



Village of Thiensville
Southern Ozaukee Fire &
EMS Board
AGENDA

Date:
Wednesday, March 12, 2025

LOCATION: 250 Elm Street, Thiensville, WI

Time: 5:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Mequon

Mayor Andrew Nerbun

Administrator Will Jones

Alderman Greg Bach

Alderman Dale Mayr

Citizen Lynn Streeter

Thiensville

President John Rosing

Trustee Kristina Eckert

Administrator Landisch-Hansen

Citizen Doug Chimenti

Alternate Trustee David Lange

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 8, 2025 (att)

IV. PERSONAL APPEARANCES AND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Personal Appearances and Public Comment: Citizens wishing to address the SOFD Board on any matter not on the agenda may do so at this time. If you desire to be heard on agenda items, you may be heard when that item is considered on the agenda. The time limit is FIVE minutes.

V. FINANCE

A. Review and Action Regarding the 2024 Financial Statement Audit Prepared by Baker Tilly Kirchow Krause, LLP (att)

B. Review and Action Regarding Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department Financial Policies (att)

VI. PERSONNEL

- A. Review and Approve the Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Employee Manual (att)

VII. OPERATIONS

- A. Cedarburg Joint Response Plan (att)
- B. Review and Action Regarding Regarding Ladder Truck Fleet and Usage (att)

VIII. GOVERNANCE

- A. 2025 Workplan Update and Action Items (att)
- B. Review and Action Regarding Strategic Planning Update and Stakeholders List (att)

IX. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

- A. Review Personnel Evaluation of the Fire Chief: The Board may convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(c), considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility and then may reconvene into open session to take such action as deemed appropriate.

X. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

- A. Possible Action Regarding Closed Session Topic

XI. REVIEW DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- A. May 14, 2025

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Colleen Landisch-Hansen, Village Clerk

March 7, 2025

Please advise the Thiensville Municipal Hall, 250 Elm Street (262-242-3720) at least 24 hours prior to the start of this meeting if you have disabilities and desire special accommodations.



Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Board
MINUTES
DATE: Wednesday, January 8, 2025
LOCATION: 250 Elm Street, Thiensville,
WI
TIME: 5:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Rosing called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

II. ROLL CALL

Mequon

Mayor Andrew Nerbun

Administrator Will Jones

Alderman Greg Bach

Alderman Dale Mayr

Citizen Lynn Streeter

Thiensville

President John Rosing

Trustee Kristina Eckert

Administrator Landisch-Hansen

Citizen Doug Chimenti

Alternate Trustee David Lange

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. November 13, 2024 (att)

MOTION to Approve by Alderman Mayr **SECONDED** by Alderman Bach. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

IV. PERSONAL APPEARANCES AND PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Personal Appearances and Public Comment: Citizens wishing to address the SOFD Board on any matter not on the agenda may do so at this time. If you desire to be heard on agenda items, you may be heard when that item is considered on the agenda. The time limit is FIVE minutes.

None

V. GOVERNANCE

A. 2025 Workplan (att)

Chief Bialk provided an update on the 2025 work plan, including the employee handbook and financial policies.

Chief Bialk noted that comments from the Board regarding the handbook had been received and that the financial policies had been reviewed by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP.

Alderman Mayr inquired if Chief Bialk could provide a breakdown to the Board on items that will be brought before the Board in upcoming meetings ahead of the actual meeting itself.

Chief confirmed a breakdown is something that could be provided going forward.

Citizen Chimenti asked for clarification regarding the difference between the Commission Handbook and what is present in the Employee Manual.

Chief Bialk and Justin Schoenemann explained that the purpose was to place all the Commission's routine processes and more infrequent duties in one centralized location for ease of reference.

B. Strategic Planning Update (att)

Chief Bialk began by introducing the new SOFD Battalion Chief, Amy Boll who was in attendance.

Chief Bialk shared that the dates for the Strategic Planning session have been set for the May 1st and 2nd, 2025, and will be held at the River Club in Mequon. This venue was selected because one of the Board members is a member of the Club, allowing the room to be used free of charge.

Chief Bialk provided a list of potential attendees and solicited the Board to recommend any additional individuals that should be present. The Board agreed to submit recommendations to Chief Bialk by a January 31, 2025.

Citizen Streeter emphasized the importance of inviting strategic thinkers, not just operational thinkers, and balancing the group with diverse perspectives.

Citizen Streeter also recommended that a letter of invitation be sent by both Mayor Nerbun and President Rosing to potential attendees.

Citizen Streeter also offered to interview any invitees unable to attend in order to still have their input considered.

VI. FINANCE

A. Q4 Financial Report (att)

Reference attached files "Q4 Financial Report", "Prelim 2024 Expenses", & "Ambulance Revenue 2023.2024"

Chief Bialk summarized the Q4 Financial Report.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen inquired if the \$1.3 million number referenced for intake includes what is collected in early 2025 but is recorded as 2024 revenue.

Chief Bialk believed that it was included.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen further inquired if it was possible that the \$250,000 used as the projected amount to be moved back to 2024 was being counted twice.

Chief Bialk offered to review the numbers again to confirm if that was the case.

B. Financial Policy Review (att)

Reference attached files "Financial Policy Review & SOFD FINANCIAL POLICIES- 2025 - AJN comments"

Chief Bialk summarized the financial policy for review.

The Board agreed to a January 31, 2025 deadline to provide feedback on the Financial Policy to Chief Bialk.

The Board will consider adoption of the Financial Policy at the March meeting.

VII. OPERATIONS

A. Review and Approve Updated Paramedic Agreement with Cedarburg (att)

Chief Bialk summarized the updated Paramedic Agreement with Cedarburg and noted that a past billing discrepancy had led to the charges not adding up to the actual activity of the Department.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen inquired if the \$8,000 difference in the agreement made up the discrepancy for past billing discrepancy.

Chief Bialk answered that yes, that was the agreed-upon amount to correct the error.

Citizen Chimenti asked how many transports the SOFD carried out in 2024.

Chief Bialk replied that there were 582 requests, but that there was no data on the actual number of transports made.

MOTION to Approve Updated Paramedic Agreement With Cedarburg by Alderman Mayr **SECONDED** by Alderman Bach. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

B. Year End Report and Report Statistics (att)

See attached file "Year End Report Statistics 2024" for reference

Chief Bialk summarized the 2024 year end statistics.

Citizen Streeter asked about how many of the calls were for senior living facilities.

Chief Bialk said that data was not available and he would not want to speculate.

Citizen Streeter asked if in future calls could be broken down into more detail to help inform future planning and resource allocation.

Chief Bialk noted that only 596 hours of uncovered time which is about .09% of the total hours for the year.

VIII. PERSONNEL

A. Review and Approve Employee Manual (att)

The Board agreed to a January 31, 2025 deadline to provide feedback and the Manual will be

reviewed again in March 2025.

MOTION to Table Approval of Employee Manual by Citizen Chimenti **SECONDED** by Alderman Mayr. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

IX. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

MOTION to Adjourn to Closed Session at 6:34 PM by Citizen Chimenti **SECONDED** by Citizen Streeter. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

A. Review Personnel Evaluation of the Fire Chief: The Board may convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 19.85(1)(c), considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility and then may reconvene into open session to take such action as deemed appropriate.

Roll Call Vote

Aye: Nerbun, Bach, Mayr, Streeter, Rosing, Eckert, Chimenti

No: none

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

X. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

MOTION to Reconvene in Open Session at 8:16 PM by Alderman Bach **SECONDED** by Citizen Chimenti. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0

A. Possible Action Regarding Closed Session Topic

None

XI. REVIEW DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A. March 12, 2025 at 5:30 PM

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to Adjourn at 8:16 PM by Alderman Mayr **SECONDED** by Mayor Nerbun. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 7

No: 0

Abstain: 0



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
Emergency Medical Services Department
11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-2530
(262) 242-5042 Fax

TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: 2024 Fiscal Audit

Background

A financial audit of the Southern Ozaukee Fire Department for fiscal year 2024 was included in the 2025 budget. Baker Tilly was contracted to conduct the audit which was performed over three days in the last week of January. Since the audit there has been follow-up correspondence with Baker Tilly to discuss open items along with an engagement with Foster & Foster to create an Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) report.

The OPEB are benefits that are owed to an employee after they leave the organization. These benefits for SOFD include health insurance and sick leave conversion. The valuation of the benefits helps the department understand our future costs and plan our finances. The valuation also makes the department compliant with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) accounting standards. The OPEB may not be available at the time of the audit presentation, however Baker Tilly can still present the audit with or without the information.

Analysis

Baker Tilly will present the 2024 SOFD Annual Fiscal Audit on March 12, 2025. Any written materials related to the audit that become available prior to the meeting will be distributed to the Board.

Fiscal Impact

None

Recommendation

None

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department

**Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS
Department**

Financial Statements and
Supplementary Information

December 31, 2024

	<u>Page</u>
Independent Auditors' Report	1
Basic Financial Statements	
Government-Wide Financial Statements	
Statement of Net Position	3
Statement of Activities	4
Fund Financial Statements	
Balance Sheet - Governmental Fund	5
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances - Governmental Fund	6
Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances of Governmental Fund to the Statement of Activities	7
Notes to Financial Statements	8
Required Supplementary Information	
Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance - Budget and Actual - General Fund	30
Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (Asset) - Wisconsin Retirement System	31
Schedule of Employer Contributions - Wisconsin Retirement System	31
Schedule of Changes in the Total OPEB Liability and Related Ratios – OPEB Plan	32
Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability - LRLIF	33
Schedule of Employer Contributions - LRLIF	33
Notes to Required Supplementary Information	34

Independent Auditors' Report

To the Department Board of
Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, and the major fund of the Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department (the Department), as of and for the year ended December 31, 2024, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Department's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, and the major fund of the Department as of December 31, 2024 and the respective changes in financial position thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinions

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Department and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; and for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Department's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date, including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Department's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the required supplementary information, as listed in the table of contents be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Management has omitted the Management Discussion and Analysis that accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require to be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such missing information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic or historical context. Our opinions on the basic financial statements are not affected by this missing information.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
March 12, 2025

Statement of Net Position

December 31, 2024

	<u>Governmental Activities</u>
Assets and Deferred Outflows of Resources	
Assets	
Cash and investments	\$ 1,482,475
Accounts receivable:	
Accounts receivable	28,040
Ambulance receivable	1,190,732
Allowance for doubtful accounts	(642,995)
Prepaid items	10,432
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	<u>1,977,061</u>
 Total assets	 <u>4,045,745</u>
Deferred Outflows of Resources	
Deferred outflow related to OPEB, LRLIF	105,786
Deferred outflow related to OPEB, health	22,235
Deferred outflow related to pension	<u>1,938,738</u>
 Total deferred outflows of resources	 <u>2,066,759</u>
Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Net Position	
Liabilities	
Accounts payables	29,390
Accrued liabilities	160,969
Noncurrent liabilities:	
Compensated absences	10,559
WRS pension liability	218,585
OPEB liability, LRLIF	82,494
OPEB liability, health	<u>41,381</u>
 Total liabilities	 <u>543,378</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources	
Deferred inflow related to OPEB, LRLIF	39,786
Deferred inflow related to OPEB, health	28,946
Deferred inflow related to pension	<u>1,418,591</u>
 Total deferred inflows of resources	 <u>1,487,323</u>
Net Position	
Invested in capital assets	1,977,061
Restricted	910,285
Unrestricted	<u>1,194,457</u>
 Total net position	 <u>\$ 4,081,803</u>

See notes to financial statements

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2024

Functions/Programs	Expenses	Program Revenues			Net (Expense) Revenues and Changes in Net Position
		Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions	Capital Grants and Contributions	
Governmental activities:					
Public safety	\$ 3,626,834	\$ 1,500,394	\$ 581,333	\$ 120,728	\$ (1,424,379)
General Revenues					
					Intergovernmental revenues not restricted to specific programs 2,973,246
					Investment income 84,108
					Miscellaneous income 19,225
					<u>Total general revenues 3,076,579</u>
					Change in net position 1,652,200
					<u>Net Position, Beginning 2,429,603</u>
					<u>Net Position, Ending \$ 4,081,803</u>

See notes to financial statements

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Balance Sheet -
Governmental Fund
December 31, 2024

	General Fund	Total Governmental Funds
Assets		
Cash and investments	\$ 1,482,475	\$ 1,482,475
Accounts receivable:		
Accounts receivable	28,040	28,040
Ambulance receivable	1,190,732	1,190,732
Allowance for doubtful accounts	(642,995)	(642,995)
Prepaid items	<u>10,432</u>	<u>10,432</u>
 Total assets	 <u>2,068,684</u>	 <u>2,068,684</u>
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Liabilities		
Accounts payables	29,390	29,390
Accrued liabilities	<u>160,969</u>	<u>160,969</u>
 Total liabilities	 <u>190,359</u>	 <u>190,359</u>
Fund Balance		
Restricted	910,285	910,285
Unassigned	<u>968,040</u>	<u>968,040</u>
 Total liabilities and fund balance	 <u>\$ 2,068,684</u>	
 Amounts reported for governmental activities in the Statement of Net Position are different because:		
Total fund balances		1,878,325
Capital assets used in governmental funds are not financial resources and therefore are not reported in the funds.		
Less accumulated depreciation/amortization		1,977,061
Some receivables do not provide current financial resources and therefore are not reported as revenue in the funds.		
Deferred outflows of resources related to pension and OPEB do not relate to current financial resources and are not reported in the governmental funds.		2,066,759
Deferred inflows of resources related to pension and OPEB do not relate to current financial resources and are not reported in the governmental funds.		(1,487,323)
Some liabilities are not due and payable in the current period and therefore are not reported in the funds.		
Compensated absences		(10,559)
Net Pension, WRS		(218,585)
Net OPEB, LRLIF		(82,494)
Net OPEB, Health		<u>(41,381)</u>
 Net Position of Governmental Activities		 <u>\$ 4,081,803</u>

See notes to financial statements

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance -

Governmental Fund

Year Ended December 31, 2024

	<u>General Fund</u>
Revenues	
Intergovernmental	\$ 581,333
Intergovernmental charges for service	2,946,173
Licenses and permits	12,157
Public charges for services	1,500,394
Investment income	84,108
Miscellaneous revenues	<u>34,447</u>
 Total revenues	 <u>5,158,612</u>
Expenditures	
Current:	
Public safety	3,062,439
Capital outlay	<u>453,930</u>
 Total expenditures	 <u>3,516,369</u>
 Net change in fund balances	 1,642,243
 Fund Balance, Beginning	 <u>236,082</u>
 Fund Balance, Ending	 <u>\$ 1,878,325</u>

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances
of Governmental Fund to the Statement of Activities
Year Ended December 31, 2024

Net Change in Fund Balances, Total Governmental Funds \$ 1,642,243

Amounts reported for governmental activities in the Statement of Activities are different because:

Governmental funds report capital outlays as expenditures. However, in the Statement of Net Position, the cost of these assets is capitalized and they are depreciated over their estimated useful lives and reported as depreciation expense in the Statement of Activities.

Capital outlay is reported as an expenditure in the fund financial statements but is capitalized in the government-wide financial statements	453,930
Some items reported as capital outlay were not capitalized	(234,196)
Depreciation is reported in the government-wide statements	(314,658)

Capital assets contributed	120,728
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Some revenue and expenses in the statement of activities do not require the use of current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported as revenue and expenditures in the governmental funds.

Compensated absences	1,300
Net pension liability	408,284
Net OPEB liability, health	-
Net OPEB liability, LRLIF	(27,356)
Deferred outflows related to pension	(385,679)
Deferred outflows related to OPEB, health	-
Deferred outflows related to OPEB, LRLIF	81,540
Deferred inflows related to OPEB, health	-
Deferred inflows related to OPEB, LRLIF	4,547
Deferred inflows related to pension	(98,483)

Change in Net Position of Governmental Activities \$ 1,652,200

	<u>Page</u>
1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies	9
Reporting Entity	9
Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements	9
Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting and Financial Statement Presentation	10
Assets, Deferred Outflows of Resources, Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Net Position or Equity	11
Deposits and Investments	11
Receivables	11
Capital Assets	12
Deferred Outflows of Resources	12
Compensated Absences	12
Deferred Inflows of Resources	12
Equity Classifications	13
Pension	14
Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions (OPEB)	14
2. Stewardship, Compliance and Accountability	14
Financial Contributions	14
Budgetary Information	15
3. Detailed Notes on all Funds	15
Deposits and Investments	15
Receivables	15
Capital Assets	16
4. Other Information	16
Employees' Retirement System	16
Risk Management	22
Commitments and Contingencies	23
Other Postemployment Benefits	23
Effect of New Accounting Standards on Current Period Financial Statements	29

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The accounting policies of the Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department (SOFD) conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America as applicable to governmental units. The accepted standard-setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principals is the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Reporting Entity

SOFD is an intergovernmental entity consisting of representation from two municipalities within Ozaukee County – City of Mequon and Village of Thiensville. SOFD is managed by a five member Board consisting of two Village of Thiensville representatives and three City of Mequon representatives. SOFD was created, pursuant to the provisions of section 61.65 and 66.0301 of the Wisconsin Statutes, in 2023 for the purpose of providing the necessary fire and emergency services to the City of Mequon and the Village of Thiensville.

This report includes all of the funds of SOFD. The reporting entity for SOFD consists of the primary government and its component units. Component units are legally separate organizations for which the primary government is financially accountable or other organizations for which the nature and significance of their relationship with the primary government are such that their exclusion would cause the reporting entity's financial statements to be misleading. SOFD has not identified any organizations that meet these criteria.

Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements

Government-Wide Financial Statements

The statement of net position and statement of activities display information about the reporting government as a whole. They include all funds of the reporting entity except for fiduciary funds. Governmental activities generally are financed through intergovernmental revenues and other nonexchange revenues.

The statement of activities demonstrates the degree to which the direct expenses of a given function or segment are offset by program revenues. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with a specific function or segment. SOFD does not allocate indirect expenses to functions in the statement of activities. Program revenues include 1) charges for services and 2) grants and contributions. Contributions from municipalities and other items not included among program revenues are reported as general revenues. Internally dedicated resources are reported as general revenues rather than as program revenues.

Fund Financial Statements

Financial statements of the reporting entity are organized into funds, each of which is considered to be a separate accounting entity. Each fund is accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts, which constitute its assets, deferred outflows, liabilities, deferred inflows of resources, net position/fund equity, revenues and expenditure/expenses.

Separate financial statements are provided for governmental funds financial statements. Major individual governmental funds are reported as separate columns in the fund financial statements.

Funds are organized as major funds or nonmajor funds within the governmental fund financial statements. An emphasis is placed on major funds. A fund is considered major if it is the primary operating fund of SOFD or meets the following criteria:

- a. Total assets/deferred outflows, liabilities/deferred inflows of resources, revenues, or expenditures of that individual governmental fund are at least 10% of the corresponding total for all funds of that category or type, and
- b. In addition, any other governmental fund that the System believes is particularly important to financial statement users may be reported as a major fund.

SOFD reports the following major governmental funds:

General Fund - accounts for SOFD's primary operating activities.

Measurement Focus, Basis of Accounting and Financial Statement Presentation

Government-Wide Financial Statements

The government-wide statement of net position and statement of activities are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned and expenses are recorded when the liability is incurred or economic asset used. Revenues, expenses, gains, losses, assets and liabilities resulting from exchange and exchange-like transactions are recognized when the exchange takes place. Grants and similar items are recognized as revenue as soon as all eligibility requirements imposed by the provider are met. Unbilled receivables are recorded as revenues when services are provided.

Fund Financial Statements

Governmental fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recorded when they are both measurable and available. Available means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. For this purpose, SOFD considers revenues to be available if they are collected within 60 days of the end of the current fiscal period. Expenditures are recorded when the related fund liability is incurred, except for unmatured interest on long-term debt, claims, judgments, compensated absences and pension expenditures, which are recorded as a fund liability when expected to be paid with expendable available financial resources.

Intergovernmental charges for services are recognized as revenues in the period SOFD is entitled the resources and the amounts are available. Billings for services are rendered as occurred. Amounts owed to SOFD which are not available are recorded as receivables and unavailable revenues.

Revenues susceptible to accrual include public charges for services and interest. Other general revenues such as licenses and permits, fines and forfeitures and miscellaneous revenues are recognized when received in cash or when measurable and available under the criteria described above.

All Financial Statements

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities and deferred inflows of resources and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenditures/expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Assets, Deferred Outflows of Resources, Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Net Position or Equity**Deposits and Investments**

Investment of SOFD funds is restricted by Wisconsin state statutes. Available investments are limited to:

- Time deposits in any credit union, bank, savings bank or trust company.
- Bonds or securities of any county, city, drainage district, technical college district, village, town or school district of the state. Also, bonds issued by a local exposition Department, a local professional baseball park district, a local professional football stadium district, a local cultural arts district, the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority or the Wisconsin Aerospace Authority.
- Bonds or securities issued or guaranteed by the federal government.
- The local government investment pool.
- Any security maturing in seven years or less and having the highest or second highest rating category of a nationally recognized rating agency.
- Securities of an open-end management investment company or investment trust, subject to various conditions and investment options.
- Repurchase agreements with public depositories, with certain conditions.

SOFD has adopted a limited investment policy and that policy follows the state statute for allowable investments but does not include provisions pertaining to custodial credit risk.

Investments are stated at fair value, which is the amount at which an investment could be exchanged in a current transaction between willing parties. No investments are reported at amortized cost. Adjustments necessary to record investments at fair value are recorded in the operating statement as increases or decreases in investment income. The difference between the bank balance and carrying value is due to outstanding checks and deposits in transit.

See Note 3 for further information.

Receivables

An allowance for uncollectible accounts has been recorded relating to their ambulance billings in the amount of \$642,995.

Capital Assets

Government-Wide Statements

Capital assets, which include property, plant and equipment, are reported in the governmental-wide financial statements. Capital assets are defined by SOFD as assets with an initial cost of more than \$5,000 for general capital assets and an estimated useful life in excess of one year. All capital assets are valued at historical cost or estimated historical cost if actual amounts are unavailable. Donated capital assets are recorded at their estimated fair value at the date of donation.

Depreciation of all exhaustible capital assets is recorded as an allocated expense in the statement of activities, with accumulated depreciation reflected in the statement of net position. Depreciation is provided over the assets' estimated useful lives using the straight-line method. The range of estimated useful lives by type of asset is as follows:

	<u>Years</u>
Equipment and furnishings	5-15
Vehicles	5

All buildings have remained property of the participating communities.

Fund Financial Statements

In the fund financial statements, capital assets used in governmental fund operations are accounted for as capital outlay expenditures of the governmental fund upon acquisition.

Deferred Outflows of Resources

A deferred outflow of resources represents a consumption of net assets that applies to a future period and will not be recognized as an outflow of resources (expense/expenditure) until that future time.

Compensated Absences

Under terms of employment, employees are granted sick leave, vacations and paid time off in varying amounts. Only benefits considered to be vested are disclosed in these statements. All vested vacation and sick leave pay is accrued when incurred in the government-wide and proprietary fund financial statements. A liability for these amounts is reported in governmental funds only if they have matured, for example, as a result of employee resignations and retirements, and are payable with expendable resources. The total amount outstanding at year end to be paid in the future is \$10,559 and is included in the government-wide statement of net position.

Payments for vacation and sick leave will be made at rates in effect when the benefits are used. Accumulated vacation and sick leave liabilities at December 31, 2024, are determined on the basis of current salary rates and include salary related payments.

Deferred Inflows of Resources

A deferred inflow of resources represents an acquisition of net assets that applies to a future period and therefore will not be recognized as an inflow of resources (revenue) until that future time.

