations leader/succession | 3 | 2.4 | 3.1 |
| A wellness program for staff * | 1 | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| Total Points out of 90 possible | 64 | 59.3 | 60.3 |

*This attribute should have scored a 2. A score of 1 was for EMS services with no wellness program. A score of 2 can be given to services that make wellness brochures available. Wellness brochures are available in a rack near the front door. Adjusted total points are then 65 or nearly six points better than peer agencies in the region.

The detailed list of attributes and Brooklyn's scores are presented in Appendix 2.

The Survey measured attributes for EMS agencies only. However, many of the attributes can be applied to Fire Department operations as well. The Brooklyn Fire department side would score equally well on operations traits such as policies and procedures, finance, equipment and data reports. Areas needing improvement would also apply to Fire operations.

Public Opinion Survey

In May 2021, the general public was asked to complete a survey designed to measure public confidence and satisfaction with the district. Four questions presented residents with an

opportunity to jointly rate fire and EMS services. Rating confidence and satisfaction on a scale of one to six, residents could score the departments on issues of availability and promptness, proper training, courtesy and professionalism and overall level of support. A yes or no question on information availability was offered. Finally, residents who had received specific services were asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of one to six.

108 responses were received by the close of the survey on June 18. Respondents listed their residence as: Village of Brooklyn, 63 responses (58%); town of Brooklyn, 25 (23%); town of Oregon, 10 (9%); town of Union, 6 (6%); town of Rutland, 4 (4%).

Responses to the questions on the level of confidence can be summarized:

| | Poor (3 or less) | Good (4 or more) | Average score |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Available and Prompt | 9 | 99 | 5.07 |
| Properly Trained | 9 | 99 | 5.16 |
| Courteous/Professional | 4 | 103 | 5.59 |
| Overall level of support | 9 | 99 | 5.20 |

On the question of awareness of what information can be found on the Brooklyn Fire & EMS website, 64 respondents said they were aware (60%) and 43 said they were not aware (40%).

There were 107 respondents to the question of whether or not they had received services from Fire & EMS. 39 said they had received some form of service (36%) and 68 said they had not (64%).

Responses to the question on level of satisfaction with the service received (on a scale of 1: not at all satisfied, to 6: highly satisfied) can be summarized:

| | Poor (3 or less) | Good (4 or more) | Total | Avg score |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|-----------|
| Fire suppression – structure | 2 | 9 | 11 | 4.73 |
| Fire suppression – brush | 2 | 13 | 15 | 5.73 |
| Alarm / odor investigation | 2 | 12 | 14 | 4.79 |
| Gas leak | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4.13 |
| Fire inspection | 3 | 5 | 8 | 4.00 |
| Emergency medical service | 4 | 32 | 36 | 5.14 |
| Ambulance transport | 3 | 28 | 31 | 5.32 |
| Traffic accident | 2 | 6 | 8 | 4.00 |
| Overall quality of service | 4 | 96 | 100 | 5.24 |

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide written comments or recommendations on how to improve fire and emergency medical services in the district. Comments were received from 39 residents and 69 skipped the question.

Only 10 respondents offered specific recommendations or posed questions. These are:

“They need to be better funded. Lack of supplies at times due to lack of funding...”

“Please consider staffing more than basic EMT levels.”

“Minimum physical fitness standards.”

“Increase staffing numbers.”

“I would like to work with EMS to possibly develop a funding stream for well check after people are released from day surgeries. Medicare **or** private insurance. I believe often times these patients do NOT receive medical services from the providers same **or** next couple of days after procedure. Or the family is supposed to provide health care without any training.”

Provide funding for more paid personnel as the number of volunteers are harder and harder to get.”

“Combine the two departments into one.”

“Some need to drive slower when driving to the station...”

“I’d like more visibility into the budget and how the money is spent. Fire and EMS is a business and should be professionally managed as such.”

“Money seems to be an ongoing issue. Wondering if Oregon Fire/EMS could provide better coverage.”

“Give them more funding.”

These questions do not answer the stability of the organization to provide service with the next 5 to 10 years...is there going to be enough staff to continue a volunteer based system...with limited budgets.”

The full survey including all written responses is attached as appendix C.

Other Metrics

Measurable attributes not covered in surveys are available to consider in the plan. In particular, compliance with county standards for response times, comparisons with nearby peer agency staffing, budgets and performance standards should be established and monitored.

