

DEC 23 2024

LORI GUMMOW

NORTHWEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT****1. UNIT OF GOVERNMENT SUBMITTING THIS REPORT**

NORTHWEST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THE FIRE DISTRICT

- A. We are located at 3222 North Central Ave., Rockford, Illinois.
- B. Our Fire Protection District is located in WINNEBAGO COUNTY and covers about approximately 17 square miles serving a population of roughly 14,000 people.
- C. Our Board of Trustees is comprised of three members.
- D. Our Fire Protection District consists of approximately 2 part time paid staff members (Chief and Deputy Chief) and roughly 20 volunteer firefighters, with approximately 10 of those firefighters certified as EMT-B's.
- E. Our budget for the 2024/2025 fiscal year is \$1,443,040.00, such amount includes cash reserves and potential annual receipts from all sources.
- F. Our Fire Protection District's 2023 tax levy distributed in 2024 is \$452,672.72.

3. INFORMATION ABOUT OUR COMMITTEE

- A. COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Jerry Caskey (Committee Chair), Charles Barnes, Matthew Lawrence, Gregory Gill, Greg Castronova and Jason Bonomo
- B. DATES THAT OUR COMMITTEE MET: 4/16/23; 6/12/23; 9/19/23; and 4/26/24. A survey of the public was conducted as part of each meeting per the requirements of the Act, with no persons giving any input.

4. PROGRAMS OFFERED BY OUR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

- A. Our District offers the following services and programs:
 - 1. Respond to building, vehicle, grass/brush/field fires.
 - 2. Respond to activated fire and carbon monoxide alarms.
 - 3. Respond to motor vehicle accidents, providing extrication services if necessary.
 - 4. Respond to EMS calls, providing First Responder level care (EMT-B), non-transport service at this time.
 - 5. Provide mutual aid assistance to co-members of MABAS.
 - 6. Provide public relations and fire safety/prevention services to area church organizations.

- B. Other services/programs we could possibly provide:
 - 1. None at this time with the current volunteer staffing arrangement. We would like to do a Community Risk Reduction Program if/when we have the staff to accommodate that. Additionally we have just purchased an ambulance for transport, lift assist, and other Fire Standby services and mutual aid as needed.

5. SERVICE/INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

- A. Mutual Aid Box Alarm System - Illinois Member: As a member, the District is part of a multi-state mutual aid group, which can provide mutual aid assistance across all disciplines of the fire service and EMS. this could be in the form of manpower, equipment, special response teams and etc. Regionally, we are a member of MABAS Division 8, which consists of Fire and EMS agencies from 23 Fire Districts in the surrounding communities. Our residents have benefited from these agreements by having a pre-planned, readily available, no cost, mutual aid solution made up of several departments or districts and their personnel across the area. Additionally, part of the value of participating in mutual aid, is that it is a training efficient experience.
- B. Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement Northwest and North Park Fire Protection Districts regarding use of North Park radio infrastructure for the purposes of utilizing their radio frequencies for fire/EMS dispatch, paging and response.
- C. Intergovernmental Agreement with Winnebago County Sheriff for dispatch service was put into place in 2024.

6. We have reviewed the following in performing the Committee's duties under the Act.

Annual Calendar Checklist

It was found that the District is actively addressing each item on the IAFFPD Calendar recommendations, and seeking improvements where necessary.

Review of the most recent Budget and Appropriation Ordinance

It was found that the Budget is being prepared on time and that the Budget is reflective of the District's actual spending.

Review of Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)

It was found that the District is in compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Review of the most recent Tax Levy

It was found that the Levy is based on the needs of the District while the District strives to control costs, realizing the tax burden on it's constituents.

Review of Audit Procedures

It was found that the District is in compliance with ILCS statutes regarding Audits and financial reports. The financials are reviewed yearly, and a fiscal year Audit is being performed annually by an independent party and filed as required with the Illinois Comptroller's office.

Review of Current ISO rating (insurance services)

It was found that the current ISO rating for the department is 7 in regard to one property and 5 for the other. These ratings reflect good standing for the district.

Review of the location, condition and adequacy of the District's physical facilities

The District serves it's constituents from 2 buildings. The facilities, although well maintained, are currently insufficient for the District needs, and potential expansion options are being explored to best meet the District's needs while making the most efficient use of tax dollars to accommodate such need.

Review of the District's inventory of fire apparatus and other emergency vehicles

Much discussion took place regarding the efficient utilization of fire apparatus and when it is best to keep used equipment or purchase new when the time arises. It was found that much attention is devoted to the needs and condition of vehicles and fire apparatus and that the inventory of vehicles and fire apparatus is being upgraded as needed, and where possible grants are utilized to assist with funding of such needs.

Review of PPE and SCBA equipment, radio and communication equipment, and rescue gear/related equipment

It was found that the equipment is sufficient and is updated as needed to provide adequate protection to the District's firefighters. As with fire apparatus and emergency vehicles, grants are sought after where applicable, and discussions have taken place regarding the possibility of utilizing interest free loan programs that may be available

Water Supply

The water for the tankers and engines is supplied by area fire hydrants and have always been sufficient for our needs.

Dispatching Services

Dispatching Services are currently contracted for with the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department, which has been found to be the most efficient and effective method for emergency dispatch at this time.

Schedule of all of our regular FPD meetings for the calendar or fiscal year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)

Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)

Designation of FOIA Officer: There is currently no specific FOIA Officer designated. This is being addressed at an upcoming meeting.

FOIA Officer Training: Will take place when the FOIA Officer has been appropriately designated.

Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests: There is a suitable system in place for the handling and retention of FOIA requests.

All of our Officials required to have filed their statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A).

Sexual harassment prevention training (755 ILCS 5/2-109c)

Sexual harassment prevention training is conducted in January each year and is up to date.

After examining each of the foregoing areas, the committee has determined that with it's available resources, the Northwest Fire Protection District is providing the most adequate fire and ambulance service it can at this time with the staff and resources it has.

Upon Review:

1- Areas of District's greatest strengths and efficiencies:

Dedicated group of volunteer firefighters and staff.

Quality leadership from the Officers.

The Buildings and equipment are frequently being evaluated and are well maintained.

There is good response times and coordination with other departments for Mutual Aid.

The District is financially stable.

Policies and procedures are in place and up to date to keep up with current requirements.

Firefighters clean their buildings and equipment as volunteers at no cost to the District.

Much attention is given to areas of financial management and efficiency.

Some trustees on the Board have had prior fire service experience, which has been noted by the committee to be efficient as to understanding the needs of the District.

2- Areas of District's deficiencies/challenges:

Future recruitment of volunteers is getting more difficult.

Inflation and need for enough income to pay additional part time staff in order to more efficiently and effectively accommodate the needs of the community we serve.

The Committee concluded that: The District has strived to keep up with the demands for service to their community as resources allow. The Trustee Board is very supportive and does their best to evaluate needs that are presented to them and address those needs in the most efficient way possible. Leadership staff spend time pursuing quality low cost options to address needs as they arise, including pursuing grant opportunities and low/no interest loan programs that may be available. Inflation and staffing remain particular concerns and the District staff and Trustees remain vigilant in pursuing solutions to these and other issues as they arise.

Upon submission of this report, the committee is dissolved in accordance with the Act.