Equity Classifications

Government-Wide Statements

Equity is classified as net position and displayed in three components:

Net Investment in Capital Assets - Consists of capital assets including restricted capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation.

Restricted Net Position - Consists of net position with constraints placed on their use either by 1) external groups such as creditors, grantors, contributors or laws or regulations of other governments or, 2) law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Unrestricted Net Position - All other net positions that do not meet the definition of restricted or net investment in capital assets.

When both restricted and unrestricted resources are available for use, it is SOFD's policy to use restricted resources first, then unrestricted resources as they are needed.

Fund Financial Statements

Governmental fund balances are displayed as follows:

Nonspendable - Includes fund balance amounts that cannot be spent either because they are not in spendable form or because legal or contractual requirements require them to be maintained intact.

Restricted - Consists of fund balances with constraints placed on their use either by 1) external groups such as creditors, grantors, contributors or laws or regulations of other governments or 2) law through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation.

Committed - Includes fund balance amounts that are constrained for specific purposes that are internally imposed by the government through formal action of the highest level of decision-making authority. Fund balance amounts are committed through a formal action (resolution) of the Board. This formal action must occur prior to the end of the reporting period, but the amount of the commitment which will be subject to the constraints, may be determined in the subsequent period. Any changes to the constraints imposed require the same formal action of the Board that originally created the commitment.

Assigned - Includes spendable fund balance amounts that are intended to be used for specific purposes that are not considered restricted or committed. Fund balance may be assigned through the following; 1) SOFD has adopted a financial policy authorizing the Board to assign amounts for a specific purpose. 2) All remaining positive spendable amounts in governmental funds, other than the general fund, are neither restricted nor committed. Assignments may take place after the end of the reporting period.

Unassigned - Includes residual positive fund balance within the general fund which has not been classified within the other above mentioned categories. Unassigned fund balance may also include negative balances for any governmental fund if expenditures exceed amounts restricted, committed or assigned for those purposes.

SOFD considers restricted amounts to be spent first when both restricted and unrestricted fund balance is available unless there are legal documents/contracts that prohibit doing this, such as in grant agreements requiring dollar for dollar spending. Additionally, SOFD would first use committed, then assigned and lastly unassigned amounts of unrestricted fund balance when expenditures are made.

Pension

The fiduciary net position of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) has been determined using the flow of economic resources measurement focus and accrual basis of accounting. This includes for purposes of measuring the following:

- Net Pension Liability (Asset);
- Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions; and
- Pension Expense (Revenue)

Information about the fiduciary net position of the WRS and additions to/deductions from WRS' fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by the WRS. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions (OPEB)

For purposes of measuring the total OPEB liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB and OPEB expense, the SOFD OPEB Plan recognizes benefit payments when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms.

The fiduciary net position of the Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund (LRLIF) has been determined using the flow of economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting. This includes for purposes of measuring following:

- Net OPEB Liability;
- Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Other Postemployment Benefits; and
- OPEB Expense (Revenue).

Information about the fiduciary net position of the LRLIF and additions to/deductions from LRLIF's fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by LRLIF. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of member contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

2. Stewardship, Compliance and Accountability

Financial Contributions

City of Mequon shall bear 84.43% and Village of Thiensville shall bear 15.57% of SOFD's approved operating and capital improvement expenses. Either municipality may request that the percentages be renegotiated as of or after December 31, 2027, and every five years thereafter. Renegotiated percentages will consider fluctuations in number of service calls per year, population and equalized value of improvements with the heaviest weight applied to number of service calls per year.

Budgetary Information

Budgetary information is derived from the annual operating budget and is presented using the same basis of accounting for the general fund as described in Note 1. A budget for the general fund has been created.

3. Detailed Notes on All Funds

Deposits and Investments

SOFD's deposits and investments at year end were comprised of the following:

	<u>Carry Value</u>	<u>Statement Balance</u>	<u>Associated Risks</u>
Demand deposits	\$ 1,482,475	\$ 1,562,604	Custodial credit risk
Reconciliation to financial statements per statement of net position	<u>\$ 1,482,475</u>		

Deposits in each local and area bank are insured by the FDIC in the amount of \$250,000 for time and savings accounts (including NOW accounts), \$250,000 for demand deposit accounts (interest-bearing and noninterest bearing). In addition, if deposits are held in an institution outside of the state in which the government is located, insured amounts are further limited to a total of \$250,000 for the combined amount of all deposit accounts.

Bank accounts are also insured by the State Deposit Guarantee Fund in the amount of \$1,000,000. However, due to the nature of this fund, recovery of material principal losses may not be significant to individual municipalities. This coverage has not been considered in computing custodial credit risk.

Custodial Credit Risk

Deposits

Custodial credit risk is the risk that in the event of a financial institution failure, SOFD's deposits may not be returned to SOFD.

As of December 31, 2024, \$209,115 of SOFD's total bank balances were exposed to custodial credit risk as uninsured and uncollateralized.

Receivables

Receivables as of year-end for the general fund, including the applicable allowances for uncollectible accounts are as follows:

	<u>Receivable</u>
Accounts receivable balance	\$ 28,040
Ambulance receivable balance	1,190,732
Less allowance for uncollectible	<u>(642,995)</u>
Net total receivables	<u>\$ 575,777</u>

Capital Assets

Capital asset activity for the year ended December 31, 2024, was as follows:

	<u>Beginning Balance</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Deletions</u>	<u>Ending Balance</u>
Capital assets being depreciated:				
Equipment	\$ 507,806	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 507,806
Vehicles	1,751,300	340,462	-	2,091,762
Total capital assets being depreciated	<u>2,259,106</u>	<u>340,462</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,599,568</u>
Less accumulated depreciation for:				
Equipment	(68,110)	(68,110)	-	(136,220)
Vehicles	(239,739)	(246,548)	-	(486,287)
Total accumulated depreciation	<u>(307,849)</u>	<u>(314,658)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(622,507)</u>
Total capital assets, net of depreciation	<u>\$ 1,951,257</u>	<u>\$ 25,804</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,977,061</u>

Depreciation expense was charged to the public safety function.

4. Other Information

Employees' Retirement System

Plan Description

The WRS is a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan. WRS benefits and other plan provisions are established by Chapter 40 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Benefit terms may only be modified by the legislature. The retirement system is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF). The system provides coverage to all eligible State of Wisconsin, local government and other public employees. All employees, initially employed by a participating WRS employer on or after July 1, 2011, expected to work at least 1,200 hours a year (880 hours for teachers and school district educational support employees) and expected to be employed for at least one year from employee's date of hire are eligible to participate in the WRS.

ETF issues a standalone Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), which can be found at <https://etf.wi.gov/about-etf/reports-and-studies/financial-reports-and-statements>.

Additionally, ETF issued a standalone Wisconsin Retirement System Financial Report, which can also be found using the link above.

Vesting

For employees beginning participation on or after January 1, 1990, and no longer actively employed on or after April 24, 1998, creditable service in each of five years is required for eligibility for a retirement annuity. Participants employed prior to 1990 and on or after April 24, 1998, and prior to July 1, 2011, are immediately vested. Participants who initially became WRS eligible on or after July 1, 2011, must have five years of creditable service to be vested.

Benefits Provided

Employees who retire at or after age 65 (54 for protective occupation employees, 62 for elected officials and executive service retirement participants, if hired on or before December 31, 2016) are entitled to a retirement benefit based on a formula factor, their final average earnings, and creditable service.

Final average earnings is the average of the participant's three highest annual earnings period. Creditable service includes current service and prior service for which a participant received earnings and made contributions as required. Creditable service also includes creditable military service. The retirement benefit will be calculated as a money purchase benefit based on the employee's contributions plus matching employer's contributions, with interest, if that benefit is higher than the formula benefit.

Vested participants may retire at age 55 (50 for protective occupations) and receive an actuarially-reduced benefit. Participants terminating covered employment prior to eligibility for an annuity may either receive employee-required contributions plus interest as a separation benefit or leave contributions on deposit and defer application until eligible to receive a retirement benefit.

The WRS also provides death and disability benefits for employees.

Postretirement Adjustments

The Employee Trust Funds Board may periodically adjust annuity payments from the retirement system based on annual investment performance in accordance with s. 40.27, Wis. Stat. An increase (or decrease) in annuity payments may result when investment gains (losses), together with other actuarial experience factors, create a surplus (shortfall) in the reserves, as determined by the district's consulting actuary. Annuity increases are not based on cost of living or other similar factors. For Core annuities, decreases may be applied only to previously granted increases. By law, Core annuities cannot be reduced to an amount below the original, guaranteed amount (the Floor) set at retirement. The Core and Variable annuity adjustments granted during recent years are as follows:

Years Ending December 31:	Core Fund Adjustment	Variable Fund Adjustment
2014	4.7 %	25.0 %
2015	2.9	2.0
2016	0.5	(5.0)
2017	2.0	4.0
2018	2.4	17.0
2019	0.0	(10.0)
2020	1.7	21.0
2021	5.1	13.0
2022	7.4	15.0
2023	1.6	(21.0)

Contributions

Required contributions are determined by an annual actuarial valuation in accordance with Chapter 40 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The employee required contribution is one-half of the actuarially determined contribution rate for General category employees and Executives and Elected Officials. Starting on January 1, 2016, the Executives and Elected Officials category merged into the General Employee Category. Required contributions for protective employees are the same rate as general employees. Employers are required to contribute the remainder of the actuarially determined contribution rate. The employer may not pay the employee required contribution unless provided for by an existing collective bargaining agreement.

During the reporting period, the WRS recognized \$179,611 in contributions from SOFD.

Contribution rates for the plan year reported as of December 31, 2024 are:

Employee Category	Employee	Employer
General (Executives & Elected Officials)	6.90 %	6.90 %
Protective with Social Security	6.80	13.20
Protective without Social Security	6.80	18.10

Pension Liability, Pension Expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions

At December 31, 2024, SOFD reported a liability of \$218,585 for its proportionate share of the net pension liability. The net pension liability was measured as of December 31, 2022 and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of December 31, 2022 rolled forward to December 31, 2023. No material changes in assumptions or benefit terms occurred between the actuarial valuation date and the measurement date. SOFD's proportion of the net pension liability was based on SOFD's share of contributions to the pension plan relative to the contributions of all participating employers. At December 31, 2023, SOFD's proportion was 0.01470171%, which was a decrease of .06914804% from its proportion measured as of December 31, 2022.

For the year ended December 31, 2024, SOFD recognized pension expense of \$255,489.

At December 31, 2024, SOFD reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflow of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences between projected and actual experience	\$ 881,336	\$ 1,167,335
Changes in assumptions	95,275	-
Net differences between projected and actual earnings on pension plan investments	761,736	-
Changes in proportion and differences between employer contributions and proportionate share of contributions	-	251,256
Employer contributions subsequent to the measurement date	200,391	-
Total	\$ 1,938,738	\$ 1,418,591

\$200,391 reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pension resulting from the WRS Employer's contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net pension liability (asset) in the year ended December 31, 2025. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pension will be recognized in pension expense as follows:

Years Ending December 31:	Deferred Outflow of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources (Net)
2025	\$ 44,672
2026	50,477
2027	405,800
2028	(181,193)

Actuarial Assumptions

The total pension liability in the December 31, 2023 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions, applied to all periods included in the measurement:

Actuarial Valuation Date:	December 31, 2022
Measurement Date of Net Pension Liability (Asset):	December 31, 2023
Actuarial Cost Method:	Entry Age Normal
Asset Valuation Method:	Fair Value
Long-Term Expected Rate of Return:	6.8%
Discount Rate:	6.8%
Salary Increases:	
Inflation	3.0%
Seniority/Merit	0.1% - 5.6%
Mortality:	2020 WRS Experience Mortality Table
Postretirement Adjustments*	1.7%

* No postretirement adjustment is guaranteed. Actual adjustments are based on recognized investment return, actuarial experience and other factors. 1.7% is the assumed annual adjustment based on the investment return assumption and the postretirement discount rate.

Actuarial assumptions are based upon an experience study conducted in 2021 that covered a three-year period from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020. The Total Pension Liability for December 31, 2023 is based upon a roll-forward of the liability calculated from the December 31, 2022 actuarial valuation.

Long-Term Expected Return on Plan Assets

The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building block method in which best estimate ranges of expected future real rates of return (expected returns, net of pension plan investment expense and inflation) are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future real rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage and by adding expected inflation. The target allocation and best estimates of arithmetic real rates of return for each major asset class are summarized in the following table:

Asset Allocation Targets and Expected Returns* as of December 31, 2023

Core Fund Asset Class:	Asset Allocation Percent	Long-Term Expected Nominal Rate of Return Percent	Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return Percent
Public Equity	40 %	7.3 %	4.5 %
Public Fixed Income	27	5.8	3.0
Inflation Sensitive Assets	19	4.4	1.7
Real Estate	8	5.8	3.0
Private Equity/Debt	18	9.6	6.7
Leverage	(12)	3.7	1.0
Total Core Fund	100	7.4	4.6
Variable Fund Asset Class:			
U.S. Equities	70	6.8	4.0
International Equities	30	7.3	4.8
Total Variable Fund	100	7.7	4.5

Asset Allocations are managed within established ranges; target percentages may differ from actual monthly allocations.

New England Pension Consultants' Long-Term U.S. CPI (Inflation) Forecast: 2.7%

The investment policy used for the Core Fund involves reducing equity exposure by leveraging lower-volatility assets, such as fixed income securities. Currently, an asset allocation target of 12% policy leverage is used, subject to an allowable range of up to 20%.

Single Discount Rate

A single discount rate of 6.8% was used to measure the Total Pension Liability for the current and prior year. This discount rate is based on the expected rate of return on pension plan investments of 6.80% and a municipal bond rate of 3.77% (Source: Fixed-income municipal bonds with 20 years to maturity that include only federally tax-exempt municipal bonds as reported in Fidelity Index's "20-year Municipal GO AA Index" as of December 31, 2023. In describing this index, Fidelity notes that the Municipal Curves are constructed using option-adjusted analytics of a diverse population of over 10,000 tax exempt securities.). Because of the unique structure of WRS, the 6.8% expected rate of return implies that a dividend of approximately 1.7% will always be paid. For purposes of the single discount rate, it was assumed that the dividend would always be paid. The projection of cash flows used to determine this single discount rate assumed that plan member contributions will be made at the current contribution rate and that employer contributions will be made at rates equal to the difference between actuarially determined contribution rates and the member rate. Based on these assumptions, the pension plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments (including expected dividends) of current plan members. Therefore, the investment rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

Sensitivity of SOFD's Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (Asset) to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents SOFD's proportionate share of the net pension liability (asset) calculated using the discount rate of 6.80%, as well as what SOFD's proportionate share of the net pension liability (asset) would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (5.80%) or 1-percentage-point higher (7.80%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease to Discount Rate (5.80%)	Current Discount Rate (6.80%)	1% Increase to Discount Rate (7.80%)
SOFD's proportionate share of the net pension liability (asset)	\$ 2,112,738	\$ 218,585	\$ (1,106,832)

Pension Plan Fiduciary Net Position

Detailed information about the pension plan's fiduciary net position is available in separately issued financial statements available at <http://etf.wi.gov/publications/cafr.htm>.

Risk Management

SOFD is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to or destruction of assets; errors and omissions; workers compensation; and health care of its employees. All of these risks are covered through the purchase of commercial insurance, with minimal deductibles. Settled claims have not exceeded the commercial coverage in any of the past three years. There were no significant reductions in coverage compared to the prior year.

Commitments and Contingencies

Claims and judgments are recorded as liabilities if all the conditions of Governmental Accounting Standards Board pronouncements are met. The liability and expenditure for claims and judgments are only reported in governmental funds if it has matured. Claims and judgments are recorded in the government-wide statements and proprietary funds as expenses when the related liabilities are incurred.

From time to time, SOFD is party to various pending claims and legal proceedings. Although the outcome of such matters cannot be forecasted with certainty, it is the opinion of management that the likelihood is remote that any such claims or proceedings will have a material adverse effect on SOFD's financial position or results of operations.

Other Postemployment Benefits

Portion of this footnote will change once have OPEB study back from actuary.

General Information About the OPEB Plan

Plan Description

SOFD's defined benefit OPEB plan, Retiree Benefits Plan (RBP), provides OPEB for all permanent full-time general and public safety employees of the Department. RBP is a single-employer defined benefit OPEB plan administered by the Department. Article 11 of the State Compiled Statutes grants the authority to establish and amend the benefit terms and financing requirements to the Board. No assets were accumulated in a trust that meets the criteria in paragraph 4 of Statement 75.

Benefits Provided

For nonrepresented employees (including command staff), the RBP provides monthly contributions towards the premium in the amount of the group health insurance coverage for the plan in effect on January 1, 2013. For each ten days of accumulated unused sick leave (up to 180 days), the RBP will provide one month of medical coverage. For police employees, the RBP provides monthly contributions towards the premium in the amount of the group health insurance coverage for the plan currently in effect. For each ten days of accumulated unused sick leave (up to 180 days), the RBP will provide one month of family medical coverage subject to the employer maximum payment condition. The contribution is based upon the same employer contribution for active employees (currently 88%).

Total OPEB Liability

SOFD's total OPEB liability of \$41,381 was measured as of December 31, 2023, and was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date.

Actuarial Assumptions and Other Inputs

The total OPEB liability in the December 31, 2023 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions and other inputs, applied to all periods included in the measurement, unless otherwise specified:

Inflation	2.50%
Salary increases	2.25%
Healthcare cost trend rates	7.00% decreasing to 6.5%, then by 0.10% per year down to 4.50%, and level thereafter

The discount rate was based on all years of projected payments discounted at a municipal bond rate of 4.25%.

Mortality rates were based on the 2020 WRS Experience Tables for Active Employees and Health Retirees projected with mortality improvements using the fully generational MP-2021 projection scale from a base year of 2010.

The actuarial assumptions used in the December 31, 2023 valuation were based on the results of an actuarial experience study from 2018-2020.

Sensitivity of the Total OPEB Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents the total OPEB liability of the SOFD, as well as what the SOFD's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (3.25%):

	<u>1% Decrease</u>	<u>Discount Rate</u>	<u>1% Increase</u>
Total OPEB liability	\$ 61,685	\$ 41,381	\$ 55,845

Sensitivity of the Total OPEB Liability to Changes in the Healthcare Cost Trend Rates

The following presents the total OPEB liability of the SOFD, as well as what the SOFD's total OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using healthcare cost trend rates that are 1-percentage-point lower (6.0% decreasing to 3.5%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.0% decreasing to 5.5%) than the current healthcare cost trend rates:

	<u>1% Decrease</u>	<u>Healthcare Cost Trend Rates</u>	<u>1% Increase</u>
Total OPEB liability	\$ 54,808	\$ 41,381	\$ 63,237

OPEB Expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to OPEB

For the year ended December 31, 2023, the SOFD recognized negative OPEB expense of \$3,144. At December 31, 2023, the SOFD reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	<u>Deferred Outflow of Resources</u>	<u>Deferred Inflows of Resources</u>
Differences between projected and actual experience	\$ 18,888	\$ 17,429
Changes of assumptions or other inputs	3,347	11,517
Total	<u>\$ 22,235</u>	<u>\$ 28,946</u>

Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB will be recognized in OPEB expense as follows:

Years Ending December 31:	Amount
2024	\$ (2,746)
2025	(2,746)
2026	(2,746)
2027	(2,746)
2028	2,260
Thereafter	2,013

Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund (LRLIF)

Plan Description

The LRLIF is a multiple-employer, defined benefit OPEB plan. LRLIF benefits and other plan provisions are established by Chapter 40 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) and the Group Insurance Board have statutory authority for program administration and oversight. The plan provides postemployment life insurance benefits for all eligible employees.

ETF issues a standalone Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR), which can be found at <https://etf.wi.gov/about-etf/reports-and-studies/financial-reports-and-statements>.

Additionally, ETF issued a standalone Retiree Life Insurance Financial Report, which can be found at the link above.

Benefits Provided

The LRLIF plan provides fully paid up life insurance benefits for post-age 64 retired employees and pre-65 retirees who pay for their coverage.

Contributions

The Group Insurance Board approves contribution rates annually, based on recommendations from the insurance carrier. Recommended rates are based on an annual valuation, taking into consideration an estimate not of the present value of future benefits and the present value of future contributions. A portion of employer contributions made during a member's working lifetime funds a postretirement benefit.

Employers are required to pay the following contribution based on employee contributions for active members to provide them with Basic Coverage after age 65. There are no employer contributions required for pre-age 65 annuitant coverage. If a member retires prior to age 65, they must continue paying the employee premiums until age 65 in order to be eligible for the benefit after age 65.

Contribution rates for the plan year reported as of December 31, 2024 are:

Coverage Type	Employer Contributions
50% Postretirement Coverage	40% of Employee Contribution
25% Postretirement Coverage	20% of Employee Contribution

Member contributions are based upon nine age bands through age 69 and an additional eight age bands for those age 70 and over. Participating members must pay monthly contribution rates per \$1,000 of coverage until the age of 65 (age 70 if active).

The member contribution rates in effect for the plan year are as listed below:

Life Insurance Member Contribution Rates for the Plan Year			
Attained Age	Basic		Supplemental
Under 30	\$	0.05	\$ 0.05
30-34		0.06	0.06
35-39		0.07	0.07
40-44		0.08	0.08
45-49		0.12	0.12
50-54		0.22	0.22
55-59		0.39	0.39
60-64		0.49	0.49
65-69		0.57	0.57

Disabled members under age 70 receive a waiver-of-premium benefit.

During the reporting period, the LRLIF recognized \$2,416 in contributions from the employer.

OPEB Liability, OPEB Expense, Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to OPEBs

At December 31, 2024, the SOFD reported a liability of \$82,494 for its proportionate share of the net OPEB liability. The net OPEB liability was measured as of December 31, 2023, and the total OPEB liability used to calculate the net OPEB liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of December 31, 2022 rolled forward to December 31, 2023. No material changes in assumptions or benefit terms occurred between the actuarial valuation date and the measurement date. The SOFD's proportion of the net OPEB liability was based on the SOFD's share of contributions to the OPEB plan relative to the contributions of all participating employers. At December 31, 2023, the SOFD's proportion was 0.01793100% which was an decrease of 0.13757400% from its proportion measured as of December 31, 2022.

For the year ended December 31, 2024, the SOFD recognized OPEB expense of \$58,731.

At December 31, 2024, the SOFD reported deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB from the following sources:

	Deferred Outflows of Resources	Deferred Inflows of Resources
Differences between expected and actual experience	\$ -	\$ 7,302
Net differences between projected and actual earnings on OPEB plan investments	1,114	-
Changes in assumptions	25,804	32,484
Changes in proportion and differences between employer contributions and proportionate share of contributions	76,452	-
Employer contributions subsequent to the measurement date	2,416	-
Total	<u>\$ 105,786</u>	<u>\$ 39,786</u>

\$12,080 reported as deferred outflows related to OPEB resulting from the LRLIF Employer's contributions subsequent to the measurement date will be recognized as a reduction of the net OPEB liability in the year ended December 31, 2025. Other amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB will be recognized in OPEB expense as follows:

Years Ending December 31:	Net Deferred Outflows (Inflows) of Resources (Net)
2025	\$ 12,280
2026	13,421
2027	10,124
2028	7,609
2029	7,981
Thereafter	12,169

Actuarial Assumptions

The net OPEB liability in the actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions, applied to all periods included in the measurement:

Actuarial Valuation Date:	January 1, 2023
Measurement Date of Net OPEB Liability	December 31, 2023
Experience Study:	January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2020 Published November 19, 2021
Actuarial Cost Method:	Entry Age Normal
20 Year Tax-Exempt Municipal Bond Yield*	3.72%
Long-Term Expected Rate of Return:	4.25%
Discount Rate:	3.76%
Salary Increases:	
Wage Inflation	3.0%
Seniority/Merit	0.1%-5.6%
Mortality:	2020 WRS Experience Mortality Table

* Based on the Bond Buyers GO Index

Actuarial assumptions are based upon an experience study conducted in 2021 that covered a three-year period from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2020. The Total OPEB Liability for December 31, 2023 is based upon a roll-forward of the liability calculated from the January 1, 2023 actuarial valuation.