Response Times. In 2020, the average time for EMS from 911 page to enroute was 4.29 minutes. The average time from enroute to arrival was 6.17, which includes travel time to locations outside the district. The available Fire data shows the average time from alarm receipt to arrival at a scene was 11:26 in 2020. Again, the average includes time on calls outside of the district. In 2020, 26% of all calls were outside of the district boundaries. The response times are in compliance with county standards.

EMS Out-of-Service Hours. Weekday daytime EMS staffing continues to be a challenge. In 2018, the EMS began to gradually fill two weekday day shifts (6 am to 6 pm) with paid EMTs. This has significantly reduced the number of hours the ambulance is out of service. An EMT may still respond but cannot transport patients due to lack of a full crew. In those situations, Mutual Aid units, usually from the Oregon District, are available and respond. In 2019, EMS was out of service a total of 551 hours or 6.3% of the time.

Uncollectible EMS charges. In 2016, the district switched from in-house billing and collection to a commercial service. Records allowing a comparison between in-house and commercial results are not readily available.

The majority of claims (71% in 2019) are paid within 90 days. EMS had nine cases in 2019 where the account was over 180 days due. In 2020, a small majority of claims (54%) were billed to Medicare or Medicaid. The average revenue per call was \$493. Residents and non-residents are billed the same for transport, \$650 plus mileage. At scene only care is \$200. These rates are lower than other agencies in Dane County and could be revisited.

Comparison to peer agencies. Brooklyn Fire & EMS is the smallest service in Dane County in terms of population served, at 3,405 people. Nearby agencies are Belleville with 5,500; Oregon with 16,000; Stoughton with 18,800 and Evansville with an estimated 8,000. As a result, the district cost-per-capita of the EMS at \$59.64, is higher than all but four other services in Dane County.

The fire department levy, translated to a per-capita rate, is \$57.82. There is no data readily available on other area fire department's per capita cost.

The combined annual per-capita cost for the Brooklyn district is \$117.46 or about 32 cents per day or \$9.79 per month per person.

Most Dane County EMS services have at least two ambulances. The others running only one ambulance are Cross Plains and District One serving northwest Dane County.

The annual Dane County EMS Association Survey has additional peer information that should be reviewed by the commission every year. The WIORH survey data noted earlier should be updated when possible.

Management Interviews

The Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, EMS Director and Assistant EMS Director were asked to provide input on topics and attributes not covered in surveys or reviews of other metrics. The Fire Chief discussed additional issues with the strategic planning committee on July 7, 2021.

Apparatus/Equipment. The EMS Director believes a new replacement ambulance will need to be ordered within two years and will add it to the proposed vehicle replacement schedule when it is prepared for the commission's approval.

Inventory radio equipment and evaluate assignment needs.

Explore technology to replace pagers with a more reliable notification system.

Facilities. It may be possible to add two new beds to the living quarters by using a portion of the exercise room.

Review options for training props, especially for ladder training.

Purge old records from the records storage room per Historical Society guidance.

Technology. Review options for Fire Department scheduling software.

Review software options for tracking certifications to replace current paper system.

Improve use and management of the website.

Develop an inventory of properties needing twice-annual inspections. Update with additional rural properties not currently inspected.

Update Standard Operating Procedures on a regular schedule, a minimum of two per year.

Emergency Response. Require a quarterly report on response times compared to county protocols.

Consider setting schedules for Fire shifts and look at appropriate scheduling software.

Personnel. Consider starting an internship program for high school age members.

Set standards for a probation period for new members and officers.

Require an annual performance review for members and officers.

Survey infrequent responding members for future availability.

Training. Determine need for refresher training in Incident Command System protocols.

Health and Safety. Consider physical exams or screening for new members.

Schedule more member and family events including regular award dinners.

Employee Assistance Program staff will present services summary this year.

Continue and improve critical incident debriefings.

Support Services. Review current billing rates for EMS to maintain parity with peer services.