Long-Term Expected Return on Plan Assets

The long-term expected rate of return is determined by adding expected inflation to expected long-term real returns and reflecting expected volatility and correlation. Investments for the LRLIF are held with Securian, the insurance carrier. Interest is calculated and credited to the LRLIF based on the rate of return for a segment of the insurance carriers' general fund, specifically 10-year A-Bonds (as a proxy and not tied to any specific investments). The overall aggregate interest rate is calculated using a tiered approach based on the year the funds were originally invested and the rate of return for that year. Investment interest is credited based on the aggregate rate of return and assets are not adjusted to fair market value. Furthermore, the insurance carrier guarantees the principal amounts of the reserves, including all interest previously credited thereto.

**State OPEB Life Insurance
Asset Allocation Targets and Expected Returns
As of December 31, 2023**

Asset Class	Index	Target Allocation	Long-Term Expected Geometric Real Rate of Return %
U.S. Intermediate Credit Bonds	Bloomberg U.S. Interm Credit	50.00%	2.45%
U.S. Mortgages	Bloomberg U.S. MBS	50.00	2.83%
Inflation			2.30%
Long-Term Expected Rate of Return			4.25%

The long-term expected rate of return remained unchanged from the prior year at 4.25%. The long-term expected rate of return is determined by adding expected inflation to expected long-term real returns and reflecting expected volatility and correlation. The expected inflation rate remained unchanged from the prior year at 2.30%.

Single Discount Rate

A single discount rate of 3.76% was used to measure the Total OPEB Liability for the current year, as opposed to a discount rate of 2.17% for the prior year. The significant change in the discount rate was primarily caused by the increase in the municipal bond rate from 2.06% as of December 31, 2022 to 3.72% as of December 31, 2023. The Plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be insufficient to make all projected future benefit payments of current active and inactive members. Therefore, the discount rate for calculating the Total OPEB Liability is equal to the single equivalent rate that results in the same actuarial present value as the long-term expected rate of return applied to benefit payments, to the extent that the plan's fiduciary net position is projected to be sufficient to make projected benefit payments, and the municipal bond rate applied to benefit payment to the extent that the plan's fiduciary net position is projected to be insufficient. The plan's fiduciary net position was projected to be available to make projected future benefit payments of current plan members through December 31, 2036.

The projection of cash flows used to determine the single discount rate assumed that employer contributions will be made according to the current employer contribution schedule and that contributions are made by plan members retiring prior to age 65.

Sensitivity of the SOFD's Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents the SOFD's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability calculated using the discount rate of 3.76%, as well as what the SOFD's proportionate share of the net OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (2.76%) or 1-percentage-point higher (4.76%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease to Discount Rate (2.76%)	Current Discount Rate (3.76%)	1% Increase to Discount Rate (4.76%)
Proportionate share of the net OPEB liability	\$ 110,843	\$ 82,494	\$ 60,855

OPEB Plan Fiduciary Net Position

Detailed information about the OPEB plan's fiduciary net position is available in separately issued financial statements available at <http://etf.wi.gov/publications/cafr.htm>.

Effect of New Accounting Standards on Current-Period Financial Statements

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has approved the following:

- Statement No. 102, *Certain Risk Disclosures*
- Statement No. 103, *Financial Reporting Model Improvements*
- Statement No. 104, *Disclosure of Certain Capital Assets*

When they become effective, application of these standards may restate portions of these financial statements.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Schedule of Revenues, Expenditures and Change in Fund Balances - Budget and Actual -

General Fund

Year Ended December 31, 2024

	Original and Final Budget	Actual	Variance With Final Budget
Revenues			
Intergovernmental	\$ 563,238	\$ 581,333	\$ 18,095
Intergovernmental charges for service	1,747,219	2,946,173	1,198,954
Licenses and permits	17,122	12,157	(4,965)
Public charges for services	1,434,209	1,500,394	66,185
Investment income	12,000	84,108	72,108
Miscellaneous revenues	-	34,447	34,447
	<u>3,773,788</u>	<u>5,158,612</u>	<u>1,384,824</u>
Total revenues			
Expenditures			
Current:			
Public safety	3,538,510	3,062,439	476,071
Capital outlay	235,278	453,930	(218,652)
	<u>3,773,788</u>	<u>3,516,369</u>	<u>257,419</u>
Total expenditures			
Net change in fund balances	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>1,642,243</u>	<u>\$ 1,642,243</u>
Fund Balance, Beginning		<u>236,082</u>	
Fund Balance, Ending		<u>\$ 1,878,325</u>	

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (Asset) -

Wisconsin Retirement System

Year Ended December 31, 2024

WRS Fiscal Year Ending	Proportion of the Net Pension Liability (Asset)	Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (Asset)	Covered Payroll	Proportionate Share of the Net Pension Liability (Asset) as a Percentage of Covered Payroll	Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total Pension Liability
12/31/22	0.08384975 %	\$ 626,869	\$ 1,575,192	39.80%	unknown
12/31/23	0.01470171 %	218,585	1,375,705	15.89%	98.85%

Schedule of Employer Contributions - Wisconsin Retirement System

Year Ended December 31, 2024

SOFD Fiscal Year Ending	Contractually Required Contributions	Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contributions	Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	Covered Payroll	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll
12/31/23	\$ 136,505	\$ 136,505	\$ -	\$ 2,020,202	6.76 %
12/31/24	200,391	200,391	-	1,418,657	17.16 %

See notes to required supplementary information

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Schedule of Changes in the Total OPEB Liability and Related Ratios -
OPEB Plan
Year Ended December 31, 2024

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Total OPEB Liability		
Service cost	\$ -	\$ -
Interest	-	-
Changes in benefit terms	-	-
Difference between expected and actual experience	18,888	-
Changes in assumptions	22,493	-
Benefit payments	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net change in total OPEB liability	41,381	-
Total OPEB Liability, Beginning	<hr/>	<hr/>
	-	-
Total OPEB Liability, Ending	<u>\$ 41,381</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Covered-employee payroll	<u>\$ 575,307</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Total OPEB liability as a percentage of covered-employee payroll	7.19%	

Notes to Schedule:

The SOFD is required to present the last ten years of data, however, accounting standards allow the presentation of as many years as are available until ten fiscal years are presented.

Benefit changes . None.

Accumulation of assets . No assets have been accumulated in a trust that meets the criteria in GASB Statement No. 75.

Changes of assumptions . The discount rate was changed from 2.50% to 4.25%.

A schedule of employer contributions has not been presented because an actuarially determined contribution for the SOFD has not been determined.

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Schedule of Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability -

Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund

Year Ended December 31, 2024

Plan Fiscal Year End	Proportion of the Net OPEB Liability	Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability	Covered Payroll	Proportionate Share of the Net OPEB Liability as a Percentage of Covered Payroll	Plan Fiduciary Net Position as a Percentage of the Total OPEB Liability
12/31/22	0.01180500 %	\$ 55,138	\$ 873,629	6.31 %	unknown
12/31/23	0.01793100 %	82,494	1,295,000	6.37 %	33.90 %

Schedule of Employer Contributions - Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund

Year Ended December 31, 2024

SOFD Fiscal Year End	Contractually Required Contributions	Contributions in Relation to the Contractually Required Contributions	Contribution Deficiency (Excess)	Covered Payroll	Contributions as a Percentage of Covered Payroll
12/31/23	\$ 269	\$ 269	\$ -	\$ 2,020,202	0.01 %
12/31/24	2,416	2,416	-	1,418,657	0.17 %

See notes to required supplementary information

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS

Notes to Required Supplementary Information
Year Ended December 31, 2024

Budgetary Information

Budgetary information is derived from the annual operating budget and is presented using generally accepted accounting principles and the modified accrual basis of accounting.

All annual appropriations lapse at year-end unless specifically carried over by the Board. Budgetary control is exercised at the total fund level.

Wisconsin Retirement System

SOFD is required to present the last ten fiscal years data; however the standards allow the SOFD to present as many years as are available until ten fiscal years are presented.

Changes of benefit terms. There were no changes of benefit terms for any participating employer in WRS.

Changes in assumptions. Based on a three-year experience study conducted in 2021 covering January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2020, the ETF Board adopted assumption changes that were used to measure the total pension liability beginning with the year-end December 31, 2022, including the following:

- Lowering the long-term expected rate of return from 7.0% to 6.8%
- Lowering the discount rate from 7.0% to 6.8%
- Lowering the price inflation rate from 2.5% to 2.4%
- Lowering the postretirement adjustments from 1.9% to 1.7%
- Mortality assumptions were changed to reflect updated trends by transitioning from the Wisconsin 2018 Mortality Table to the 2020 WRS Experience Mortality Table

Based on a three-year experience study conducted in 2018 covering January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017, the ETF Board adopted assumption changes that were used to measure the total pension liability beginning with the year-ended December 31, 2018, including the following:

- Lowering the long-term expected rate of return from 7.2% to 7.0%
- Lowering the discount rate from 7.2% to 7.0%
- Lowering the wage inflation rate from 3.2% to 3.0%
- Lowering the price inflation rate from 2.7% to 2.5%
- Lowering the postretirement adjustments from 2.1% to 1.9%
- Mortality assumptions were changed to reflect updated trends by transitioning from the Wisconsin 2012 Mortality Table to the Wisconsin 2018 Mortality Table

Other Postemployment Benefits, Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund

The amounts determined for each fiscal year were determined as of the calendar year-end and occurred within the fiscal year.

SOFD is required to present the last ten fiscal years data; however the standards allow the SOFD to present as many years as are available until ten fiscal years are presented.

Changes in benefit terms. There were no changes of benefit terms for any participating employer in the Local Retiree Life Insurance Fund.

Changes in assumptions. In addition to the rate changes detailed in the tables above, the State of Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund Board adopted economic and demographic assumption changes based on a three year experience study performed for the Wisconsin Retirement System. These assumptions are used in the actuarial valuations of OPEB liabilities (assets) for the retiree life insurance programs and are summarized below.

The assumption changes that were used to measure the December 31, 2022 total OPEB liabilities, including the following:

- Lowering the price inflation rate from 2.5% to 2.4%
- Mortality assumptions were changed to reflect updated trends by transitioning from the Wisconsin 2018 Mortality Table to the 2020 WRS Experience Mortality Table

The assumption changes that were used to measure the December 31, 2018 total OPEB liabilities, including the following:

- Lowering the long-term expected rate of return from 5.0% to 4.25%
- Lowering the wage inflation rate from 3.2% to 3.0%
- Lowering the price inflation rate from 2.7% to 2.5%
- Mortality assumptions were changed to reflect updated trends by transitioning from the Wisconsin 2012 Mortality Table to the Wisconsin 2018 Mortality Table



Reporting and insights from 2024 audit:

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

December 31, 2024

Executive summary

March 12, 2025

To the Board Members
Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

We have completed our audit of the financial statements of Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department (the Department) for the year ended December 31, 2024, and have issued our report thereon dated March 12, 2025. This letter presents communications required by our professional standards.

Your audit should provide you with confidence in your financial statements. The audit was performed based on information obtained from meetings with management, data from your systems, knowledge of your Department's operating environment and our risk assessment procedures. We strive to provide you clear, concise communication throughout the audit process and of the final results of our audit.

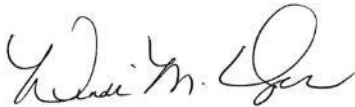
Additionally, we have included information on key risk areas Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department should be aware of in your strategic planning. We are available to discuss these risks as they relate to your organization's financial stability and future planning.

If you have questions at any point, please connect with us:

- Wendi Unger, Principal: wendi.unger@bakertilly.com or +1 (414) 777 5423

Sincerely,

Baker Tilly US, LLP



Wendi M. Unger, CPA, Principal

THIS COMMUNICATION IS INTENDED SOLELY FOR THE INFORMATION AND USE OF THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE, AND, IF APPROPRIATE, MANAGEMENT, AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE AND SHOULD NOT BE USED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN THESE SPECIFIED PARTIES.

BAKER TILLY ADVISORY GROUP, LP AND BAKER TILLY US, LLP, TRADING AS BAKER TILLY, ARE MEMBERS OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF BAKER TILLY INTERNATIONAL LTD., THE MEMBERS OF WHICH ARE SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT LEGAL ENTITIES. BAKER TILLY US, LLP IS A LICENSED CPA FIRM THAT PROVIDES ASSURANCE SERVICES TO ITS CLIENTS. BAKER TILLY ADVISORY GROUP, LP AND ITS SUBSIDIARY ENTITIES PROVIDE TAX AND CONSULTING SERVICES TO THEIR CLIENTS AND ARE NOT LICENSED CPA FIRMS.

Responsibilities

Our responsibilities

As your independent auditor, our responsibilities include:

- Planning and performing the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance.
- Assessing the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. Included in that assessment is a consideration of the Department's internal control over financial reporting.
- Performing appropriate procedures based upon our risk assessment.
- Evaluating the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management.
- Forming and expressing an opinion based on our audit about whether the financial statements prepared by management, with the oversight of the Board Members:
 - Are free from material misstatement
 - Present fairly, in all material respects and in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Our audit does not relieve management or the Board Members of their responsibilities.

We are also required to communicate significant matters related to our audit that are relevant to the responsibilities of the Board Members, including:

- Internal control matters
- Qualitative aspects of the Department's accounting practice including policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures
- Significant unusual transactions
- Significant difficulties encountered
- Disagreements with management
- Circumstances that affect the form and content of the auditors' report
- Audit consultations outside the engagement team
- Corrected and uncorrected misstatements
- Other audit findings or issues

Audit status

Significant changes to the audit plan

There were no significant changes made to either our planned audit strategy or to the significant risks and other areas of emphasis identified during the performance of our risk assessment procedures.

Audit approach and results

Planned scope and timing

Audit focus

Based on our understanding of the Department and environment in which you operate, we focused our audit on the following key areas:

- Key transaction cycles
- Areas with significant estimates

Our areas of audit focus were informed by, among other things, our assessment of materiality. Materiality in the context of our audit was determined based on specific qualitative and quantitative factors combined with our expectations about the Department’s current year results.

Key areas of focus and significant findings

Significant risks of material misstatement

A significant risk is an identified and assessed risk of material misstatement that, in the auditor’s professional judgment, requires special audit consideration. Within our audit, we focused on the following areas below.

Significant risk areas	Testing approach	Conclusion
Management override of controls	Incorporate unpredictability into audit procedures, emphasize professional skepticism and utilize audit team with industry expertise	Procedures identified provided sufficient evidence for our audit opinion
Improper revenue recognition due to fraud	Confirmation or validation of certain revenues supplemented with detailed predictive analytics based on non-financial data and substantive testing of related receivables	Procedures identified provided sufficient evidence for our audit opinion
Inadequate segregation of duties	Incorporate unpredictability into audit procedures, emphasize professional skepticism, utilize audit team with industry expertise and performance of sufficient substantive procedures	Procedures identified provided sufficient evidence for our audit opinion

Other areas of emphasis

We also focused on other areas that did not meet the definition of a significant risk, but were determined to require specific awareness and a unique audit response.

Other areas of emphasis		
Cash and investments	Revenues and receivables	General disbursements
Payroll	Pension and OPEB liabilities	
Capital assets including infrastructure	Net position/fund balance calculations	Financial reporting and required disclosures

Internal control matters

We considered the Department’s internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our audit procedures for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the financial statements. We are not expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Department’s internal control.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and, therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis.

A material weakness is a deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity’s financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. We identified the following deficiencies as material weaknesses:

- **Inadequate segregation of duties**

A properly designed system of internal control includes adequate staffing as well as policies and procedures to properly segregate duties. This includes systems that are designed to limit the access or control of any one individual to your government’s assets or accounting records, and to achieve a higher likelihood that errors or irregularities in your accounting processes would be discovered by your staff in a timely manner.

At this time, due to staffing and financial limitations, the proper internal controls are not in place to achieve adequate segregation of duties. As a result, errors, irregularities or fraud could occur as part of the financial reporting process that may not be discovered by someone in your organization. Therefore, we are reporting a material weakness related to the internal control environment.

- **Missing key controls**

There are certain controls that are not currently in place related to significant transaction cycles. As a result, there is a risk that erroneous or unauthorized transactions or misstatements could occur without the knowledge of management or the governing body. Our recommendations for strengthening controls are listed on the following page.

Controls over monthly and year-end accounting

- Adjusting journal entries and supporting documentation should be reviewed and approved by an appropriate person who is not the original preparer.
- Account reconciliations prepared throughout the year should be performed by someone independent of processing transactions in the account.
- Year-end reconciliations (retainages, payroll accruals) should be reviewed and approved by someone other than the preparer.

Since the controls listed above or other compensating controls are not currently in place, errors or irregularities could occur as part of the accounting processes that might not be discovered by management or the governing body. Therefore, the absence of these controls is considered to be a material weakness.

We recommend that a designated employee review the segregation of duties, risks, and these potential controls and determine whether additional controls should be implemented. This determination should take into consideration a cost / benefit analysis.

- **Financial statement close process**

Properly designed systems of internal control provide your organization with the ability to process and record accurate monthly and year-end transactions and annual financial reports.

Our audit includes a review and evaluation of the internal controls relating to financial reporting. Common attributes of a properly designed system of internal control for financial reporting are as follows:

- There is adequate staffing to prepare financial reports throughout the year and at year-end.
- Material misstatements are identified and corrected during the normal course of duties.
- Complete and accurate financial statements, including footnotes, are prepared.
- Financial reports are independently reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

Our evaluation of the internal controls over financial reporting has identified control deficiencies that are considered material weakness surrounding the preparation of financial statements and footnotes, adjusting journal entries identified by the auditors, and an independent review of financial reports.

Management has not prepared financial statements that are in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. In addition, material misstatements in the general ledger were identified during the financial audit.

Other comments and recommendations

- **Cash Reconciliation**

During our review of cash, it was noted there are several old outstanding checks and deposits in transit on the bank reconciliation. Some of which are removed from the reconciliation but still show up on the report. We recommend that the Department review older items and determine items which should not be included as cash on the books and in the reconciliation and address as appropriate.

In addition to the above, reconciliations have not been completed for the two money market accounts that the Department has. We recommend that the Department create a process for reviewing these accounts monthly to ensure that they reconcile.

- **Ambulance Billings**

The Department utilizes a third-party vendor to prepare the billings for ambulance services. Department personnel spot check the bills prepared by the third-party vendor for accuracy. During our testing, the Department could not provide evidence that the spot checking of the bills took place. We recommend that the Department maintain supporting documentation that includes evidence of the spot checking / review of the ambulance bills.

- **QuickBooks Automatic Allocations**

The Department utilizes a feature within QuickBooks that automatically allocates checks and receipts. During testing, it was noted that it automatically allocated items incorrectly. Credit card activity at the Department is not being reconciled properly because of this. Some of the activity has been posted correctly, while other portions have not been. There were several credit card expenses that were left unallocated at the year end. We recommend that the Department turn off this feature as it is a cause for a significant number of discrepancies.

Required communications

Qualitative aspect of accounting practices

- Accounting policies: Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter, we have advised management about the appropriateness of accounting policies and their application. The significant accounting policies used by the Department are described in Note 1 to the financial statements. No new accounting policies were adopted, and the application of existing accounting policies was not changed during 2024. We noted no transactions entered into by the Department during the year for which accounting policies are controversial or for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus or diversity in practice.
- Accounting estimates: Accounting estimates, including fair value estimates, are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements, the degree of subjectivity involved in their development and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected. The following estimates are of most significance to the financial statements:

Estimate	Management's process to determine	Baker Tilly's conclusions regarding reasonableness
Accrued compensated absences	Evaluation of hours earned and accumulated in accordance with employment policies and average wage per hour rates	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Net pension liability and related deferrals	Evaluation of information provided by the Wisconsin Retirement System	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Allowance for doubtful accounts	Evaluation of historical revenues and loss levels with the analysis on collectability of individual amounts	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Net OPEB liability and related deferrals	Key assumptions set by management with the assistance of a third party actuary	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole
Depreciation	Evaluate estimated useful life of the asset and original acquisition value	Reasonable in relation to the financial statements as a whole

There have been no significant changes made by management to either the processes used to develop the particularly sensitive accounting estimates, or to the significant assumptions used to develop the estimates noted above.

- Financial statement disclosures: The disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent and clear.

Significant unusual transactions

There have been no significant transactions that are outside the normal course of business for the Department or that otherwise appear to be unusual due to their timing, size or nature.

Significant difficulties encountered during the audit

We encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management and completing our audit.

Disagreements with management

Professional standards define a disagreement with management as a matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, concerning a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditors' report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Audit report

There have been no departures from the auditors' standard report.

Audit consultations outside the engagement team

We encountered no difficult or contentious matters for which we consulted outside of the engagement team.

Uncorrected misstatements and corrected misstatements

Professional standards require us to accumulate misstatements identified during the audit, other than those that are clearly trivial and to communicate accumulated misstatements to management. Management agrees with the misstatements we have identified, and they have been corrected in the financial statements. The schedule below summarizes the material corrected misstatements, that, in our judgment, may not have been detected except through our auditing procedures. The internal control matters section of this report describes the effects on the financial reporting process indicated by the corrected misstatements, other than those that we consider to be of a lesser magnitude than significant deficiencies and material weaknesses.

Description	Opinion unit	Amount
To reallocate revenue recorded incorrectly	General Fund	\$1,151,593
To reallocate expenditures recorded incorrectly	General Fund	\$22,733
To adjust ambulance receivable	General Fund	\$247,618
To adjust allowance for uncollectible receivables	General Fund	\$26,616
To record missed November payroll entry	General Fund	\$87,090
To record accrued payroll	General Fund	\$136,876
To reallocate receivables recorded incorrectly	General Fund	\$234,809
To adjust cash accounts	General Fund	\$27,504

The remaining misstatements that were identified and corrected by management were not material individually or in the aggregate to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Other audit findings or issues

We encountered no other audit findings or issues that require communication at this time.

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the Department's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

Other information in documents containing audited basic financial statements

Official statements

The Department's audited financial statements are "general purpose" financial statements. General purpose financial statements consist of the basic financial statements that can be used by a broad group of people for a broad range of activities. Once we have issued our audit report, we have no further obligation to update our report for events occurring subsequent to the date of our report. The Department can use the audited financial statements in other client prepare documents, such as official statements related to the issuance of debt, without our acknowledgement. Unless we have been engaged to perform services in connection with any subsequent transaction requiring the inclusion of our audit report, as well as to issue an auditor's acknowledgment letter, we have neither read the document nor performed subsequent event procedures in order to determine whether or not our report remains appropriate.

Management's consultations with other accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters. Management informed us that, and to our knowledge, there were no consultations with other accountants regarding auditing or accounting matters.

Written communications between management and Baker Tilly

The attachments include copies of other material written communications, including a copy of the management representation letter.

Compliance with laws and regulations

We did not identify any non-compliance with laws and regulations during our audit.

Fraud

We did not identify any known or suspected fraud during our audit.

Going concern

Pursuant to professional standards, we are required to communicate to you, when applicable, certain matters relating to our evaluation of the Department's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time but no less than 12 months from the date of the financial statements, including the effects on the financial statements and the adequacy of the related disclosures, and the effects on the auditor's report. No such matters or conditions have come to our attention during our engagement.