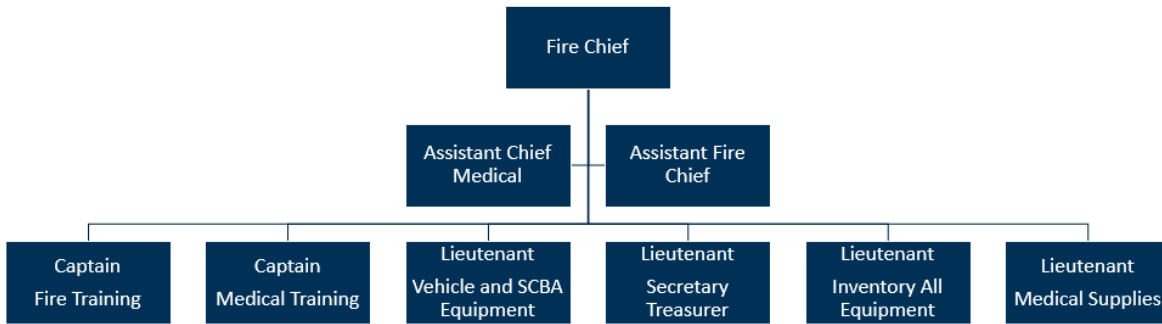
Explore options for implementing service fees for fire calls.

Review options for more aggressive collections through state TRIP program.

Committee Studies

Over a one-year period in 2018 and 2019, members of the Fire and EMS departments met to discuss ways to better integrate the two services. A Merger Committee identified and discussed the pros and cons to a merger of operations and personnel.

The committee recommended a restructuring of management, but retention of two different departments. The management structure would reduce the number of officers from 13 to nine.



District Commission

Full Time Chief. In developing the 2021 district budget, the commission recommended hiring a full-time fire chief to manage both the Fire department and the EMS department. The commission determined that a full-time chief with oversight of both departments would improve coordination between the two. The chief would be able to cover 32 hours of EMT shifts each week at an annual savings of \$23,040 and work reassignment savings of \$8,750. The reduction in the number of officers would save \$21,400. With those savings the net cost of a full-time chief would total \$29,876.

Fire Call Fees. The commission is considering the option of assessing a fee for certain fire calls, particularly calls on state and federal highways where uncollectable fees can be reimbursed by the state. State law currently requires that any fee enacted after 2013 must be offset by an equivalent property tax reduction by the municipalities, based on estimated revenue. This is impractical for a district serving five municipalities. Area legislators should be made aware of the situation and asked to consider changes in state law.

By-laws. Both the Fire and EMS departments have adopted by-laws. Among other things, the by-laws contain position descriptions for officers including Captains, Lieutenants and others. The commission could consider folding these department by-laws into the district agreement.

Strategic Planning. Require monthly, quarterly and annual reports on progress toward goals set in this plan. Where appropriate, set deadlines for specific goals.

Plan Chapter 3. Strengths and Weaknesses.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths and Weaknesses in this section are based on results of the surveys, follow-up interviews with officers, standard metrics and committee reports.

Administration

Strengths:

The district had audits performed in 2017 and 2019. Both were clean audits that showed no irregularities. The 2017 audit recommended a two-person review process for bill payments, banks statements and credit card use. Insurance on banks deposits was noted as potentially inadequate. A two-person review was implemented in 2018 and deposit insurance was increased in 2020 to cover the total amount on deposit.

District budgets are adhered to. Adequate financial reserves are maintained. Standard operating policies are in place. Both departments have associations with 501 (c)(3) status for fund raising.

Weaknesses:

The district management is divided between the two departments. The Fire Chief and EMS Director operate independently. The 2019 study committee recommendation to reorganize management under a full-time Chief with fewer officers has not been implemented. The commission approved the proposal, but it was not adopted at the joint municipal meeting in September, 2020.

The Fire and EMS associations (non-profit organizations incorporated under state law) maintain by-laws that, among other provisions, set out duties of officers. These could be incorporated into the district agreement.

There is no requirement for periodic strategic planning or for updating a plan or reporting progress.

Apparatus/equipment

Strengths:

The district's 11 vehicles are adequate for current needs. The 2021 pumper (Engine 2) was carefully designed for flexibility in ability to respond to all type of calls. Preventive maintenance schedules are maintained.

The Fire department cooperates with neighboring departments on equipment for water rescues.

Weaknesses:

The district does not have a long-term schedule for vehicle replacements.

There is no requirement for municipalities to consult with the district when making plans for business park tenants or other land use plans that may impact equipment needs.

Pagers may not be the best system for notification as technology evolves.

Facilities

Strengths:

The current 2006 station is generally adequate for current needs. The land footprint allows for future expansion.

Weaknesses:

Storage was cited as less than adequate in the member survey.

Technology

Strengths:

The officers have adequate computer assets. The reporting software is up to date.

Weaknesses:

The department web site and Face Book presence are not used to the fullest potential. New software is needed to improve tracking of licenses, certifications, inspections and inventory.