Independence

We are not aware of any relationships between Baker Tilly and the Department that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence.

Related parties

We did not have any significant findings or issues arise during the audit in connection with the Department's related parties

Other matters

We applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information (RSI) that supplements the basic financial statements. Our procedures consisted of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We did not audit the RSI and do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the RSI

Nonattest services

The following nonattest services were provided by Baker Tilly:

- Financial statement preparation
- Adjusting journal entries

In addition, we prepared GASB No. 34 conversion entries which are summarized in the "Reconciliation of the Balance Sheet of Governmental Funds to the Statement of Net Position" and the "Reconciliation of the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balances of Governmental Funds to the Statement of Activities" in the financial statements.

None of these nonattest services constitute an audit under generally accepted auditing standards, including *Government Auditing Standards*.

Board Member resources

Visit our resource page for regulatory updates, trending challenges and opportunities in your industry and other timely updates.

Visit the resource page at <https://www.bakertilly.com/page/audit-committee-resource-center>.

Management representation letter

March 12, 2025

Baker Tilly US, LLP
790 N Water St, Suite 2000
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Baker Tilly US, LLP:

We are providing this letter in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department as of December 31, 2024 and for the year then ended for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and the general fund of Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department and the respective changes in financial position, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). We confirm that we are responsible for the fair presentation of the previously mentioned financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We are also responsible for adopting sound accounting policies, establishing and maintaining internal control over financial reporting, and preventing and detecting fraud.

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. Items are considered material, regardless of size, if they involve an omission or misstatement of accounting information that, in the light of surrounding circumstances, makes it probable that the judgment of a reasonable person relying on the information would be changed or influenced by the omission or misstatement. An omission or misstatement that is monetarily small in amount could be considered material as a result of qualitative factors.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations made to you during your audit.

Financial Statements

- 1) We have fulfilled our responsibilities, as set out in the terms of the audit engagement letter dated October 30, 2024, including our responsibility for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP.
- 2) The financial statements referred to above are fairly presented in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. We have engaged you to advise us in fulfilling that responsibility. The financial statements include all properly classified funds of the primary government and all component units required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America to be included in the financial reporting entity.
- 3) We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

- 4) We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.
- 5) Significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, if any, are reasonable in accordance with U.S. GAAP.
- 6) All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed. No other events, including instances of noncompliance, have occurred subsequent to the financial statement date and through the date of this letter that would require adjustment to or disclosure in the aforementioned financial statements.
- 7) All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- 8) All known audit and bookkeeping adjustments have been included in our financial statements, and we are in agreement with those adjustments.
- 9) We are in agreement with the adjusting journal entries you have proposed, and they have been posted to the appropriate accounts.
- 10) There are no known or possible litigation, claims, and assessments whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements. There are no unasserted claims or assessments that our lawyer has advised us are probable of assertion and must be disclosed in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Information Provided

- 11) We have provided you with:
 - a) Access to all information, of which we are aware, that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as financial records and related data, documentation, and other matters.
 - b) Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit.
 - c) Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
 - d) Minutes of the meetings of the Board or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared.
- 12) We have not completed an assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- 13) We have no knowledge of any fraud or suspected fraud that affects the entity and involves:
 - a) Management,
 - b) Employees who have significant roles in internal control, or
 - c) Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

- 14) We have no knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity received in communications from employees, former employees, regulators, or others.
- 15) We have no knowledge of known instances of noncompliance or suspected noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, or grant agreements, or abuse, whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
- 16) There are no related parties or related party relationships and transactions, including side agreements, of which we are aware.

Other

- 17) There have been no communications from regulatory agencies concerning noncompliance with, or deficiencies in, financial reporting practices.
- 18) The Department has no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets, deferred outflows of resources, liabilities, deferred inflows of resources or fund balance or net position.
- 19) We are responsible for compliance with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and provisions of contracts and grant agreements applicable to us, including tax or debt limits, debt contracts, and IRS arbitrage regulations; and we have identified and disclosed to you all federal, state, and local laws, regulations and provisions of contracts and grant agreements that we believe have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts or other financial data significant to the audit objectives, including legal and contractual provisions for reporting specific activities in separate funds.
- 20) There are no:
 - a) Violations or possible violations of budget ordinances, federal, state, and local laws or regulations (including those pertaining to adopting, approving and amending budgets), provisions of contracts and grant agreements, tax or debt limits, and any related debt covenants whose effects should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as a basis for recording a loss contingency, or for reporting on noncompliance, except those already disclosed in the financial statement, if any.
 - b) Other liabilities or gain or loss contingencies that are required to be accrued or disclosed by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
 - c) Nonspendable, restricted, committed, or assigned fund balances that were not properly authorized and approved.
 - d) Rates being charged to customers other than the rates as authorized by the applicable authoritative body.

21) In regards to the nonattest services performed by you listed below, we acknowledge our responsibility related to these nonattest services and have 1) accepted all management responsibility; 2) designated an individual with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience to oversee the services; 3) evaluated the adequacy and results of the services performed, and 4) accepted responsibility for the results of the services.

a) Financial statement preparation

b) Adjusting journal entries

None of these nonattest services constitute an audit under generally accepted auditing standards, including *Government Auditing Standards*.

- 22) Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department has satisfactory title to all owned assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets nor has any asset been pledged as collateral.
- 23) Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial statement in the event of noncompliance.
- 24) The financial statements include all component units as well as joint ventures with an equity interest, and properly disclose all other joint ventures and other related organizations, if any. Component units have been properly presented as either blended or discrete.
- 25) The financial statements include all fiduciary activities required by GASB No. 84.
- 26) The financial statements properly classify all funds and activities.
- 27) All funds that meet the quantitative criteria in GASB Statement No. 34 and No. 37 for presentation as major are identified and presented as such and all other funds that are presented as major are particularly important to financial statement users.
- 28) Components of net position (net investment in capital assets; restricted; and unrestricted) and components of fund balance (nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned and unassigned) are properly classified and, if applicable, approved.
- 29) Provisions for uncollectible receivables, if any, have been properly identified and recorded.
- 30) Expenses have been appropriately classified in or allocated to functions and programs in the statement of activities, and allocations have been made on a reasonable basis.
- 31) Revenues are appropriately classified in the statement of activities within program revenues and general revenues.
- 32) Interfund, internal, and intra-entity activity and balances have been appropriately classified and reported.
- 33) Deposits and investments are properly classified, valued, and disclosed (including risk disclosures, collateralization agreements, valuation methods, and key inputs, as applicable).
- 34) Capital assets, including infrastructure and intangible assets, are properly capitalized, reported, and, if applicable, depreciated/amortized. Any known impairments have been recorded and disclosed.

- 35) We have appropriately disclosed Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department's policy regarding whether to first apply restricted or unrestricted resources when an expense is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted net position are available and have determined that net position were properly recognized under the policy. We have also disclosed our policy regarding which resources (that is, restricted, committed, assigned or unassigned) are considered to be spent first for expenditures for which more than one resource classification is available.
- 36) We acknowledge our responsibility for the required supplementary information (RSI). The RSI is measured and presented within prescribed guidelines and the methods of measurement and presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period. We have disclosed to you any significant assumptions and interpretations underlying the measurement and presentation of the RSI.
- 37) We assume responsibility for, and agree with, the findings of specialists in evaluating the other postemployment and pension benefits and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures used in the financial statements and underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had impact on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.
- 38) We assume responsibility for, and agree with, the information provided by the Wisconsin Retirement System as audited by the Legislative Audit Bureau relating to the net pension asset/liability and related deferred outflows and deferred inflows and have adequately considered the reasonableness of the amounts and disclosures used in the financial statements and underlying accounting records. We also assume responsibility for the census data that has been reported to the plan.
- 39) We have evaluated GASB Statement No. 101, *Compensated Absences*, and believe that the effects on the financial statements is immaterial and therefore, implementation has not occurred.
- 40) The auditing standards define an annual report as "a document, or combination of documents, typically prepared on an annual basis by management or those charged with governance in accordance with law, regulation, or custom, the purpose of which is to provide owners (or similar stakeholders) with information on the entity's operations and the financial results and financial position as set out in the financial statements." Among other items, an annual report contains, accompanies, or incorporates by reference the financial statements and the auditors' report thereon. We confirm that we do not prepare and have no plans to prepare an annual report.

Sincerely,

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Signed: _____
David Bialk, Fire Chief

Signed: _____
Jill Wellman, Administrative Assistant

Client Services Team



Wendi Unger, CPA

Principal

790 N Water St. Suite 2000
Milwaukee, WI 53202
United States

T +1 (414) 777 5423 | Milwaukee
wendi.unger@bakertilly.com

Accounting changes relevant to Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department

Future accounting standards update

GASB Statement Number	Description	Potentially impacts you	Effective date
102	Certain Risk Disclosures	✓	12/31/25
103	Financial Reporting Model Improvements	✓	12/31/26
104	Disclosure of Certain Capital Assets	✓	12/31/25

Further information on upcoming_

New guidance on disclosure of certain risks

The requirements in GASB Statement No. 102, *Certain Risk Disclosures* is meant to provide financial statement users with information about certain risks when circumstances make a government vulnerable to a heightened possibility of loss or harm. It requires governments to disclose essential information about risks related to vulnerabilities due to certain concentrations or constraints.

- (a) The Statement defines a concentration as a lack of diversity related to an aspect of a significant inflow or outflow of resources—for example, a small number of companies that represent a majority of employment in a government’s jurisdiction, or a government that relies on one revenue source for most of its revenue.
- (b) The Statement defines a constraint as a limitation imposed on a government by an external party or by formal action of the government’s highest level of decision-making authority—such as a voter-approved property tax cap or a state-imposed debt limit.

Concentrations and constraints may limit a government’s ability to acquire resources or control spending.

The Statement generally requires a government to disclose information about a concentration or constraint if all of the following criteria are met:

- (a) The concentration or constraint is *known* to the government prior to issuing the financial statements.
- (b) The concentration or constraint makes the government vulnerable to the risk of a substantial impact.
- (c) An event or events associated with the concentration or constraint that could cause a substantial impact have occurred, have begun to occur, or are more likely than not to begin to occur within 12 months of the date the financial statements are issued.

The disclosures should include a description of the following:

- The concentration or constraint,
- Each event associated with the concentration or constraint that could cause a substantial impact if the event has occurred or has begun to occur prior to the issuance of the financial statements, and
- Actions taken by the government to mitigate the risk prior to the issuance of the financial statements.

Changes to the financial reporting model

GASB Statement 103, *Financial Reporting Model Improvements*, builds on Statement 34 by providing key targeted improvements to the financial reporting model. Its requirements are designed to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of governmental financial reports in providing information essential for decision making and assessing a government's accountability, and
- Address certain application issues.

The targeted improvements contained in Statement 103 establish or modify existing accounting and financial reporting requirements related to:

- Management's discussion and analysis - While the overall requirements do not substantially change management's discussion and analysis, the modifications are meant to improve the analysis included in this section and provide details about the items that should be discussed as currently known facts, decisions, or conditions expected to have a significant financial effect in the subsequent period.
- Unusual or infrequent items (previously known as extraordinary and special items) - The new Statement simplifies GASB literature by eliminating the separate presentation of extraordinary and special items. Under the requirement of Statement 103, applicable items will either be identified as unusual or infrequent, or both.
- Presentation of the proprietary fund statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in fund net position - The changes are designed to improve consistency around the classification of items in these statements by better defining what should be included in operating revenues and expenses and nonoperating revenues and expenses including, for example, the addition of subsidies received or provided as a new category of nonoperating revenues and expenses.
- Major component unit information, and Budgetary comparison information - Statement 103 is designed to improve the consistency of the reporting of major component unit information and budgetary comparison information by specifying required placement of that information.

Two-way audit communications

As part of our audit of your financial statements, we are providing communications to you throughout the audit process. Auditing requirements provide for two-way communication and are important in assisting the auditor and you with more information relevant to the audit.

As this past audit is concluded, we use what we have learned to begin the planning process for next year's audit. It is important that you understand the following points about the scope and timing of our next audit:

- a. We address the significant risks of material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, through our detailed audit procedures.
- b. We will obtain an understanding of the five components of internal control sufficient to assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to error or fraud, and to design the nature, timing and extent of further audit procedures. We will obtain a sufficient understanding by performing risk assessment procedures to evaluate the design of controls relevant to an audit of financial statements and to determine whether they have been implemented. We will use such knowledge to:
 - Identify types of potential misstatements.
 - Consider factors that affect the risks of material misstatement.
 - Design tests of controls, when applicable, and substantive procedures.
- c. We will not express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting or compliance with laws, regulations and provisions of contracts or grant programs.
- d. The concept of materiality recognizes that some matters, either individually or in the aggregate, are important for fair presentation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles while other matters are not important. In performing the audit, we are concerned with matters that, either individually or in the aggregate, could be material to the financial statements. Our responsibility is to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that material misstatements, whether caused by errors or fraud, are detected.

Our audit will be performed in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America.

We are very interested in your views regarding certain matters. Those matters are listed here:

- a. We typically will communicate with your top level of management unless you tell us otherwise.
- b. We understand that the governing board has the responsibility to oversee the strategic direction of your organization, as well as the overall accountability of the entity. Management has the responsibility for achieving the objectives of the entity.
- c. We need to know your views about your organization's objectives and strategies, and the related business risks that may result in material misstatements.
- d. We anticipate that the Department will receive an unmodified opinion on its financial statements.
- e. Which matters do you consider warrant particular attention during the audit, and are there any areas where you request additional procedures to be undertaken?
- f. Have you had any significant communications with regulators or grantor agencies?
- g. Are there other matters that you believe are relevant to the audit of the financial statements?

Also, is there anything that we need to know about the attitudes, awareness and actions of the governing body concerning:

- a. The entity's internal control and its importance in the entity, including how those charged with governance oversee the effectiveness of internal control?
- b. The detection or the possibility of fraud?

We also need to know if you have taken actions in response to developments in financial reporting, laws, accounting standards, governance practices, or other related matters, or in response to previous communications with us.

With regard to the timing of our audit, here is some general information. If necessary, we may do preliminary financial audit work during the months of October-December, and sometimes early in January. Our final financial fieldwork is scheduled during the spring to best coincide with your readiness and report deadlines. After fieldwork, we wrap up our financial audit procedures at our office and may issue drafts of our report for your review. Final copies of our report and other communications are issued after approval by your staff. This is typically 6-12 weeks after final fieldwork, but may vary depending on a number of factors.

Keep in mind that while this communication may assist us with planning the scope and timing of the audit, it does not change the auditor's sole responsibility to determine the overall audit strategy and the audit plan, including the nature, timing and extent of procedures necessary to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence.

We realize that you may have questions on what this all means, or wish to provide other feedback. We welcome the opportunity to hear from you.



**Southern Ozaukee Fire and
 Emergency Medical Services Department**
 11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
 Mequon, WI 53092
 (262) 242-2530
 (262) 242-5042 Fax

TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Financial Policies SOFD

Background

One of the primary objectives in the Southern Ozaukee Fire Department's (SOFD) 2024/2025 Workplan is the development of dedicated financial policies. As an independent entity separate from the City and Village, the creation of customized policies is crucial to addressing the department's unique operational and governance needs.

SOFD, governed by a Board of Directors consisting of elected officials from the participating communities and two ad hoc members, aims to use these policies to standardize financial management, enhance accountability, and ensure clarity in decision-making. This initiative underscores SOFD's commitment to financial integrity, autonomy, and building trust among stakeholders.

The original draft of SOFD's financial policies was based on the City of Mequon's guidelines, which included 19 policy statements. After an initial review, some policies were deemed not applicable and were eliminated, while others served as the foundation for SOFD's financial policies. As a result, the 19 policies were streamlined into 13 key areas, as outlined below:

Policies Kept	Policies Eliminated
Budgeting	Basis of Budgeting
Reserve Requirements	Amending the Budget
Revenues	Cash Management/Investments
Expenditures	Accounting, Auditing, & Financial Reporting
Capital Planning	Vehicle Leasing
Long-Term Financial Planning	Sewer User Rate & Levy
Debt Management	
Purchasing	
Credit Card Use	
Public Surplus Property	
Employee Travel	
Donations	
Payment Card Acceptance	

During the November 2024 SOFD Board meeting, members were presented with the draft policies and asked to provide feedback on several important aspects. These included determining the appropriate level of reserve funds, establishing borrowing guidelines for significant capital expenditures, and creating a structured purchasing policy to ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency.

The Board's input was used to refine the policies to better align with SOFD's objectives and governance model while promoting operational efficiency and fiscal responsibility. Additionally, the draft policies were reviewed by Baker Tilly, the department's auditors, who provided professional feedback to ensure alignment with best practices in financial management, compliance standards, and audit requirements.

The revised policies were presented to the Board again at the January 2025 meeting for further review and input.

Analysis

Most of the feedback received primarily focused on improving the document's formatting and addressing incorrect references that remained after the policies were adapted from the City of Mequon's original policies. Both the input from Baker Tilly and the Board's feedback have been incorporated into the current draft for review.

Below is a summary of key questions and comments from the Baker Tilly review and the Board meeting discussion of the Employee Manual:

Punctuation, Grammatical, and Formatting Issues

All identified issues were addressed, with corrections made to punctuation, grammar, and consistent formatting applied across the manual.

References to the IGA

In the draft Financial Policies, references to the original Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Mequon and the Village of Thiensville, which merged the fire departments, have been removed.

Budgeting Policy

A suggestion was made to include a specific date for the completion and submission of the SOFD budget to allow sufficient time for the two communities to approve the budget and incorporate the fire department into their budgeting process.

Reserve Requirements Policy

The Reserve Requirements policy clarifies that SOFD aims to maintain an unassigned General Fund Balance or Cash Reserve between 16-25% of the following year's operating expenditures. This target supports financial stability, improves emergency preparedness, and strengthens the Department's investment credit rating.

Capital Planning Policy

To comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), a line was added to the Capital Planning policy stating that “Board approval of any change orders related to an approved capital expense or project exceeding \$25,000 shall be subject to Board approval.”

Debt Management Policy

A line was added to the Debt Management policy stating, “Certain costs incurred annually reflect an investment in the future of the Department. These costs include the development, acquisition, and replacement of assets that will be used by the residents of the City of Mequon and Village of Thiensville over an extended period. Financing these long-term assets is often appropriately done through the issuance of long-term debt instruments, which is most likely to occur through the City’s or the Village’s borrowing authority.”

Purchasing Policy

The following purchasing thresholds were established:

- Under \$5,000: Fire Chief
- \$5,000 - \$24,999: Fire Chief and Mequon City Administrator
- \$25,000 or more: Fire Chief, Mequon City Administrator, and SOFD Board

Credit Card Policy

The following credit card thresholds were established:

The monthly credit limit will be \$15,000 for the Fire Chief and \$5,000 for all other cardholders. The Fire Chief may approve an increase to the monthly credit limit on an as-needed basis.

Donation Policy

A new provision was added to the Donation Policy stating, “Any donations received by the Department will be acknowledged in writing through a receipt letter that includes SOFD’s Federal ID #, along with the monetary amount (or equivalent) of the donation.”

These updates and revisions aim to improve the clarity, accuracy, and functionality of the policies while ensuring they align with SOFD’s operational goals and governance standards.

Fiscal Impact

Not Applicable

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of the final policies.

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department

SOUTHERN OZAUKEE FIRE & EMS DEPARTMENT



Financial Policies

Adopted March 12, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS Page 1

INTRODUCTION Page 2

POLICY STATEMENT 1: BUDGETING Page 3

POLICY STATEMENT 2: RESERVE REQUIREMENTS Page 4

POLICY STATEMENT 3: REVENUES Page 5

POLICY STATEMENT 4: EXPENDITURES Page 6

POLICY STATEMENT 5: CAPITAL PLANNING Page 7

POLICY STATEMENT 6: LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING Page 9

POLICY STATEMENT 7: DEBT MANAGEMENT Page 10

POLICY STATEMENT 8: PURCHASING Page 11

POLICY STATEMENT 9: CREDIT CARD USE Page 14

POLICY STATEMENT 10: SURPLUS PROPERTY Page 16

POLICY STATEMENT 11: EMPLOYEE TRAVEL Page 18

POLICY STATEMENT 12: DONATIONS Page 20

POLICY STATEMENT 13: PAYMENT CARD ACCEPTANCE Page 22

INTRODUCTION

The components of this document have been prepared by staff to provide an outline describing the general processes which are currently used to help facilitate meeting the broader goals of the Department. Furthermore, these policies ensure that the financial resources of the Department are managed in a manner consistent with those expectations. They are intended to highlight the significant components of the processes used to achieve these goals and are not intended to be an all-inclusive listing of the duties required of staff at the direction of the SOFD Board.

These policies will be reviewed periodically in order to determine if any additional policies may be necessary to fill identified policy gaps, or if any updates are required due to changes in SOFD's practices. Any recommended changes will be presented to the SOFD Board for consideration and approval.

DRAFT

**POLICY STATEMENT 1
BUDGETING**

Budgets requests are prepared by the Fire Chief with the assistance of staff. The SOFD's budget is prepared for the fiscal year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. The budget is a total financial management plan for the Fire Department's operations.

Process Overview:

By September 1 of each year, the Fire Chief shall submit a proposed budget for the following fiscal year to the SOFD Board for consideration.

The SOFD Board evaluates and amends the proposed budget at their discretion and then adopts a final balanced budget by October 1. A balanced budget requires that proposed budget expenditures shall not exceed the estimated revenues and any applied fund balances.

Thereafter, the Board shall submit the approved Operating Budget to the governing bodies of the municipalities by October 1 of each year. The proposed Operating Budget shall contain an explanation of the Board's reasons for recommending the Operation Budget.

Action by each municipality (City of Mequon, Village of Thiensville) in connection with approval of the Operating Budget (adoption by resolution) shall be completed by November 15 of each year.

No expenditure shall be made or contracted by the Board or any employee with respect to any budget item not contained in the prior year's Operating Budget, until the governing bodies of the municipalities approve the proposed Operating Budget.

In the event an Operating Budget is not approved by the municipalities as set forth above, Net Operating Expenses on a monthly basis shall not exceed Net Operating Expenses during the prior calendar year, plus any cost increases resulting from contractual obligations incurred in the prior year, until budget approval is obtained by both municipalities.

POLICY STATEMENT 2 **RESERVE REQUIREMENTS**

This policy outlines the financial practices for the Southern Ozaukee Fire Department (SOFD) regarding maintaining an appropriate cash reserve. SOFD aims to keep an unassigned General Fund Balance or Cash Reserve between 16-25% of the subsequent year's operating expenditures. This goal supports financial stability, improves readiness for emergencies, and strengthens the Department's investment credit rating.

Key Details:

- 1. Fund Balance Use:** If funds exceed 25% of the subsequent year's expenditure budget, the SOFD Board may allocate any excess reserves for:
 - A. One-time capital improvement projects or expenses
 - B. Debt abatement or reduction
 - C. Investments or programs that enhance efficiency or reduce costs

- 2. Process for Fund Balance Management:** The Fire Chief will annually provide the SOFD Board with fund balance information as part of the annual budgeting process. This report will include:
 - A. Current fund balance status
 - B. Projections for any budget surplus or deficit
 - C. A five-year history of fund balances, providing insight into financial trends

- 3. Primary Sources of Fund Balance Changes:**
 - A. Operating budget surpluses or deficits
 - B. Planned use of funds as outlined in the annual budget

POLICY STATEMENT 3 REVENUES

The Department will seek to maintain a reliable revenue base and will continue to explore ways to diversify its revenue sources, seek full cost recovery for services through user fees when appropriate, and establish cost sharing arrangements with other governmental units in order to minimize the reliance on property taxes to support Department services.

Process Overview:

When preparing forecasts for the annual budget, staff will utilize generally accepted forecasting techniques that include the use of historical data and trend analysis, as well as considering the impact of changing economic conditions on SOFD's revenue sources. This approach produces revenue estimates that are as reliable as possible and reduces the likelihood of actual revenues falling short of budget estimates during the year.

Staff will also continuously explore opportunities to take advantage of alternative funding sources and revenue streams to help offset the costs of providing Fire & EMS services, and to reduce OFD's reliance on the tax levy.

The Department will develop a fee schedule that determines the appropriate level of fees to charge for services which are provided for the benefit of only certain individuals. This fee schedule is designed to estimate the rates that need to be charged by the Department in order to cover the cost of the services provided. Such factors will consider State Statutes, comparability with other jurisdictions, affordability and where applicable, SOFD's calculated overhead model.

POLICY STATEMENT 4 EXPENDITURES

The SOFD will administer expenditures in an efficient and cost-effective manner in order to provide both residents and taxpayers with delivery of the highest quality public services within the resources available.

Process Overview:

As part of the budget process, the SOFD Board and staff will continually evaluate the service needs of the community and the methods of providing those services in a most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Unless an exception is made by the SOFD Board, the SOFD's operating budget will not use one-time revenues to support ongoing expenditures.

The SOFD will maintain expenditure categories according to applicable State Statutes and administrative regulations.

As part of the annual capital planning process, the SOFD Board and staff will work to develop a comprehensive plan to effectively maintain the SOFD's capital assets and infrastructure at sufficient levels to meet ongoing service requirements, as well as to minimize future maintenance and replacement costs. Capital expenditures shall meet the requirements of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and any necessary change orders related to an approved capital expense or project exceeding \$25,000 shall be subject to Board approval.

On an ongoing basis, staff will work to minimize the cost of purchasing materials and providing services while still maintaining quality and performance. This is accomplished through compliance with the SOFD's purchasing policy, including, but not limited to, the use of competitive bidding for major contracts and purchases, obtaining multiple price quotes and estimates for other non-routine purchases, and through cooperative arrangements with other governmental agencies for the procurement or delivery of various goods and services.

POLICY STATEMENT 5 CAPITAL PLANNING

To assist in facilitating long-term planning for capital expenditures and resources that will be necessary to meet the future needs of the Department, the SOFD Board shall review and adopt a comprehensive five-year capital plan on an annual basis.

The Board may recommend a proposed Capital Improvement Budget to the governing bodies of the two municipalities at any time. The Board may only recommend a Capital Improvement Budget with the approval of at least four members of the Board. The proposed Capital Improvement Budget shall contain an explanation of the Board's reasons for recommending the Capital Improvement Budget. No expenditures shall be made or contracted for by the Board or any employee with respect to any Capital Improvement Expenditure in the proposed Capital Improvement Budget until approved by the governing bodies of the municipalities. After such approval, the Board is authorized to enter into contracts and make expenditures deemed necessary by the Board for the Capital Improvement Expenses described in the Capital Improvement Budget as and when determined by the Board (unless otherwise specified in the approval of the governing bodies of the municipalities), and in amounts not in excess of the approved Capital Improvement Budget.

Process Overview:

Prior to consideration of the annual operating budget, the SOFD Board will be presented with a capital improvement plan for all pending or proposed capital projects that may be needed within the next five years. This plan is called the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Under the direction of the SOFD Board proposed projects will be submitted by Fire Chief for consideration and inclusion in the Five-Year CIP. This plan will include a detailed description of each project, a timeframe of when the project needs to be completed, an estimate of the project's cost and useful life, and any information on proposed funding sources other than property tax revenues.

The Department will identify the estimated costs and potential funding sources for each proposed capital project before it is submitted to the SOFD Board for approval. The Department will use intergovernmental assistance and other outside funding sources whenever possible. Based on this information, staff and the SOFD Board will then prioritize projects and align funding requirements for approved projects.

The approved projects and funding levels for the following year will then be transferred from the CIP to the capital budget for the next fiscal year unless further modified by the SOFD Board as part of the annual budget development process. In addition to new annual capital budget funding, any remaining balance at the end of the year within each project account will automatically be carried forward into the next fiscal year.

**POLICY STATEMENT 6
LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING**

To assist the SOFD Board in developing strategies to achieve the long-term financial goals of the Department, the SOFD Board shall evaluate on an annual basis, a five-year Financial Plan forecasting the financial resources that will be required to support the future operations of the SOFD.

Process Overview:

Each year, in advance of the annual budget development process, Department staff shall prepare a Five-Year Financial Forecast of projected revenues and expenditures needed to support the planned future operations of the SOFD.

This forecast will include all known and planned activities included in the Capital Improvement Plan, as well as forecasts for future debt costs, operating costs, and non-tax levy revenue estimates.

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POLICY STATEMENT 7 DEBT MANAGEMENT

The SOFD acknowledges that certain costs incurred on an annual basis reflect an investment in the future of the Department. These types of costs include development, acquisition, and replacement of assets that will be used by the residents of the City of Mequon and Village of Thiensville over a long period of time. Financing these long-term assets is often appropriately accomplished through the issuance of long-term debt instruments, which is most likely to occur through either the City's or the Village's borrowing authority.

It is the responsibility of the SOFD Board and Department staff to monitor the financial health of the Department. A significant portion of the SOFD's financial health is determined by its ability to manage debt. Further, it is the responsibility of the Fire Chief and SOFD Board to regularly monitor the SOFD's outstanding debt and to recommend issuance, replacement and retirement of outstanding debt.

Process Overview:

1. Financing Considerations

- A. The Department will confine long-term borrowing to capital improvements, or capital equipment or other long-term projects which cannot and, appropriately should not, be financed from current revenues.
- B. The Department will not use long-term debt to finance current operations, nor will long-term debt be used to finance the cost of short-lived (less than five years) depreciable assets.
- C. In general, the final maturity of bonds and notes issued by the Department should not exceed the expected useful life of the underlying project for which it is being issued.
- D. The Department will retire bond anticipation debt within six (6) months after completion of the underlying project or upon the next general debt issuance.

2. Debt Limits

- A. The Department will keep the maturity of all outstanding general obligation bonds at or below 20 years, unless such a limit would otherwise inhibit consideration and/or completion of a project.

POLICY STATEMENT 8 PURCHASING POLICY

The SOFD, as a local government entity, must ensure that the expenditure of funds occurs in a manner that balances the desire for lowest cost to the Department with an expectation of a quality services. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and procedures to be followed for the procurement of goods and services within the Department. The controls and procedures set forth are intended to provide reasonable assurance that the lowest cost and highest quality goods or services are obtained, while balancing the need for flexibility in Department operations. This policy covers items that have been included in the annual Department budget as approved by the SOFD Board. Any items in excess of \$25,000 that are not included in the budget require specific approval by the SOFD Board, prior to purchase.

Process Overview:

1. General
 - A. Procurements consist of the following three major categories:
 - i. Goods: Tangible Items (e.g., equipment, supplies, vehicles, etc.)
 - ii. Services: Items requiring outside labor, maintenance agreements, etc.
 - iii. Facility maintenance, building/facility construction, other improvements, etc.
 - B. The Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) have responsibility for procurement, which includes the delegated authority to be a purchasing agent of the Department.
 - C. When an emergency will not permit the use of the competitive processes outlined in this policy, the Fire Chief and the Mequon City Administrator may determine the procurement methodology most appropriate to the situation. Appropriate documentation of the basis for the emergency should be maintained. In a non-emergency situation that does not allow time to obtain three bids, the SOFD Board will be notified as soon as possible, and staff will address the purchase in a memorandum to the Board. Any emergency or non-emergency purchase in excess of the threshold requiring Board approval will be brought to the SOFD Board for ratification at its next meeting.
 - D. In situations of extreme price volatility, the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) may approve a purchase and then submit the requisition for approval *ex post facto*. Appropriate documentation of vendors solicited for bids shall be maintained.
2. Purchase of Goods
 - A. Guidelines for Approval Authority of Purchases:

- i. Under \$5,000: The Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) must approve prior to purchase. It is recommended that competitive quotes be obtained, but specific documentation is not required.
 - ii. \$5,000 to \$24,999: Fire Chief approval is required; competitive quotes must be documented via a bid sheet or similar. The purchasing requisition will be reviewed and approved by the Mequon City Administrator prior to purchase.
 - iii. \$25,000 or More: Competitive bids or proposals are required; must submit to the SOFD Board for approval, prior to purchase.
 - B. Unless there is only one qualified source, bids or quotes should be obtained from at least three vendors.
 - C. In general, the lowest responsible bid should be accepted for procurement. Awards shall be made only to responsible vendors that possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement.
 - D. Sole source purchases are allowed in the following circumstances:
 - i. The item or service is only available from a single source.
 - ii. After competitive procurement solicitations, competition is determined to be inadequate.
 - iii. The purchase is from another governmental body, subject to market verification of the proposed pricing; or
 - iv. The item is being purchased through a cooperative purchasing arrangement such as the State bid list, or State of Wisconsin VendorNet.
3. Contracts for Services
 - A. The Department's Attorney should be consulted on the need for legal review of any proposed purchasing or procurement contracts.
 - B. Where applicable, a competitive process for selection of vendors for contracts for services must be used.
 - C. Contracts for services that are not specifically identified in the budget shall be presented to the SOFD Board for review and approval, prior to signing.
 - D. The following approval thresholds (after applicable legal review) are to be used:
 - i. Under \$5,000: Fire Chief
 - ii. \$5,000 - \$24,999: Fire Chief and Mequon City Administrator
 - iii. \$25,000 or More: Fire Chief, Mequon City Administrator and SOFD Board
4. The Board President and Fire Chief shall sign contracts on behalf of the Department. Prior to signing any service contract, regardless of size, the Board President may refer the contract to the SOFD Board for review and approval. Unless otherwise required, general

authority to enter into contracts within the constraints of this policy is delegated to the Board President and Fire Chief and may be changed from time to time via resolution adopted by the Board. No contracts will be processed without documentation that the approval process has been followed and appropriate reviews completed.

- A. Unless approved by the SOFD Board, automatic renewals for contracted services are not otherwise permitted.

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POLICY STATEMENT 9 CREDIT CARD USE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the use of credit cards, including credit limits, authority and standards of prudence. The policy is intended to be broad enough to allow the employee to function properly within the parameters of responsibility and authority, yet specific enough to adequately safeguard SOFD's assets.

Process Overview:

1. The use of credit cards is based upon the fact that there are exceptions in which convenience and/or timing may be a concern, requiring a change from normal purchasing procedures.
2. Purchases by credit card may be appropriate on a limited basis, and limited to specific individuals within the Department.
3. Department credit cards are not allowed for personal use. In the event an employee uses a credit card either accidentally or intentionally for personal use, the employee shall reimburse the Department immediately. Credit card privileges are subject to revocation if personal use becomes an issue.
4. Credit cards must be kept in a secure location by the card holder.
5. Employees eligible to be a card holder include the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and any other management staff as approved by the Fire Chief.
6. Use of credit cards is restricted to:
 - A. Contingency situations involving short timing notices as to when funds are needed for a purchase, whereby the situation results in the inability to give advance notice of a need for funds.
 - B. Miscellaneous purchases from vendors who do not provide the Department with a line of credit in which it is difficult to know what expenses will be incurred.
 - C. Occasional online Department purchases.
7. Credit card use is permitted for attending training & conference events, whereupon it may be more efficient to do so rather than requesting an advance.
8. The monthly cycle credit limit will be \$15,000 for the Fire Chief and \$5,000 for all other individual card holders. The Fire Chief may approve an increase to the monthly credit limit, on an as-needed basis.

- A. Itemized sales receipts associated with each credit card purchase must be retained by the card holder and provided monthly to the Fire Chief for review and approval, along with the monthly credit card bill attached to the monthly statement for payment processing.
- B. A brief explanation as to what the charge was for should be noted on each sales receipt. This is necessary information in order to process a credit card statement for payment.
- C. The card holder shall surrender the card to the Fire Chief upon separation of employment from the Department.

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POLICY STATEMENT 10 PUBLIC SURPLUS PROPERTY

The SOFD has adopted this policy for the purpose of establishing guidelines for the disposition of public surplus property. Surplus Property is defined as property (individual or in the aggregate) owned by the Fire Department that has become obsolete, been replaced, or has generally outlived its useful service to the Fire Department. The objective of this policy is to maximize the value received upon disposal of surplus property of the Department.

Process Overview:

1. Surplus property with an estimated value of more than \$1,000:
 - A. Public sale (external auction, set price, or negotiated price). The Fire Chief may approve the disposal of surplus property with a value estimated to be in excess of \$1,000 through external public auction, public posting at a set price, or through negotiated sale. The SOFD Board will be notified of the sale of any surplus property with a value in excess of \$1,000.
 - B. Trade-in. For certain types of surplus property, it may be customary for a vendor to offer a trade-in discount or credit for the surplus property when purchasing new or replacement equipment. Trade-ins are allowable when the purchase price of the new equipment is at the lowest competitive purchase price, and the value of the discount or credit for the surplus property meets or exceeds the estimated fair market sale value. This protocol may be utilized if:
 - i. the discount from trade-in is stated clearly within the purchase agreement; and
 - ii. the trade-in and subsequent purchase have been provided for within the budget.
2. Surplus property with an estimated value of more than \$250 but less than \$1,000:
 - A. The Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) may authorize the dismantling or scrapping of equipment for salvage value if such value exists. This decision shall be made having considered the possibility of obtaining a fair market value by other means.
3. Surplus property with an estimated value of less than \$250
 - A. Certain surplus property may have no readily convertible value and may be discarded under the following conditions:
 - iii. If the property is valued under \$250, it may be summarily disposed of, if it is not possible or practical to bring such to public sale, trade-in, or

dismantle/scrap. This distinction will be made by the Fire Chief, or his/her designee(s).

4. No surplus property shall be sold or given to any employee, employee's family member, or an employee's designee.
5. The proceeds from the sale of Department assets shall be deposited in official Department bank or capital project accounts.
6. Department employees are prohibited from accepting cash payments in exchange for the sale of Department assets.
7. If the property cannot be sold, it may be donated to another government agency or not-for-profit entity. A record shall be created of the date, description, condition of the asset and recipient and forwarded to the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s).
8. If the property cannot be sold or donated, it shall be recycled in an environmentally friendly manner, whenever possible.

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POLICY STATEMENT 11 EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

It is the SOFD's policy to reimburse employees for ordinary, necessary, and reasonable travel expenses that are related to the transaction of Department business. Employees are responsible for complying with this policy. Employees submitting expenses that are not in compliance with this policy risk delayed, partial or forfeited reimbursement.

Process Overview

1. When employees of the Department are required to travel on official business, the Department will pay reasonable amounts for transportation, meals, lodging, and miscellaneous approved expenses. An employee is expected to show good judgment when incurring travel expenses. No reimbursements will be made for attendance at events sponsored by, or affiliated with, political parties.
2. The Fire Chief must authorize all out-of-town travel which require overnight accommodations.
3. Transportation:
 - A. Employees required to travel by air should travel economy class whenever available.
 - B. An employee must obtain permission from the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) prior to using Department vehicles. Gasoline must be obtained at the SOFD's pumps prior to departure.
 - C. When an employee is authorized by the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) to use a personal vehicle for official travel outside of the Department, the employee shall be compensated at the current mileage rate as established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
 - D. An employee of the Department may use a rental car when authorized by the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s). The rental car should be used for official business only. The car shall be rented under the employee's name when reserving the vehicle. The employee shall use a Department credit card or account with the rental company. The employee shall not purchase the insurance offered by the rental car company, as SOFD's insurance program provides coverage for hired/rented vehicles.
4. Employee lodging expenses shall be covered while traveling on Department business. Employees are expected to make lodging reservations in advance whenever possible and to take other actions to ensure that lodging is secured at the most reasonable rate possible.

5. Meals

- A. Employees traveling on Department business shall be reimbursed for meals if the employee pays, in accordance with per diem limits as specified in the Mequon Municipal Code. The Department will not pay for alcoholic beverages. Claims for meals shall represent actual, reasonable and necessary expenses. Tips are limited to 18%.
 - B. When an employee is entitled to two or more consecutive meals in a day (this includes meals included in a registration fee, a lodging rate or served aboard plane), he/she may exceed the maximum on one or more meal claims as desired, as long as the total allowable for the consecutive meals per day is not exceeded. Each day is considered separately for application of this policy. If meal maximums are not reached on one day, the savings do not accrue and cannot be applied to expenses claimed on another day or for other costs such as lodging.
 - C. The Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) shall determine what meals will be reimbursed based upon the times and dates of travel. Where conference registration or training tuition fees include one or more meals, only those meals not covered by such fees shall be reimbursed by the Department. Where a conference offers meals in conjunction with the conference program but does not include those meals in the registration fee, the Department shall pay for those meals selected by the employee.
6. Miscellaneous expenses, such as parking fees, taxi/ride fares, fax transmissions, and other bona fide miscellaneous expenses, shall be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts or other suitable documentation. Tips for meals, baggage handling, transportation etc., will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 18% of the bill.
 7. It is the responsibility of the employee incurring the expense to obtain the necessary approval from the Fire Chief or his/her designee(s) before making travel arrangements. The Department will pay registration, lodging and transportation (air, train, bus, rental car) to the employee or vendor, provided a supervisor-approved Travel & Training Expense Report with appropriate documentation is presented to the Fire Chief within ten days of the employee's return.
 8. Documentation: Claims for reimbursement must be accompanied by an original vendor receipt or bank credit card slip showing the amount paid and items/services received.
 9. Reimbursement will not be paid for expenses incurred by spouses, guests or other persons not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy or state regulations. One person may claim reimbursement for several employees or officials dining together, if all the names are listed on the reimbursement claim.

POLICY STATEMENT 12 DONATIONS

General

SOFD's Donation Policy provides those in the community with the opportunity to give through memorials, gifts and donations. This policy is not intended to compete with other non-profits or friend groups with which the Department works, but rather to provide those that specifically are interested in Department projects the opportunity to give.

Any donation to the Department of land, a vehicle, apparatus or other property shall require the approval of the Board prior to acceptance by the Department, if such a donation is from an organization or one or more residents of a municipality, and the donor specifies municipality's obligation to the Department as follows:

1. If the item donated was scheduled to be purchased pursuant to the Operating Budget, the fair market value of the donation as reasonably determined by the Board shall be credited against the municipality's Operating Budget obligations; or
2. The municipality shall receive a credit of 1/10 of the fair market value of the item, as reasonably determined by the Board, for each of the 10 years following the donation.

Process Overview:

Prior to accepting any donation, the Department and its employees must consider:

1. Is it consistent with the aesthetic and functional integrity of the SOFD's existing and proposed facilities and goals?
2. Whether a donation causes unbudgeted expenditures or a significant ongoing expenditure responsibility for the Department, and if there are funds to support these donations.
3. Whether it creates liability for the Department regarding the health and safety of facility users.
4. That donations do not create conflict of interest or special treatment concerns, or other ethical issues related to a Board member or Department employee.

The Department reserves the right to forgo any donation.

The Department must have statutory authority to use/spend the donation for the purpose(s) that it is intended for.

All items purchased or accepted by donation will receive standard levels of maintenance by the Department, or as otherwise documented in an agreement during the donation's normal life

expectancy. Any donations received by the Department will be acknowledged in writing through a receipt letter that includes SOFD's Federal ID #, along with the monetary amount (or equivalent) of the donation.

Items that are damaged will be repaired or replaced as feasible, but the Department does not guarantee replacement of any items damaged beyond repair, or where the cost of doing so is not considered cost effective.

Any solicitation of gifts on behalf of the Department for public purposes must comply with the general conditions listed below:

1. An elected official, appointed local official or employee shall not solicit any donation to the Department under circumstances that in fact or in appearance:
 - A. Rewards, influences, or tends to impair the judgement of the performance of the official's or employee's official duties; or
 - B. Provides special consideration, treatment, advantage, privilege or exemption for, or coerces a potential donor.
2. Inspectors or other employees with enforcement powers should not solicit gifts from any source. Exceptions to this rule would be an annual community-building or capital project campaign (e.g., purchase of a new ambulance, construction of a new fire station, etc.).
3. Employees with discretionary authority over any permit or application should not solicit donations.
4. Donations should not be solicited from any of the following interested entities:
 - A. Current Department vendors and contractors.
 - B. Vendors, contractors, entities or individuals who have had contracts or submitted proposals or bids within the last 12 months.
 - C. Vendors, contractors, entities or individuals reasonably anticipated to have business with the Department within the next 3 months.
 - D. Persons or entities actively promoting or opposing Department legislation.
 - E. Persons or entities with matters pending before the SOFD Board.

POLICY STATEMENT 13 PAYMENT CARD ACCEPTANCE

The Department accepts payment for services in the form of cash, check, and credit/debit card. Card payments must be processed in compliance with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) requirements, which are intended to limit exposure and/or theft of personal cardholder information.

This document identifies the requirements that SOFD will follow in accepting payments by card. There is only one method for processing transactions: online. Card payments will not be accepted over-the-phone as they pose the greatest risk for fraud. However, if the card provider offers Interactive Voice Response (IVR), an automated way to accept payments securely over the phone, this will be allowable per the SOFD's financial policy.

1. Costs Associated with Accepting Payment by Card

There are one-time, recurring, and transactional fees associated with accepting card payments. The one-time fee for the terminal(s) or card-reader devices as well as the recurring maintenance fees on those terminals will be absorbed by the Department. Additionally, the recurring annual fee to integrate with different software programs outside of SOFD's ERP, if applicable, will be assumed by the Department. All transactional card fees will be passed to the customer as a convenience fee.

2. Daily Recording of Card Transactions and Reconciliations

All funds received via card will be processed and deposited to a Department-designated bank account. All card transactions must be settled daily and recorded timely in SOFD's financial records. Card bank deposit activity is monitored and reconciled to the merchant statement and financial system monthly by the administrative assistant, to ensure that all card activity is being recorded.

3. Refunding and Disputes of Card Payment

When an item or service is purchased using a card, and a refund is necessary, the refund must be credited to the same card account from which the purchase was made. When a customer disputes the validity of a bank card transaction, a chargeback to SOFD's bank account is automatically generated by SOFD's merchant services provider.

4. Protecting and Securing Customers' Personal Information

All personal card information must be protected and should not be stored. Failure to maintain strict controls over this information could result in a breach of the data, large fines or penalties, and the inability to continue to process card transactions. Personal card data should never be written down or moved from the Department receiving this data. Cardholder information should never be sent or requested over-the-phone, or via email, fax, or instant messaging.

5. Possible Lost or Stolen Card Data

Due to the Department not storing card information and not accepting card payments over the phone, there should be minimal exposure.

6. PCI Compliance

The PCI DSS Program is a mandated set of security standards that were created by the major credit card companies to offer merchants and service providers with a complete, unified approach to safeguarding cardholder data.

The PCI DSS requirements apply to all payment card network members, merchants, and service providers that store, process, or transmit cardholder data. The requirements apply to all methods of card processing. As SOFD accepts card payments, it is responsible for adhering to all twelve standards in the PCI-DSS, as follows:

- A. Install and maintain a firewall configuration to protect cardholder data.
- B. Do not use vendor-supplied defaults for system passwords and other security parameters.
- C. Protect stored cardholder data.
- D. Encrypt transmission of cardholder data across open, public networks.
- E. Use and regularly update anti-virus software.
- F. Develop and maintain secure systems and applications.
- G. Restrict access to cardholder data by business need-to-know.
- H. Assign a unique ID to each person with computer access.
- I. Restrict physical access to cardholder data.
- J. Track and monitor all access to network resources and cardholder data.
- K. Regularly test security systems and processes.
- L. Maintain a policy that addresses information security.