Emergency Response

Strengths:

Staffing is critically low in both departments. Weekday daytime coverage has greatly improved with the hiring of part-time paid EMTs.

Response times currently meet the Dane County protocol minimums.

Weaknesses:

Response times could be improved on.

The Fire department does not maintain an on-duty shift schedule of personnel. The Chief does not know how many members will respond to a call and the number who do is dropping.

There is no routine reporting of response times or investigation of problems with meeting protocols.

Personnel

Strengths:

Personnel are capable, well trained and respected by the community.
The department's

Weaknesses:

The number of trained members has remained flat despite gradually rising call volume.
Survey returns suggest that the level of base pay is not adequate.
Recruitment is not always an on-going priority.
State training requirements are viewed as discouraging new members.
There are no standards for probation and no annual performance reviews.
Officer responsibilities are not annually reviewed.

Training

Strengths:

All members meet state required training levels.
There are regularly scheduled training dates.
Inter-agency training is routine.

Weaknesses:

Incident Command System training may need refreshed.

Health and Safety

Strengths:

Personnel have adequate PPE and are trained to use the equipment.
Incident debriefings are held for critical situations.

Weaknesses:

There is no program for comprehensive physical exams.
New recruits do not get physical exams or screening.
The Employee Assistance Program is lightly used.

Support Services

Strengths:

The district commission has knowledgeable, long-term members.

The district secretary/treasurer has more than adequate training and credentials.

The EMS billing agency is thorough and has reduced the amount of uncollectible charges.

Weaknesses:

The Medical Director is viewed as being less involved than is ideal.

State law prevents the implementation of service fees for calls.

The State TRIP program could potentially improve collections of overdue accounts.

Strategic Plan Chapter 4. Goals and Strategies.

Administration

Implement the management structure recommended by the merger study committee.

Hire a full-time Fire Chief to improve coordination between Fire and EMS.

Rename the departments as divisions to reflect that this is one district providing both fire and EMS services and not two separate departments.

Incorporate department by-laws into the district agreement. For example, the by-laws have position descriptions for all officers; the agreement only spells out duties for the Chief, Director and the two Assistants.

Assign an officer the duty of records management with the authority to recommend an annual purge of obsolete records per the agreement with the State Historical Society.

Schedule an annual report on the goals established in this Chapter.

Apparatus/equipment

Develop a long-term vehicle replacement schedule.

Facilities

Reconfigure storage for turn-out gear.

Evaluate options for expanding living quarters.

Review structural options for ladder training.

The records storage room needs to be purged in accordance with the policy established in 2019 and approved by the State Historical Society.

Technology

Assign social media responsibilities to an officer.
Post on line all commission meeting agendas, minutes and district budgets.
Review new software requirements and options.
Inventory properties for fire inspection and set a schedule.
Schedule updates to Standard Operating Procedures.

Emergency Response

Response time could be improved by assigning a radio-equipped response vehicle to officers on a rotating schedule. The vehicle would be taken home at night for rapid response to Dane Communications pages. It would be the first at the scene and the officer would be able to assess the situation and convey equipment and personnel needs.

Report quarterly on response times based on county protocols and requirements.

The Fire Chief should consider a scheduled shift system to assure adequate personnel are available for all calls.

Personnel

A full-time Fire Chief could devote more time to making recruitment and retention a priority. The department can access the State data base of licensed EMTs and do an annual mailing to EMTs in select zip codes inviting them to consider volunteer and paid positions.
A full-time Fire Chief will provide supervision of day-time paid staff and provide coverage for the second daytime position.

Consider an increase in base pay and other incentives.
Consider a formal mentoring process.
Develop an internship / explorer program.
Set standards for a probation period for new members.
Annually, determine member availability.

Training

Pursue more inter-agency training opportunities.
Schedule member and family events and award options.
Consider refresher courses in Incident Command System protocols.
Improve critical incident debriefings.
Encourage use of the Employee Assistance Program.

Health and Safety

Consider requiring annual physical exams or screenings.
Consider physical exams or screenings for new members.
Improve wellness program effort by seeking professional advice.

Support Services

Eliminate the requirement for an annual meeting of all elected officials or amend the agreement to allow a municipality to send as few or as many officials or appointees as they wish. Further amend the agreement to make it clear that a municipality has one vote no matter the number of officials at the meeting.

Consider requesting legislation to allow service fees for fire calls. Review EMS billing rates annually.