7. Maintain Procedures that Addresses Information Security

The SOFD's card processor must maintain compliance with PCI DSS requirements. By partnering with a compliant third party, the SOFD's risk exposure is minimized; however, it is not eliminated. Also, by not storing card information, not writing down card information, and not accepting card payments over the phone, exposure is further minimized. Each employee that accepts payment via card must acknowledge card processing procedures annually.

8. Restrict Access to Cardholder Data

Access to payment card terminals is limited to only authorized employees. The physical location of payment card terminals should be protected, monitored, and secured. Only authorized employees will have access to the merchant accounts and payment card terminal settlement processes.



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
Emergency Medical Services Department
11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-2530
(262) 242-5042 Fax

TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Employee Manual

Background

As part of the Southern Ozaukee Fire Department's (SOFD) 2024/25 Workplan, the department is responsible for creating its own Employee Manual. This new manual will replace the previous reliance on key documents from the City of Mequon, which included:

- The City of Mequon Personnel Code and Employee Handbook
- The City of Mequon Classification and Compensation Study (January 2023)
- An expired Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the City of Mequon and the Mequon Fire and EMS Association

During the January SOFD Board Meeting, several outstanding questions were raised regarding the final edits of the Employee Manual. Board members were encouraged to submit any further comments or questions to the Chief by January 31, 2025. All submitted comments have been carefully addressed and incorporated into the final draft of the Employee Manual. The updated Employee Manual will be presented to the Board for review adoption at the March Board Meeting.

Analysis

The SOFD Employee Manual has been reviewed to ensure it is compliant with all State and Federal laws and is well-suited to the department's needs. It underwent a thorough review process that included:

- An initial review by the City of Mequon Human Resources Director.
- A legal review for compliance with State and Federal laws by labor attorneys at Von Briesen and Roper.
- A review and input from Attorney and retired Fire Chief Chris Bell.

Summary of Questions and Comments from the November Board Meeting Review of the Employee Manual:

- Punctuation, Grammatical, and Formatting Issues
Comments: Several board members noted minor punctuation errors and formatting inconsistencies throughout the document.

Resolution: All issues were addressed, with corrected punctuation, grammar, and consistent formatting applied across the manual.

- Duplicated or Overlapping Policies

Comments: A few policies in the General Policies and Standards of Conduct sections were found to be redundant or too similar.

Resolution: Duplicated policies were removed, and overlapping content was consolidated into a single section for improved clarity and coherence.

- Clarification of Policy Terminology

Comments: Board members requested clarification on specific terminology used in policies regarding employee behavior and reporting procedures.

Resolution: Definitions and examples were added to ensure clarity, and ambiguous terms were re-worded for easier understanding.

- Content Consistency

Comments: It was pointed out that certain sections used different language to describe similar concepts, which could cause confusion.

Resolution: Consistent language was used throughout the manual to describe key concepts, ensuring uniformity in tone and meaning.

Below is a summary of the questions and comments made by the reviewing parties and the resolution of the outstanding issues.

Accident Policy

The policy mentions the PIO officer, stating that only the Chief or a designated PIO can speak on behalf of the Department, as outlined in the Communication Policy. Additionally, it was clarified that a claim, particularly for worker compensation, cannot be denied based on the timing of reporting an accident.

Harassment & Workplace Violence Policy

The policy does not specifically mention reporting sexual harassment outside the chain of command, such as to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC). However, it is clear that a supervisor must be contacted, and all supervisors have been trained on the proper reporting procedures for incidents.

Bereavement Leave

The question about the difference between 40-hour and 56-hour employees and the number of "days" given to each was addressed by adding clarifying language in the policy.

Nepotism Policy (promotion, hiring, process)

The policy was rewritten to clarify who can be hired and to establish limits on promotions and transfers, addressing the question of whether more restrictions were intended.

Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

The text was revised for consistency, consolidating the policy to include the use of vaping products and smokeless tobacco into a single, unified policy.

Sick Leave

The policy was updated to allow sick time accumulation starting from the date of hire, with usage permitted after six months.

Vacation

The vacation time for 40-hour employees was aligned with the City of Mequon Personnel Code, while the vacation time for 56-hour employees was reviewed in comparison to other local CBA agreements.

Medical Plan

The question was whether the section on various plans should be moved to a separate appendix to avoid yearly revisions of the main document. It was decided to keep it in the manual, with the understanding that any changes would still require adoption.

Employee Contributions

The method was questioned, with a suggestion to calculate the average cost and apply the same deductions for each paycheck. However, the SOFD uses the City of Mequon for payroll processing, and historically, two deductions per month have been the established practice.

Open Enrollment

"Qualifying events" are defined by the IRS, and a reference to this definition is included in the manual.

Immoral Conduct

The concern was raised about the enforceability of morality in the policy, noting that Parts 1 and 2 are broad and vague, while Part 3 is more specific and actionable. The intent of including this in the manual is to support the department's position if disciplinary action ever needs to be applied based on morality.

Fictitious Illness

This is redundant with other parts of this document and was eliminated.

Alcohol and Drugs

This is redundant with other parts of this document and was eliminated.

Gifts

This is redundant with other parts of this document and was eliminated.

Abuse of Position

"Without chief approval" was eliminated from the last sentence.

Gambling

The gambling policy to rewritten to "members shall not engage in illegal gambling."

Unauthorized Use of Equipment

Definitions were added to the policy.

Cooperation with Other Members

“Members shall follow the chain of command” was added to this section.

Social Media

The question about the Hatch Act is addressed in the Standards of Conduct under the section on Political Activity.

Wisconsin Retirement Fund

In the Wisconsin Retirement Fund section, the reference to a Police or Fire Chief hired before January 1, 2012, was removed. This wording, which came from the City of Mequon Personnel Code, referred to legacy employees, and the term "Police Chief" was deleted.

General Employer Provided Insurances

The question raised is whether the section detailing the various plans should be placed in a separate appendix to avoid rewriting the main document every year when updates or changes are made. It was decided to leave it in the manual, with the understanding that any changes would require adoption, regardless of whether the section is in the main document or an appendix. The main goal is to avoid frequent rewrites while still accommodating yearly changes.

Fiscal Impact

None

Recommendation

Staff recommends adopting the finalized draft document.

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department

SOUTHERN OZAUKEE FIRE & EMS
DEPARTMENT



EMPLOYEE MANUAL

Adopted: March 12, 2025

Acknowledgement of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department Employee Manual. I, _____, understand that I am responsible for reading and abiding by all policies and procedures in this Manual, as well as all other policies and procedures of the Department.

I also understand that the purpose of this Manual is to inform me of the Department's policies and procedures, and that it is not a contract of employment. Nothing in this Manual provides any entitlement to me or to any Department employee, nor is it intended to create contractual obligations of any kind.

I understand that the Department has the right to change any provision of this Manual at any time and that I will be bound by any such changes. I expressly agree to the provisions in the Dispute Resolution section of the Manual, in which I have agreed to use alternative dispute resolution, in lieu of litigation, as the sole means of resolving any dispute that may arise between the Department and me, subject to the Department's right to seek injunctive relief. I agree to first seek to mediate any dispute with the Department with a mediator from the American Arbitration Association or similar organization trained and experienced in employment disputes. If mediation is not successful, I agree to submit the dispute to arbitration. I understand that by agreeing to arbitration I waive any right I may have to sue or seek a jury trial. The decision of the arbitrator will be final and binding.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Full Name (please print): _____

Please sign and date one copy of this acknowledgement and return it to the SOFD Administrative Assistant. Retain a second copy for your reference.

Table Of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	6
Mission Vision, Vision and Values.....	6
Purpose and Application	7
Affirmative Action Statement.....	8
Definitions	9
Management Rights	10
Severability	12
Attendance and Punctuality	13
Chapter 2: Procedures.....	14
Employee Commitment	14
Grievance Procedure	15
Purpose.....	15
Definitions	15
Time Limits	16
Procedure.....	16
Chapter 3: General Policies	20
Employee Conduct and Customer Service.....	20
Accident Policy	21
Personal Relationship Policy	22
Dress Code Policy	24
Drug-Free Workplace Policy	25
Drug Testing Policy	26
Communications Policy	29
Conflict of Interest Policy	30
Emergency Contact Information Policy.....	31
Employee Access to Personnel File Policy.....	32
Employee Assistance Program Policy	33
Family and Medical Leave Policy	34
Harassment & Workplace Violence Policy.....	41
Bereavement Leave.....	43

Modified Duty/Return-To-Work Policy	44
Nepotism Policy.....	46
Open Door Policy	47
Informal Complaint Procedure	48
Smoke-Free Workplace Policy	49
Telephone Usage Policy.....	50
Chapter 4: Full-Time Employees	51
Probationary Period.....	51
Leave of Absence	52
Jury Duty	53
Paid Holidays	54
Sick Leave.....	55
Abuse of Leave.....	56
Retirement Payout	57
Accumulation Changes.....	58
Vacation	59
Uniform Allowance.....	60
Wisconsin Retirement Fund	61
General Employer Provided Insurance	62
Group Health Insurance	66
Notification of Group Insurance Continuation Policy.....	67
Car and Expense Allowance	68
Chapter 5: Paid-On-Call Staff	69
Paid Holidays	69
Uniform/Clothing Allowance	70
Wisconsin Retirement System.....	71
Life & Disability Insurance	72
Chapter 6: Standards of Conduct	73
Violation of Rules.....	73
Unbecoming Conduct.....	73
Conformance to Laws	73
Reporting for Duty	74
Attentiveness to Duty	74

Reporting for Duty	74
Leaving Duty Post.....	74
Meals.....	74
Unsatisfactory Performance.....	75
Use of Alcohol on Duty or in Uniform	75
Use of Alcohol Off Duty	75
Insubordination	75
Unlawful Orders.....	76
Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards	76
Abuse of Position	77
Endorsements and Referrals	77
Citizen Complaints	77
Identification	77
Courtesy	77
Requests for Assistance.....	78
Associations	78
Visiting Prohibited Establishments	78
Gambling.....	78
Personal Appearance	79
Political Activity.....	79
Dissemination of Information	79
Intervention	79
Required Reports	80
Use of Department Property	80
Operating Vehicles	80
Truthfulness.....	80
Unauthorized Equipment	80
Civil Actions.....	81
Public Criticism	81
Concealed Recording Devices.....	81
Committing Unsafe Acts or Endangering Self or Others.....	81
Cooperation with other Members, Employees, and Other Officials.....	81
Knowing, Observing, and Obeying all Directives, Rules, Policies, and Procedures.....	82

Personal Use of Property, Equipment or Supplies..... 82
Possession of Weapons 82

Note: Starting on page 82, Administrative Directives issued by the Fire Chief are appended to the back of the employee manual for easy reference but are not considered part of the manual.

Chapter I: Introduction

Mission Vision, Vision and Values

Our Mission

The Southern Ozaukee Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department exists to ensure the safety of our communities through fire suppression, response to medical emergencies, professional training and public education. We serve our communities to protect the people, property, and environment. We provide our citizens with reassurance, aid and comfort when they are vulnerable.

Our Vision

The Southern Ozaukee Fire & Emergency Medical Services Department will continuously strive to be a trusted community service that is recognized for meeting the needs of our citizens, while being good stewards of our resources. We will be known as a modern department with a professionally trained team that attains best practice standards and ensures a high level of readiness. We will innovate and continuously have an eye to the future.

We will accomplish our vision of a strong combination department by investing in our people, with a workforce of committed career and volunteer team members. We will forge strong partnerships to ensure the safety of the communities we serve.

Our Values

Our culture reflects our shared values and we have pride in all that we do.

Integrity

We live in accordance with our values, demonstrating sound ethical principles and being honest with ourselves and others.

Trust

We believe that reliability and the strength of our relationships is core to our being. Trust fosters respect, provides safety and earns loyalty.

Empathy

We seek to understand the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others from their point of view. We show compassion for those who feel vulnerable or suffer a loss.

Grit

We exhibit courage, resolve and a selfless devotion to duty.

Excellence

We are professional and exceptional in our skills, continuously striving to improve.

Stewardship

We are responsible in our use of financial and human resources.

Purpose and Application

This manual is an informational guide regarding employment practices for all non-represented regular full/part-time, represented general, seasonal and temporary Department employees, who are not represented by a labor organization and collective bargaining agreement. The Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department reserves the right to amend, delete, supplement or rescind any of the provisions of this manual or any other written or unwritten plans, policies or procedures at any time with or without advance notice. The Department further reserves the right to deviate from policies or procedures where appropriate, to interpret policies and to suspend the application of a general policy when, in the Department's sole discretion, such an action is appropriate.

The provisions contained within this manual are not conditions of employment nor are they intended to create an express or implied contract of employment for any employee. Unless otherwise specified in writing or required by law, your employment with the Department is at-will and may be terminated by you or the Department at any time with or without reason.

No Provision contained within this manual is intended to nor shall be construed to conflict with Wisconsin Statutes or Federal Law, including but not limited to Sections 17.12, 62.09 and 62.13, Wis. Stats.

Affirmative Action Statement

The Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department will not discriminate in its hiring practices on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, handicap, or other non-job-related factors, except where such factors constitute a bona fide occupational qualification. The Department is an equal opportunity employer hiring those persons whose qualifications best correspond to those of the position being filled. Equal employment opportunity will be practiced in related activities pertaining to applicants and employees who will be judged on their individual merit and relevant qualifications in a fair and equitable manner.

Affirmative action will be sought to eliminate restrictive policies in a timely coordinated manner with due regard and consideration to all applicants and present employees.

Definitions

1. "Department" means the organization of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.
2. "Continuous Service" means uninterrupted employment as a full-time employee with the Department from date of hire or last date of rehire and does not accrue during any unpaid leave which exceeds thirty (30) calendar days. Authorized leaves of absence granted under the terms of this Manual shall not be deemed an interruption of service.
3. "Division" means an established and recognized area of operations, staffed by employees which is organized and structured to accomplish a particular type of assigned municipal service.
4. "Command Staff" means an employee who is responsible for the operation of the Department's operations and includes: Fire Chief, Deputy Chief and Battalion Chiefs.
5. "Employee" means an individual who is engaged in providing personal services to the Department for wages or salary, and the Department has the right to control the details of and type of work assigned.
6. "Exempt Employee" means an employee whose position is classified as an administrative, supervisory, executive, professional or computer professional position, who is paid on a salary basis and is exempt from state and federal overtime requirements.
7. "Full-Time Administrative Employee" means an employee who is normally scheduled to work an average of forty (40) hours per week for the Department
8. "Full-Time Line Employee" means an employee who works a 56-hour workweek (24-hour shift). Employees shall be entitled to overtime for any hours over 212 hours in a 28-day cycle.
9. "Part-Time Employee" means an employee who is normally scheduled to work less than forty (40) hours per week for the Department but does not include volunteer fire fighters or ambulance and rescue squad personnel.
10. "Paid-on-Call Employee" - A paid-on-call employee works on an as-needed basis.
11. "Regular, Full-Time Employee" and "Regular, Part-Time Employee" means an employee who is scheduled to work throughout the year and who occupies a regular position established by the SOFD Board of Directors.
12. "Temporary or Seasonal Employee" means an employee, either full-time or part-time, who is hired only for a limited period of time and includes all employees hired under State and/or Federal grant programs, regardless of the length of such employee's period of employment.

Management Rights

Except to the extent abridged by a specific provision of this Manual, the Department reserves and retains solely and exclusively all of its common law, statutory and inherent rights to manage its own affairs, as such rights existed prior to the passage of this or any other previous Employee Manual or salary plan. Such rights include, but are not limited to the following:

1. To determine the general business practice and policies of the Department, including the purchase and utilization of equipment, and to utilize personnel, methods and means efficiently and flexibly.
2. To manage and direct the employees of the Department, to make assignments of jobs, to determine the size and composition of the work force, to train or retrain employees, to establish standards of job performance, to determine and schedule the work to be performed by the work force and each employee, to determine the competence and qualifications of the employee, to establish and revise job descriptions for any position and to establish the manner and method of selection of new employees.
3. To determine the methods, means and personnel by which and the location where the operations of the Department are to be conducted.
4. To take whatever action it deems necessary in situations of emergency.
5. To utilize temporary, provisional, part-time, paid-on-call, or seasonal employees when and where it deems necessary.
6. To hire, promote, demote, permanently or temporarily transfer, lay off employees and to make promotions and assignments to supervisory positions.
7. To suspend, demote, discipline or discharge employees.
8. To establish or alter the number of shifts, hours of work, work schedules, methods or processes.
9. To schedule and assign overtime work when required in the manner most advantageous to the Department.
10. To create new positions or divisions, to introduce new or improved operations in work practices, to terminate or modify existing positions, divisions, operations or work practices and to consolidate existing positions, divisions or operations.
11. To make and alter rules and regulations for the conduct of its business and of its employees. All employees must follow all other applicable rules, policies, regulations, or resolutions of

the Department as well as any applicable State or Federal laws currently in effect. The Department reserves the right to modify or change this Employee Manual at any time.

Whatever work is to be accomplished by the Department is not necessarily to be done by employees of the Department. The Department reserves the right unto itself to contract or subcontract any such work and/or to transfer any such work to employees not covered by this Employee Manual.

Severability

The provisions of this Employee Manual shall be severable and if any of the provisions shall be held in contravention of the Constitution and laws of the State of Wisconsin or of the United States by a court of competent jurisdiction, the validity of the rest of the Manual shall not be affected. It is hereby declared to be the intent of this Manual that the same would have been adopted and such unconstitutional or unlawful provisions, if any, not been included herein. This Manual replaces all prior employee policies which are in conflict with this new Employee Manual.

Attendance and Punctuality

It is important for a member to report to work on time and to avoid unnecessary absences. The Department recognizes that illness or other circumstances beyond a member's control may cause a member to be absent from work from time to time.

However, frequent absenteeism or tardiness may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Excessive absenteeism or frequent tardiness puts an unnecessary strain on co-workers and can have a negative impact on the success of the Department.

Members are expected to report to work when scheduled. Whenever a member knows in advance that they are going to be absent, they will notify their immediate supervisor or the designated supervisor. If a members' absence is unexpected, they should attempt to reach their immediate supervisor as soon as possible, but in no event later than one hour before the member is due at work. In the event their immediate supervisor is unavailable, the member must speak with another supervisor. If the member must leave a voicemail, the member must provide a number where their supervisor may reach them if need be.

Please note that some, but not all, absences are compensated under the Department's leave policies.

Members are expected to be at their assigned place of duty at the beginning of each shift. If a member is delayed, the member must call their immediate supervisor to state the reason for the delay. As with absences, members must make every effort to speak directly with the supervisor. Regular delays in reporting to work will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Chapter 2: Procedures

Employee Commitment

All employees of the Department agree:

1. To cooperate in giving efficient public service and to assist in maintaining efficient public administration.
2. To abide by the rules, regulations, policies, and resolutions established by the Department or the Chief. The Chief, or his/her designee, may adopt such other Departmental rules and procedures as may be required for the efficient and effective delivery of public services within the Department provided they are not in conflict with this Manual.
3. To abide by the ordinances established by the Village of Thiensville and the City of Mequon.

Grievance Procedure

Purpose

This policy is intended to comply with Section 66.0509, Wis. Stats., and provides a grievance procedure for addressing issues concerning workplace safety, discipline and termination.

Definitions

1. "Days" as used in this policy are defined as calendar days, inclusive of the day of the act that occurs or is to occur.
2. "Employee Termination" as used in this policy section, shall not include the following:
 - a. Layoffs.
 - b. Workforce reduction activities.
 - c. Job transfers or demotions.
 - d. Voluntary termination including, without limitation, quitting or resignation.
 - e. Job abandonment.
 - f. End of employment due to disability, lack of qualification or licensure or other inability to perform job duties.
 - g. End of employment and/or completion of assignment of temporary, contract or part-time employees.
 - h. Retirement.
 - i. Death; or
 - j. Any other cessation of employment not involving involuntary termination.
3. "Employee discipline" as used in this policy shall include any employment action that results in disciplinary action, which typically involves any one of four (4) actions: verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension with or without pay, and termination of employment.

"Employee discipline," as used in this policy, shall not include the following:

- a. Plans of correction or performance improvement.

- b. Performance evaluations or reviews.
- c. Documentation of employee acts and/or omissions in an employment file.
- d. Administrative suspension with pay pending investigation of alleged misconduct or nonperformance.
- e. Non-disciplinary wage, benefit or salary adjustments.
- f. Other non-material employment actions.
- g. Counseling meetings or discussions or other pre-disciplinary action.
- h. Demotion for reasons other than discipline, transfer or change in assignment.
- i. Matters governed under the exclusive authority of the SOFD Fire Commission, including disciplinary suspensions, disciplinary reductions in rank, and disciplinary terminations of subordinates; or
- j. Matters where a specific ordinance or contract provides a process for resolution of the dispute.

The term "workplace safety" as used in this section means any alleged violation of any standard established under state law or rule or federal law or regulation relating to workplace safety.

Time Limits

Unless mutually agreed to in writing by the Employee and the SOFD in advance of the expiration of the timeline, the timelines provided in this policy must be strictly adhered to. Failure of the Employee to comply with the timelines will be deemed a waiver of the processing of the grievance and the grievance will be denied. The Employee may, as the Employee's sole remedy, if a response is not provided within the designated timeframes, advance a grievance to the next step of the process. The Mequon City Administrator (or his/her designee) may advance a grievance to the next step at the request of the Employee.

Procedure

1. Informal Grievance Resolution: The employee must discuss any grievance related to discipline or workplace safety with the employee's supervisor who issued the discipline or is responsible for the workplace safety issue prior to filing a formal written grievance in order to informally resolve the issue. This discussion must occur within five (5) days of when the employee knew or should have known of the events leading to the grievance. Grievances related to termination may proceed straight to the Formal Grievance Procedure.

2. Formal Grievance Submission: The employee must file a written grievance with the Mequon City Administrator (or his/her designee) within ten (10) days of the termination, discipline or actual or reasonable knowledge of the alleged workplace safety issue. The written grievance must contain:
 - a. Name of Grievant.
 - b. A statement of the pertinent facts surrounding the nature of the grievance.
 - c. The date the alleged incident occurred.
 - d. The work rule or policy allegedly violated including any safety rule alleged to have been violated, if applicable.
 - e. The steps taken to informally resolve the grievance, the individuals involved in the attempted resolution, and the results of such discussion; and
 - f. The specific requested remedy.
3. Administrative Response: The Mequon City Administrator (or his/her designee) will meet with the grievant within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the written grievance. The Administrator will provide a written response within fifteen (15) days of the meeting. The Administrator's written response to the grievance must contain:
 - a. A statement of the date the meeting between the Administration and grievant was held.
 - b. A decision as to whether the grievance is sustained or denied; and
 - c. In the event the grievance is denied, a statement outlining the timeline to appeal the denial.
4. Impartial Hearing: The grievant may file an appeal to an Impartial Hearing Officer by giving written notice to the Mequon City Administrator (or his/her designee) within five (5) days of the issuance of the Administrative Response. Depending on the issues involved, the hearing officer will determine whether a hearing is necessary unless a hearing is required under the procedures established by the SOFD in a different applicable policy. The Administration will work with the Impartial Hearing Officer and grievant to schedule a mutually agreeable hearing date should one be needed. If it is determined that no hearing is necessary, the matter will be decided based on the submission of written documents.

The Mequon City Administrator and the Thiensville Village Administrator shall select the Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO). The IHO shall not be an employee of the SOFD. The IHO may be an employee of another municipality, a lawyer, a professional mediator/arbitrator, or other qualified individual. The cost of the IHO will be the responsibility of the SOFD.

Standard of Review: The IHO will adhere to specific guidelines set forth by the SOFD regarding hearing procedures. The Rules of Evidence will not be strictly followed, but no factual findings may be based solely on hearsay evidence. The standard of review for the IHO is whether the decision of the Administration was arbitrary or capricious. The grievant shall bear the burden of proof and production of evidence. A decision will not have been arbitrary or capricious if it was made in the best interest of the SOFD. If the decision was not arbitrary or capricious then the IHO is required to find on behalf of the Administration.

Impartial Hearing Officer Response: The Impartial Hearing Officer shall file a written response within thirty (30) days of the hearing date or the date of submission of written documents.

The Impartial Hearing Officer's written response to the grievance must contain:

- a. A statement of the pertinent facts surrounding the nature of the grievance.
 - b. A decision as to whether the grievance is sustained or denied, with the rationale for the decision.
 - c. A statement outlining the timeline to appeal the decision as defined in this policy to the SOFD Board.
 - d. The IHO must sustain or deny the decision of the Administration. The IHO has no authority to modify the Administration's decision and may not grant in whole or in part the specific request of the grievant.
5. Review by the SOFD Board: The non-prevailing party may file a written request to the SOFD Board Secretary (or his/her designee) for review of the IHO's decision by the SOFD Board within ten (10) days of receipt of the Impartial Hearing Officer Response.

The SOFD Board shall not take additional testimony or evidence; it may only decide whether the IHO reached an arbitrary or capricious decision using the standard set forth above based on the information presented to the IHO. The SOFD Board will review the record and make a decision. A written decision will be made within thirty (30) days of the filing of the appeal.

The SOFD Board's written decision regarding the grievance must contain:

- a. A decision as to whether the grievance is sustained, denied or modified.

The SOFD Board shall decide the matter by a majority vote and the decision of the SOFD Board is final and binding and is not subject to further review.

6. General Requirements:

- a. Grievance meetings/hearings held during the employee's off-duty hours will not be compensated.

If at any step in the process the SOFD reverses the decision or action that gives rise to the grievance, or the SOFD and the Employee reach some other agreement, the grievance process shall be deemed resolved and the grievance process concluded with prejudice.

Chapter 3: General Policies

Employee Conduct and Customer Service

All employees are expected to represent the Department to the public in a professional manner, which is courteous, efficient and helpful. Employees must maintain a clean and neat appearance appropriate to their work assignment, as determined by their position and their supervisor. Department members are expected to conduct themselves consistent with Department rules and regulations. Since the proper working relationship between employees and the Department depends on each employee's on-going job performance, professional conduct and behavior, the Department has established certain minimum standards of professional conduct for its employees.

These expectations include:

1. Basic tact and courtesy towards the public and fellow employees.
2. Adherence to Department policies, procedures, safety rules and safe work practices.
3. Compliance with directions from supervisors.
4. Preserving and protecting the Department's equipment, grounds, facilities, and resources.
5. Providing orderly and cost-efficient services to its citizens.

To function as efficiently as possible, employees may be asked by the Fire Chief or their supervisor to perform duties outside of regular assignments.

All Department employees are expected to periodically review and adhere to the most current version of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department's Rules and Regulations. Behavior or general performance not consistent with this document or that does not meet departmental and community expectations, will be subject to corrective actions.

Accident Policy

Purpose

The well-being and safety of employees is of utmost importance to the Department.

Procedure

In the event a significant accident occurs involving a Department employee, the following steps should be taken:

1. A Chief Officer shall be notified as soon as possible.
2. A Chief Officer will be the designated person to contact the employee's emergency contact.
3. The Public Information Officer (or his/her designee) will be the spokesperson to handle media inquiries. Therefore, employees should not discuss the accident with the media or other members of the public. Refer to the *Communications Policy* on page 27 for further clarification.

Personal Relationship Policy

The Department strongly believes that an environment where employees maintain clear boundaries between employee personal and business interactions is most effective for conducting business. Although this policy does not prevent the development of friendships or romantic relationships between co-workers, it does establish very clear boundaries as to how relationships will progress during working hours and within the working environment. Individuals in supervisory relationships or other influential roles are subject to more stringent requirements under this policy due to their status as role models, their access to sensitive information, their ability to influence others, and their responsibilities for direct or indirect supervision of Department employees.

During working time and in working areas, employees are expected to keep personal exchanges limited so that others are not distracted or offended by such exchanges and so that productivity is maintained.

During non-working time, such as lunches, breaks, and before and after work periods, employees are not precluded from having appropriate personal conversations in non-work areas as long as their conversations and behaviors could in no way be perceived as offensive or uncomfortable to a reasonable person.

Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in physical contact that would in any way be deemed inappropriate by a reasonable person while anywhere on Department premises, whether during working hours or not.

Employees who allow personal relationships with co-workers to affect the working environment may be subject to the appropriate provisions of the Department's disciplinary policy. For minor issues, counseling may be required. For more serious issues or failure to change inappropriate behavior and maintain expected behavior in the workplace, employees will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Failure to change behavior and maintain expected work responsibilities is viewed as a serious disciplinary matter.

Employee off-duty conduct is generally regarded as private, as long as such conduct does not create problems within the workplace. An exception to this principle, however, is romantic or sexual relationships between supervisors and subordinates.

The Department recognizes that people may develop personal friendships with others with whom they work or who work for the same employer. The Department further recognizes that in some situations those relationships may extend beyond a platonic relationship, which may result in concerns or problems on the part of the Department if one of the employees is in a position to influence the working conditions of the other employee or the relationship impacts on the efficiency of the operations of the Department. Thus, the Department strongly encourages supervisors, members of the Command Staff or anyone else in a sensitive or influential position to avoid such relationships with other Department employees where a concern or problem may

arise. Should such a relationship develop, the employee is required to notify their direct supervisor.

Dress Code Policy

As an employee of the SOFD, members are expected to present a clean and professional appearance when representing the SOFD, whether they are in or outside of the stations. Therefore, members are required to dress in appropriate uniform or business attire and to behave in a professional, businesslike manner. It is essential that members act in a professional manner and always extend the highest courtesy to co-workers, visitors, vendors and community members.

Employees of the Department are required to wear uniforms when on duty except for the following positions that should follow generally accepted business dress standards:

1. Civilian administrative staff.
2. Non-scheduled employees called back for emergency situations.

Chief Officers are required to wear uniforms when on duty except for Chief Officers assigned to Administration. Those members should follow generally accepted business dress standards if they opt not to wear a uniform.

Employees required to wear uniforms are obligated to maintain their uniforms, keeping them clean, neat and free of holes, frays, and signs of wear. Employees will be provided with an initial issue of required items, but will be responsible for maintenance of these items.

Employees required to wear uniforms shall receive an annual uniform allowance as defined on page 59 for full-time employees or page 70 for paid-on-call employees. Payment shall be made on the first pay period in December. Yearly allowances will be appropriately pro-rated, based upon an employee's start date with the Department during any calendar year.

Drug-Free Workplace Policy

It is the policy of the Department to maintain a drug-free workplace for all of its employees. Drug use, including alcohol consumption, both on and off the job, can have a significant impact on an employee's job performance and can threaten an employee's own personal well-being and safety, as well as the safety of other Department employees.

Employees are expected to report to work free from any substances that could inhibit their ability to safely perform their duties. The unlawful use, possession, distribution, dispensing or manufacture of an illegal drug while on duty, on or off Department property, is absolutely prohibited.

Failure to comply with this policy will lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Prescription Drugs. An employee who is taking any legally prescribed or over-the-counter medication that may affect the employee's behavior, performance, or fitness to work, should report the prescribed use of the medication to the employee's direct supervisor. The employee taking such medication has an obligation to discuss with his prescribing medical provider any potential side effects of the medication that may affect the employee's ability to safely and/or effectively perform job duties. If the medical provider indicates that the medication may interfere with the employee's ability to safely and/or effectively perform job duties, then the employee is required to obtain a written statement from the medical provider outlining any potential work-related restrictions necessitated by taking the medication and the duration of the restrictions. Should the Department have reason to verify prescription information with the treating physician under circumstances when the Department has a reasonable concern over the safety or impairment of the employee, the employee will be expected to authorize the release of such information.

Unless dictated by safety concerns or as a necessary negotiated accommodation, no employee should inform other co-workers of the necessary possession of prescription medication on the premises or during working hours.

Drug Testing Policy

The Department is committed to providing a safe, efficient, and productive work environment for all employees and visitors and to assisting employees who might have a substance abuse problem in obtaining help. To promote these goals, employees are required to report to work in an appropriate mental and physical condition, free from the effects of alcohol and other drugs.

The Department will cooperate with all federal, state, or local authorities in all matters pertaining to the use, possession, distribution, sale, purchase, or manufacture of alcohol and other drugs on Department premises or during work time.

The Department hereby adopts the following policy:

No Department employee may manufacture, purchase, use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time, and on-the-job use of or impairment by alcohol is prohibited.

The legal possession and/or use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if in the Department's judgment it does not impair an employee's ability to perform his/her job effectively and safely.

The off-duty use of alcohol and other drugs may impair the ability of an employee to perform his/her duties, and may endanger the employee, his/her co-workers, or the public, as well as property. For this reason, off duty use is also prohibited to the extent it does or may result in a violation of this policy.

Definitions

Supervisor: Those employees assigned to a position having day-to-day responsibility for supervising subordinates or who are responsible for commanding a work element.

Drug Test: The compulsory production and submission of urine by an employee, in accordance with departmental procedures, for chemical analysis to detect prohibited drug usage of controlled substances: heroin, cocaine, phencyclidine, lysergic acid diethylamide, psilocin, psilocybin, amphetamine, methamphetamine, or any form of a tetrahydrocannabinols, or any other controlled drug listed in Schedules I or II of the State Code.

Positive Drug Test: A confirmed finding of the presence of drugs or their metabolites in the sample tested at levels at or above the threshold detection levels established by the approved testing laboratory used by the Department.

Positive Alcohol Test: A confirmed finding of blood-alcohol concentration in the employee's sample tested at levels at or above the threshold detection levels established by the approved testing laboratory used by the Department.

Reasonable Cause or Reasonable Suspicion: Quantity of proof or evidence that is more than a hunch, but less than probable cause. Reasonable suspicion must be based on observable actions, alone or in conjunction with other factors including, but not limited to: dangerous or accident-prone conduct; an accident which indicates the possible use of alcohol or drugs; drug-related signs such as paraphernalia, unexplained reduced short-term memory, or unexplained physical symptoms such as, but not limited to: bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, stuffy or runny nose, anxiety, and inability to concentrate.

Refusing To Be Tested: Failing to provide an adequate urine, saliva, blood, or breath specimen for a drug and/or alcohol test without a valid medical explanation; failing or refusing to submit to a test under this policy as directed; and/or engaging in any conduct which clearly obstructs the testing process. An employee has the right to refuse to be tested for drugs and/or alcohol but will face the disciplinary consequences described below.

Approved Testing Laboratory: A laboratory which meets federal requirements and is certified to administer such testing.

Types of Testing

Initial Test: New applicants shall be required as a condition of employment to take and pass the drug screen as described herein.

Reasonable Suspicion Test: Any employee will be required to take a drug and alcohol test upon reasonable cause or reasonable suspicion.

Post-Accident Test: Any employee involved in an accident while driving a Department vehicle will be required to submit to a post-accident drug and alcohol test.

Prohibited Activity

The following rules shall apply to all employees, while on and off duty:

1. No employee shall illegally possess any controlled substance.
2. No employee shall ingest any controlled drug or other dangerous substance, unless as prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner.
3. An employee who is required to use a prescription medication and who has been advised by his/her physician not to work during such use must notify his/her immediate supervisor, including the prescribed period of use.
4. Supervisors shall document this information through the use of an internal memorandum and maintain this memorandum in the employee's medical file.

5. Any employee having a reasonable basis to believe that another employee is illegally using, or is in possession of, any controlled substance, or under the influence of alcohol while on the job shall immediately report the facts and circumstances to his supervisor.

Drug Testing Methodology

The laboratory selected to conduct the analysis shall be experienced and capable of quality control, documentation, chain of custody, technical expertise, and demonstrated proficiency in urinalysis. Employees having negative drug test results shall receive a confirmation stating that no illegal drugs were found. A copy of the memorandum will be placed in the employee's medical file.

Drug Test Results

All records pertaining to Department-required drug tests shall remain confidential. Test results are only given to the Chief or the Chief's designee and shall not be provided to other employers or agencies without the written permission of the person whose records are sought. Drug test results and records shall be retained in the employee's medical file for an indefinite period.

Actions Taken/Positive Results/Refusal To Be Tested

If an employee tests positive, or if an employee refuses to be tested, the employer shall pursue discipline for the employee up to, and including, termination. The exception shall be medications properly prescribed by a physician.

Communications Policy

Public Information Officer

The Department's Chief (or his/her designee) shall be the primary spokesperson for the SOFD and serve as the Department's Public Information Officer. Command Officers may confer with representatives of the news media on matters related to the Department. Other employees are to have no contact with the media unless instructed to do so by the Fire Chief or Command Officer.

Social Media

The term "social media" includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the internet, including to one's own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board, or a chat room, whether associated or affiliated with the Department, as well as any other form of electronic communication. The same principles and guidelines found in the Department's rules, policies and procedures apply to an employee's social media activities online.

Employees shall not represent themselves as conveying official statements of the Department on any personal social networking sites, online blogs, or websites that allow for comments on media stories, etc., unless authorized by the Chief. Employees that post their employment on social networking sites should be cognizant that postings made on their personal sites could be unintentionally construed to be representative of the Department by readers/viewers, and should exercise caution when making postings related to their career, employer, or public safety issues in general.

Any conduct that adversely affects an employee's job performance or the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects the Department's legitimate business interests, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Similarly, inappropriate postings, including but not limited to discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence, or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. However, this restriction will not apply to any postings made in the exercise of any rights granted to an employee under federal law.

Conflict of Interest Policy

The purpose of this Conflict-of-Interest Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures to ensure that employees of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department act in the best interests of the organization and the public. This Policy aims to prevent conflicts of interest that may arise when an employee's personal interests interfere with their duties and responsibilities.

This Policy applies to all employees, including elected officials, appointed officials, and employees of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department. It covers situations where personal, financial, familial, or other interests of an employee conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of the organization.

- **Conflict of Interest:** A conflict of interest exists when an employee's personal interests or relationships could improperly influence the employee's judgment or actions in performing their official duties.

Disclosure Requirements

All employees are required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the SOFD Board President or the Fire Chief. Disclosure should be made promptly upon becoming aware of the conflict and should include sufficient detail for the Fire Chief and Board President to evaluate the situation.

Evaluation and Management

Upon receipt of a disclosure, the SOFD Board President and/or the Fire Chief shall evaluate the disclosed conflict and determine an appropriate course of action, which may include:

- Reviewing the nature and extent of the conflict.
- Assessing whether the conflict can be managed or mitigated.
- Requiring the employee to recuse themselves from decision-making or other activities where the conflict exists.
- Implementing other measures deemed necessary to avoid improper influence or appearance thereof.

Recusal

Employees shall recuse themselves from participating in any decision-making, transactions, or other activities where a conflict of interest exists or may reasonably be perceived to exist. Recusal procedures shall be followed consistently and transparently to maintain the integrity of organizational decision-making processes.

Enforcement and Penalties

Violation of this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity and circumstances of the violation. Employees found to have knowingly failed to disclose a conflict of interest or to have improperly influenced organizational decisions shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures.

Emergency Contact Information Policy

All employees must provide emergency contact information for individuals that are to be contacted in the event of a personal emergency. Emergency contact information is confidential and will not be made available to non-essential staff. Emergency contact information may not be used for any purposes other than its original intention.

All employees are required to supply emergency contact information when hired. It is each employee's personal decision as to whom he or she chooses to have designated as an emergency contact. In an effort to keep information current an emergency should arise; employees are required to maintain current emergency contact information with the Department's Administration Assistant.

Employee Access to Personnel File Policy

Current employees wishing to examine their own employee file may do so by completing and submitting to the Chief a request to access their Personnel File. The Chief will then arrange for a mutually convenient meeting time within three (3) working days of the request.

Employee inspections of personnel files will conform to the following:

1. All inspections must be conducted in the office or station where the files are kept.
2. All inspections must be done with a member of the Fire Department Command Staff present.
3. Nothing may be inserted, removed, changed, or copied without specific authorization from the Fire Department's Command Staff.
4. Certain records may not be made available to the employee, at the discretion of the Chief and in conformance with applicable State law.
5. While inspecting his/her files, an employee is free to take notes and/or request one set of copies of the information in his/her file.
6. During this inspection, any information that is inaccurate or not up to date may be changed at this time with Fire Department Command Staff authorization. Examples of this type of information change include but are not limited to: change of address, name change, or change of dependents.
7. In accordance with Wisconsin State Statute section 103.13 (4), an employee who disagrees with any information contained in the personnel file can submit a written statement explaining the employee's position and that statement shall be attached to the disputed portion of the personnel record.
8. All current employees of the SOFD are limited to two (2) annual inspections of their individual personnel file. During grievance processes, the employee will have unlimited access to his/her files.

The Chief will keep a copy of the request for personnel file access on file for future reference. All requests must contain the date of inspection and the signatures of both the employee and the Chief or a member of the Command Staff.

Employee Assistance Program Policy

The Employer shall provide an Employee Assistance Program to all employees of the Department. The cost of such program will be paid for by the Employer.

Family and Medical Leave Policy

It is the policy of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department (“SOFD” or the “Department”) to provide family and medical leave as required by State and Federal laws. This Policy does not necessarily incorporate all provisions of such laws directly into SOFD personnel policies. Posters summarizing Federal and State FMLA laws can be found with other employment-related postings.

Leave taken under this Policy may be covered by Federal law, State law, or both. The eligibility and entitlements are defined differently under Federal and State law. When both Federal and State law govern leave taken by an eligible employee under this policy, the more generous provisions will control in the event of a conflict. However, when leaves are governed by State or Federal law, but not both, the applicable law will control under this policy. Certain leaves may be covered by both State and Federal law for only a portion of the leave. To the extent permitted by law, time off that is qualifying leave under the Federal FMLA and under the State FMLA, will run concurrently (i.e., at the same time) with leave granted under other SOFD policies.

Employees may be required to provide advance notice and certain information as set forth below to be eligible for leave under this Policy. Employees may also be required to submit leave requests in writing when circumstances and applicable law permit. After an employee provides SOFD with the required information, SOFD will evaluate such and make a determination as to whether the absence qualifies as FMLA leave. SOFD will notify the employee of its final determination. If the employee fails to provide SOFD with the required information within the time specified, the employee’s absence will be unexcused. If the time off is FMLA qualifying, the leave will be designated as such and the employee will receive notice of the designation, along with information on the specifics of the leave, consistent with this policy. Use of other leaves provided by SOFD for the reasons covered by law, will be treated as use of leave under this Policy whenever applicable law allows.

If it is determined that the leave does not qualify, then any absence shall be subject to the terms of SOFD’s attendance policy, or attendance policy as specified in a collective bargaining agreement. SOFD has the right to designate qualifying leave as FMLA whether or not the employee specifically requests it.

Section 1 - Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for Federal FMLA leave, the employee must have been employed by SOFD for at least 12 months, must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately prior to the start of the requested leave, and must be employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by SOFD within a 75-mile radius. To be eligible for leave under the Wisconsin FMLA, the employee must have been employed for more than 52 consecutive weeks and have been paid for at least 1,000 hours.

Section 2 - Amount and Types of Leave Available

Under the guidelines set out in this Policy and in accord with the law, SOFD will grant an eligible

employee up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid Federal FMLA leave within a rolling 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care.
- To care for the employee's covered family member suffering from a serious health condition.
- For the employee's own serious health condition.
- For any "qualifying exigency" arising as a result of the employee's child, parent or spouse serving on active military duty in support of contingency operations.

In addition, if the employee is eligible for Federal FMLA leave as defined in this policy, the employee may be entitled to take a total of up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of unpaid Federal FMLA leave in a single twelve-month period, to care for a covered service member who has incurred a serious injury or illness in the line of duty ("Military Caregiver Leave"). During that twelve-month period, the employee will be entitled only to a combined total of 26 workweeks of Federal FMLA leave for service member care and for any other Federal FMLA purpose.

When a husband and wife both work for SOFD, they are limited to an aggregate of 12 workweeks of Federal FMLA leave for birth, adoption/foster care, care of a seriously ill parent, or a qualifying exigency. Up to a combined total of 26 weeks may be used to care for a seriously ill or injured military service member.

Federal FMLA leave will run concurrently, when applicable, with the total of ten (10) workweeks of Wisconsin FMLA leave which is specifically allocated over a calendar year as follows:

- Two (2) workweeks for an employee's own serious health condition.
- Six (6) workweeks related to the birth or adoption of a child for bonding leave; and
- Two (2) workweeks to allow an employee to care for a parent, parent-in-law, spouse, registered domestic partner or child due to their incapacity caused by a serious health condition.

Applicable Definitions:

"Domestic Partner" for this purpose includes only those individuals who were registered as domestic partners under Wisconsin Law before April 1, 2018.

"Child" under this policy includes a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee has assumed the obligations of a parent and who is either under 18 years of age or is unable to care for him or herself due to a physical or mental disability.

For purposes of Wisconsin FMLA only, "Parent" includes the parent of an eligible employee's spouse or registered domestic partner.

"Serious Health Condition" under this policy means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves any of the following:

1. Any period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care.
2. A continuing period of incapacity/or any subsequent treatment relating to the same condition that also involves continuing treatment by or under the supervision of a health care provider.
3. Incapacity due to a chronic or serious health condition that also involves periodic treatment by a health care provider.
4. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care.
5. A period of incapacity due to a permanent or long-term condition for which treatment may not be effective, but for which the employee or family member must be under the continuing supervision of a health care provider.
6. Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity in the absence of medical intervention or treatment.

In most cases, a short-term condition, such as a cold, flu, earache, upset stomach, or other minor ailment would not qualify as a serious health condition. It also does not include routine treatment, doctor or dental visits. Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered are generally not considered to be serious health conditions.

Section 3 - Calculating Available Leave

1. To determine the amount of Federal FMLA leave to which an employee is entitled for a *specific* leave request, SOFD uses a rolling 12-month period looking backward from the start of the new leave to determine how much leave has been used in the preceding 12-month period. Each time an employee takes Federal FMLA leave, the remaining Federal leave entitlement is the balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.
2. Entitlement to Wisconsin FMLA leave is calculated based on what type of Wisconsin FMLA leave has been used in the calendar year.
3. If an employee suffers a work-related injury that qualifies as a serious health condition, FMLA leave provided under this Policy will be considered to run concurrently with the leave required under applicable worker's compensation laws.

Section 4 - Leave Request Process

1. Except in situations where an employee is unable to provide a written request because of the need for emergency health care, the employee is to provide SOFD with a written application for family or medical leave prior to the requested start of the leave.

2. In cases where the need for the leave is foreseeable, the request is to be made at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave. In cases where the need for the leave does not become known more than 30 days in advance, the request is to be made as soon as the employee becomes aware of the need for leave. In all cases, the employee must comply with SOFD's standard call-in procedures for absences. However, calling in sick, without providing additional information, is not sufficient notice of the need for FMLA leave.
3. All requests must be submitted on an FMLA Request Form which can be obtained from the Chief or the Chief's Designee. The Form must be fully completed including the beginning and ending dates of the leave.
4. An employee undergoing planned medical treatment or requesting intermittent or reduced schedule leave, is required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment to minimize disruptions to SOFD's operations. This requires the employee to work with his/her supervisor to schedule the leave. Failing to provide reasonable notice or work with the supervisor on the timing of the leave may result in the delay, denial or cancellation of FMLA leave.
5. SOFD may delay the taking of the requested leave until at least 30 days after the date the employee provides notice if the employee fails to provide proper advance notice, unless the employee was unable to comply because of the need for emergency health care or other reasonable excuse.

Section 5 - Certification Requirements

1. An FMLA leave request must be supported by a certification issued by the employee's health care provider or as appropriate, the health care provider of the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, parent or next of kin. SOFD reserves the right to have certified all information permitted by law. The Medical Certification Form can be obtained from the Chief or the Chief's Designee.
2. The employee must return the fully completed medical certification form to the Chief or the Chief's Designee within fifteen (15) days from the date the employee receives the medical certification form. Failure to provide SOFD with timely and responsive certification from a health care provider within fifteen (15) days of SOFD's request for certification may result in denial of the leave. If the employee submits a certification that is insufficient or incomplete, SOFD will require the employee to provide a corrected certification within seven days.
3. Where medical leave of the employee or the employee's family member is involved, SOFD may, at its expense, require the employee or a family member to obtain the opinion of a second health care provider chosen by the employer. If a dispute exists, a third opinion may be secured.
4. SOFD will require an employee to re-certify the medical condition as allowed by law.
5. SOFD may also require an employee to provide a Fitness-For-Duty Certification prior to

returning from a leave for the employee's serious health condition.

6. Failure to provide timely certifications may result in denial or delay of the leave.
7. If leave is requested for other non-medical purposes, SOFD may require certification or additional documents pertinent to that leave request, such as a copy of the birth or placement documents, confirmation of a family, *in loco parentis* or domestic partner relationship or reflecting the military exigency purpose.

Section 6 - Intermittent or Partial Leave

1. An employee may take intermittent leave, whenever certified as medically necessary or otherwise required, for their own serious health condition, to care for a qualifying family member with a serious health condition, or for military-related leaves. If the leave is for planned medical treatment and will be taken on an intermittent basis or by a reduced schedule, the employee is expected to schedule the treatment so as to create minimum disruption for SOFD. Again, this requires the employee to work with SOFD to schedule the treatment. The smallest increment that an employee may take for intermittent leave is the smallest measure of time that employees are able to take for any non-FMLA leave, which is currently 15 minutes.
2. Where the need for intermittent leave or leave on a reduced work schedule is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, SOFD may temporarily transfer the employee to an available equivalent position if the employee is qualified and the position better accommodates the recurring leave.
3. An employee may take Federal FMLA leave for the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child on a continuous basis only, no intermittent or reduced schedule will be allowed. When leave for birth or adoption is taken under the Wisconsin FMLA, the leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule as long as the employee works with SOFD to schedule the leave in advance so as to create minimum disruption for SOFD. Federal FMLA leave related to birth, adoption or foster care must be used within one year of the birth or placement of the child. The last segment of requested intermittent or reduced schedule leave for any Wisconsin FMLA portion of leave related to birth or adoption must begin within sixteen (16) weeks before, or after childbirth or placement.

Section 7 - Pay Status and Substitution

FMLA leave is generally unpaid. However, an eligible employee may request use of paid leave – or “substitute” – accrued and available paid leave under certain circumstances during the time the employee is on FMLA leave.

1. An employee may substitute any, or all, of the employee's accrued and available paid leave of any type provided by SOFD during Wisconsin FMLA leave.

2. When an employee is using solely Federal FMLA leave for the employee's own serious health condition, SOFD will require the employee to use the balance of the employee's sick, vacation, PTO, or medical leave bank during that period of federal FMLA leave. A full-time employee may elect to keep up to 80 hours of PTO or vacation time in reserve from the mandatory drawdown requirement. A part-time employee may elect to keep a pro-ration of 80 hours of PTO or vacation in reserve, based on their status. The employee must specify at the time leave is requested the type and amount of paid-time-off that the employee will be reserving.
3. For FMLA leaves governed exclusively under Federal law, the employee must meet all notice and eligibility policy requirements governing the paid leave, unless SOFD specifically waives the provisions. If an employee fails to meet the paid leave policy requirements, the Federal FMLA leave will be unpaid.

Section 8 - Continuation and Accrual of Benefits During Leave

1. Coverage under any group health plan will be maintained for the duration of an eligible employee's leave at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee continued to work. This means that in order to continue group health coverage during the employee's FMLA leave, the employee must continue to pay the same share of the health insurance premiums as the employee did prior to leave. SOFD will also continue to pay any portion of group health insurance premiums for coverage that it was responsible for paying immediately prior to the leave as required by law.
2. It is the employee's responsibility to plan with the Chief or the Chief's Designee for making premium payments for group health insurance during leaves. For employees using paid leave during FMLA, the employee's share of premiums will be paid through SOFD's normal payroll deduction method. If an employee is on unpaid FMLA leave, the employee must make advance arrangements with the Chief or the Chief's Designee to make timely payments.
3. To the extent permitted by law, SOFD reserves the right to require an employee to place up to eight weeks' health insurance premiums in escrow prior to leave, or to discontinue coverage if such premiums are received more than thirty days beyond when such payments are due.
4. The use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.
5. Benefits will not accrue during unpaid FMLA leave. However, if an employee uses accrued paid leave during FMLA leave, benefits will accrue as indicated by SOFD during use of that paid leave.

Section 9 - Leave Status and Return to Work

1. An employee who fails to return to work at the end of the FMLA leave will be considered to have voluntarily terminated unless the employee was unable to return due to a continuing serious health condition, health care emergency, or other reasonable excuse. In such

circumstances, the employee must provide advance notification to SOFD of the reason the employee is unable to return.

2. While on continuous FMLA leave, SOFD requires an employee to periodically confirm leave status and the employee's intention to return to work. Any employee who decides while on leave that he or she will not be returning to work at the end of the leave should immediately inform SOFD.
3. A returning employee must contact the Chief or the Chief's Designee and his or her supervisor during business hours to confirm the employee's return to work date.
4. Employees able to return to work prior to their approved leave end date must notify the Chief or the Chief's Designee preferably at least one (1) week, but no later than two (2) full working days, prior to their new return date.
5. If leave is due to the employee's serious health condition, the employee may be required to present a Fitness for Duty Certification to their supervisor upon returning to work.
6. An employee returning from FMLA leave will be entitled to reinstatement to the same job or an equivalent job with the same pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment as if the employee had continued working. However, this right to reinstatement will not apply if leave continues after the FMLA leave is exhausted or if the employee indicates that he or she will not return from FMLA leave to work at SOFD. This policy does not entitle an employee to any right, benefit, or position of employment other than those to which the employee would have been entitled, had the employee not taken leave. SOFD reserves all rights concerning restoration of employment or denial of same under State or Federal law.

Harassment & Workplace Violence Policy

The Department is committed to providing a work environment that provides employees with equality, respect, and dignity. In keeping with this commitment, the Department has adopted a policy of “zero tolerance” with regard to employee harassment. Harassment is defined under federal law as unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, gender (including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. Harassment becomes unlawful where: (1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment; or (2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile or abusive.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment. Harassment of any other person, including, without limitation, fellow employees, contractors, visitors, clients or customers, whether at work or outside of work, is grounds for immediate termination. The Department will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the entire community is familiar with this policy and that all employees are aware that every complaint received will be promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigated, and resolved appropriately. The Department will not tolerate retaliation against anyone who complains of harassment or who participates in an investigation.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited by federal, state and local laws, and applies equally to men and women. Federal law defines sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when the conduct: (1) explicitly or implicitly affects a term or condition of an employee’s employment; (2) is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the employee; or (3) unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Such conduct may include but is not limited to subtle or overt pressure for sexual favors; inappropriate touching; lewd, sexually oriented comments or jokes; foul or obscene language; posting of suggestive or sexually explicit posters, calendars, photographs, graffiti or cartoons; and repeated requests for dates. Department policy further prohibits harassment and discrimination based on sex stereotyping. Sex stereotyping occurs when one person perceives a man to be unduly effeminate or a woman to be unduly masculine and harasses or discriminates against that person because he or she does not fit the stereotype of being male or female. The Department encourages reporting of all perceived incidents of sexual harassment, regardless of who the offender may be. Every employee is encouraged to raise any questions or concerns with his or her immediate supervisor, the Deputy Chief or the Fire Chief.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Harassment

Employees should report incidents of inappropriate behavior or sexual harassment as soon as possible after any occurrence. Employees who believe they have been harassed, regardless of whether the offensive act was committed by a supervisor, co-worker, vendor, visitor or client,

should promptly notify their immediate supervisor, the Deputy Fire Chief or the Fire Chief. If the employee's immediate supervisor is involved in the incident, the employee should report the incident to the Fire Chief. The Department takes claims of harassment seriously, no matter how trivial a claim may appear. All complaints of harassment, sexual harassment, or other inappropriate sexual conduct will be promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigated by the Department.

The Department prohibits retaliation against any employee who files or pursues a harassment claim. To the extent possible, all complaints and related information will remain confidential, except to those individuals who need the information to investigate, educate or take action in response to the complaint.

All employees are expected to cooperate fully with any ongoing investigation regarding a harassment incident. Employees who believe they have been unjustly charged with harassment can defend themselves verbally or in writing at any stage of the investigation.

To protect the privacy of persons involved, confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances. Investigations may include interviews with the parties involved, and, where necessary, individuals who may have observed the alleged conduct or who may have relevant knowledge.

At the conclusion of a harassment investigation, the complainant and the alleged "harasser" will be informed of the determination. Where appropriate, the "harasser" and the "victim" may be offered mediation or counseling through an employee assistance program (EAP).

Penalties for Violation of Anti-Harassment

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the Department will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and take such action as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such action may range from counseling to termination of employment and may include such other forms of disciplinary action (such as, for example, suspension), as the Department deems appropriate under the circumstances and in accordance with applicable law.

Bereavement Leave

Employees are granted funeral leave in accordance with the following rules:

Bereavement leave will apply in case of each death on the immediate family, which is defined as spouse, children, brother, sister, parents, grandparents or grandchildren of an employee, or of their spouse. The employee may use up to three (3) paid workdays for forty (40) hour employees and up to two (2) workdays for fifty-six (56) hour employees.

In case of the death of the employee's uncle or aunt, or that of their spouse, employee may use up to one (1) workday for forty (40) hour employee and up to one (1) workdays for fifty-six (56) hour employees.

Modified Duty/Return-To-Work Policy

The Department strives to promote a successful recovery from any work-related injury and has established guidelines when an employee returns to work with restrictions. The opportunity for modified duty is reserved for those employees with temporary restrictions. Any corresponding reduction in job performance expectations is also only temporary.

The Department will accommodate, as much as reasonably possible, an employee's work restrictions for any work-related injury. The decision as to whether there is modified work duty available that is consistent with the employee's restrictions will be made on a case-by-case basis. The Department does not have any permanent modified duty positions. It is the employee's responsibility to be aware of their medical restrictions at all times and to communicate them to their supervisor. Employees should not attempt tasks that exceed their restrictions. If an employee has questions about the task(s) at hand and his/her restrictions, they should talk to his/her supervisor immediately. Employees must also comply during non-work hours to ensure that restrictions are maintained.

Modified duty assignments will not exceed six (6) weeks. The Department will review modified duty assignments on a periodic basis to determine whether to extend any such light duty assignment beyond the initial time period. Any such decision by the Department will again be made on a case-by-case basis.

The Department counts time an employee with a work-related injury spends at a medical appointment during their regularly scheduled hours as time worked and, therefore, compensable. If an employee schedules a medical appointment outside of their regularly scheduled hours for a work-related injury, the time spent obtaining medical care is not considered compensable. However, an employee who is required to schedule a medical appointment outside of their regularly scheduled work hours for a work-related injury because the medical care provider does not have office/clinic hours that coincide with the employee's regular hours of work and not due to the convenience or preference of the employee, will be paid for the time spent obtaining the necessary care. Such time shall not result in the payment of overtime to the employee. Employees must work with and get approval from their supervisors for compensable medical appointments.

Actual restrictions guide the Department toward job selection. Modified duty assignments can include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Conducting fire inspections
- Cleaning/waxing trucks or equipment
- Cleaning bay areas
- Performing office functions
- Completing computerized reports and miscellaneous data entry
- Reviewing manuals and maintaining certifications
- Training others and review procedures

- Shredding outdated materials
- Performing janitorial services

When an employee returns to full duty, they must provide a doctor's note with a full release prior to resuming normal job duties.

Nepotism Policy

For the protection of the Department's assets and development and maintenance of an equitable working environment, the Department may limit the hiring, promotion, and transfer rights of persons who have an immediate family member employed by the Department. For purposes of this policy, immediate family members include anyone in a direct relationship by blood or marriage up to and including first cousins. Included are spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, and first cousin of the employee or the employee's spouse, or any person residing in the employee's household.

Open Door Policy

Communication is a joint responsibility shared by the Department and its members. If members have any questions about the information contained herein or about any other aspect of their job, the Department welcomes questions. Members' opinions, suggestions and questions are important to the Department. Members should feel free to talk to their supervisor about issues at work which concern them, following their chain of command. The Department will provide honest, straightforward responses to any questions or comments that are received from its members.

Members of the Command Staff shall at all times keep their office door open unless there is a need for a private conversation, either in person or electronically, in which case the door can be closed for the duration of those events.

Informal Complaint Procedure

Generally, if members are having problems with another individual, management encourages members to attempt to resolve the conflict between themselves. If that does not resolve the problem, members should go next to their immediate supervisor. In some cases, the supervisor may decide to refer the problem to the next higher level of management. Summarily, the Department encourages members to talk to others to prevent a small conflict from growing into a larger one.

Participating in an informal complaint process does not preclude an employee from seeking a remedy through the Grievance Procedure.

Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

The Department is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to promoting the health and well-being of its employees. As required by state law, and also motivated by the desire to provide a healthy work environment, the following smoking policy has been adopted and shall apply to all employees of the Department.

Smoking, vaping, or the use of tobacco or smokeless tobacco is prohibited in all buildings owned or leased by the Fire Department, and all Fire Department vehicles owned or leased as a matter of Department policy and as provided in Section 101.123, Wisconsin Statutes.

Smoking is defined as "...carrying a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, or any other lighted smoking equipment," See Section 101.123 (1)(h), Wisconsin Statutes.

The Department believes that the spirit of thoughtfulness and cooperation which is characteristic of Department employees is adequate to resolve any disputes which might arise under this policy. Where disputes cannot be resolved, the rights of the non-smoker shall be given precedence.

Employees who violate this Smoke-Free Workplace Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including immediate discharge.

Telephone Usage Policy

Access to the Department's telephone system is given principally for work-related activities or approved educational/training activities. Incidental and occasional personal use is permitted. This privilege should not be abused and must not affect the employee's performance of employment-related activities. Telephone usage should be based upon cost-effective practices that support the Department's mission and should comply with applicable rules and regulations.

The Department telephone system is always the property of the Department. By accessing the telephone system through facilities provided by the Department, members acknowledge that the Department has the right to monitor its telephone system from time-to-time, to ensure that employees are using the system for its intended purposes.

Employees are responsible for having their work-issued cell phone available and charged at all times. If the work-issued cell phone has any security measures, such as a personal identification number ("PIN"), the PIN or security measure must be shared with the Chief or his/her designee. If the Chief or his/her designee requests the PIN, employees must provide the information in a time-sensitive manner. Failure to provide the requested information may be considered theft, and subject the employee to disciplinary measures. This responsibility applies regardless of whether the employee is on-duty or off-duty.

Members should use common sense and their best judgment when making or receiving personal cellular phone calls at work. To the extent possible, employees should make personal cellphone calls during their breaks or lunch times. The use of cameras on cell phones during work hours is prohibited to protect the privacy of the Department, as well as fellow employees unless consent is provided by the Chief or his/her designee. However, this restriction will not apply to any recordings made in the exercise of any rights granted to an employee under federal law.

The Department prohibits the use of handheld cellular devices while driving. Employees are strongly encouraged to use a hands-free cellular device while driving, should the use become a necessity in the course of employment.

Sending and/or receiving text messages is expressly prohibited while operating any vehicle.

Chapter 4: Full-Time Employees

Probationary Period

All full-time employee hires and appointments covered under this manual, including new hires, promotions, transfers and re-hires, are subject to a twenty-four (24) month probationary period, which is considered an integral part of the employee evaluation process. The probationary period provides the employee with an opportunity to demonstrate his/her suitability for the position through actual work performance. It also provides the Department with an opportunity to train the employee, and evaluate the employee's ability to meet the demands of the position. Employees are always encouraged to seek advice that can aid them in successfully performing the duties of the job.

Paid-on-call and part-time employees are subject to all the conditions above.

Extension of the standard twenty-four-month probationary period may be initiated by the Fire Chief. Employees will be notified in writing of any extension of the probationary period prior to the conclusion of their initial probationary period.

Leave of Absence

Employees may be granted subject to the approval of the Department (unless such leave is required by State or Federal law), a leave of absence up to three (3) months, provided that the employee makes prior application. A leave of absence shall not be granted for the purpose of seeking other employment. All requests for any leave of absence shall be made in writing to the Fire Chief.

In the event an employee would like to take family or medical leave, the Department must be notified at least thirty (30) days before the date on which leave is to begin, except in the case of an emergency. The request form is available from the City of Mequon's Human Resources Division. The failure to timely notify the Department may result in a delay of leave until proper notice is received.

Jury Duty

The Department encourages employees to fulfill their civic duties. To that end, employees will be allowed leave to serve on a jury or for mandated court obligations or appearances before a public body in connection with Department business, if summoned. Accordingly, the Department requests that employees provide a copy of any summons notice as soon as it is received, so that it may be kept on file.

Jury duty can last from a portion of a single day to several months or more. During this time, employees will be considered on a leave of absence and will be entitled to continue to participate in insurance and other benefits as if they were working. While serving on jury duty, employees are expected to call their supervisor periodically to keep them apprised of one's status.

Employees will receive their regular straight-time wage for scheduled straight time hours during such periods of absence, provided that the compensation received for jury duty, less parking expense and mileage, is returned to the Department. The term "compensation" includes jury fees but excludes mileage and parking expenses. When an employee is excused from jury duty before the end of a normal workday, the employee shall return to work, unless excused by his/her supervisor. A twenty-four (24) hour shift employee on jury duty will not be required to return from jury duty to finish his/her shift, if that employee is to report for jury duty the next day.

Paid Holidays

All administrative full-time and part-time employees receive the following holidays off, if scheduled to work on those days:

New Year's Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	New Year's Eve
Thanksgiving Day	Floating Holiday

Part-time employees should take their holiday day off into consideration when determining the threshold of hours they need to remain under per week.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, the Administration office is closed on Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, the Administration office is closed on Monday. If Christmas Eve/Day and New Year's Eve/Day fall on a Saturday or Sunday, the Administration office is closed on Friday and Monday. Operations Battalion Chiefs receive the actual holiday off in these instances rather than the Friday before or Monday after the holiday off.

Non-exempt employees will be compensated in accordance with holiday premiums, as outlined in this manual.

Full-time, Non-Exempt Employees

Full-time, non-exempt employees who are assigned to a 56-hour work schedule will receive a holiday stipend in lieu of time off. Each employee will earn up to 10 days (240 hours) of pay at the employee's regular hourly rate, less state and federal withholding tax. For employees who are employed for the entire year, they will receive the entire amount. For employees who are employed for part of the year, the amount will be pro-rated by the number of holidays during their period of employment. This pay is pro-rated based on the number of holidays that occurred while the employee was employed during the year. Holiday pay shall be paid on the first payroll in December (subject to a deduction of any over-payment for employees who leave before the end of the year).

Sick Leave

An employee begins to earn sick time on their start date, however eligibility for sick leave shall be after the completion of six months of employment with the Department. Each full-time member on a 24-hour shift shall accumulate eight hours of sick time per month during the year. After an employee utilizes two or more consecutive sick days, the Chief may require the employee to produce a doctor's certificate prior to returning to work stating the nature of the illness and verify that the employee was unable to report for duty. The maximum accumulation of sick time shall be 2,016 hours for a 24-hour shift employee. The maximum accumulation for sick time for a 40-hour shift employee is 1,440.

When an employee is absent from work due to an illness, injury or medical appointment, the employee must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as they are aware that they will be late or unable to report to work, and no later than one hour prior to their appointed start time - except in an emergency - in order to receive compensation. Leaving a voicemail or message with another staff member does not qualify as notifying one's supervisor.

When an absence is due to illness, the Department reserves the right to require appropriate medical documentation. Such documentation must include the employee's name, the date and time he/she was seen by a medical professional, and if applicable, specific instructions regarding care and one's ability to return to work and perform their job.

A medical excuse shall be provided for an absence of three (3) or more consecutive workdays for forty (40) hour per week employees or two (2) or more consecutive workdays for fifty-six (56) hour work week employees.

If an employee does not use any sick time in the calendar year, one additional sick day will be added to the employee's sick bank.

Abuse of Leave

The Department may investigate the alleged illness of an employee absent from work on medical leave. False or fraudulent use of medical leave may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Retirement Payout

Upon retirement under the Wisconsin Retirement System, an employee who is enrolled in the SOFD's health insurance will be allowed to choose one of the following two options:

1. If an eligible retiring employee elects to continue coverage under SOFD's group health plan, SOFD will make a contribution toward the retiree's monthly premium in the amount of \$725 for a single health insurance plan or \$1,800 for a family health insurance plan, for a period of time not to exceed the equivalent of one month for each 80 hours of sick leave that has been accumulated by a 40 hour-per-week employee, or the equivalent of one month for each 112 hours of sick leave that has been accumulated by a 56 hour-per-week employee.
2. In lieu of the premium payments described in item 1 above, a taxable cash payment equal to 50 percent of the premium paid by the SOFD for similarly situated active employees who participate in the Department's group health plan, which will be paid out in substantially equal installments annually over the period described above during which the retiree is eligible for a SOFD contribution towards the retiree's health insurance. To receive the cash payment, the eligible retiree must make an election consistent with SOFD's benefits plan.

The SOFD will deduct the cost of the employee's contribution from their final paycheck. After an eligible retiree has exhausted the retiree health insurance benefits described above, the employee and/or her/his spouse may elect to maintain coverage under the SOFD's group health plan, and the retiree will be solely responsible for the full cost of continued coverage. The SOFD may modify or terminate this policy at any time.

Accumulation Changes

An employee who moves from a fifty-six-hour work week position to a forty-hour work week position will have their bank of unused medical leave adjusted to reflect the change in accumulation based on schedule (the bank of unused medical leave will be divided by a factor of 1.5). Thereafter, affected employees will accumulate and utilize medical leave as described above.

If an employee moves from a forty-hour work week position to a fifty-six-hour work week position, their bank of unused medical leave will be adjusted to reflect the change in accumulation based on the schedule change (the bank of unused medical leave will be multiplied by a factor of 1.5). Thereafter, affected employees will accumulate and utilize medical leave as described above.

Vacation

Following the completion of the anniversary year of service, non-administrative employees are entitled to annual vacation leave with pay according to the following years of service schedule:

YEARS OF SERVICE	40 HOUR EMPLOYEES	LINE PERSONNEL 56 HOUR EMPLOYEES	COMMAND STAFF 56 HOUR EMPLOYEES
1	18 DAYS	7 DAYS	15 DAYS
2	18 DAYS	9 DAYS	15 DAYS
4	18 DAYS	10 DAYS	17 DAYS
7	23 DAYS	12 DAYS	17 DAYS
12	28 DAYS	14 DAYS	19 DAYS
25	33 DAYS	16 DAYS	21 DAYS

No vacation time may be carried over from year-to-year for line personnel.

Vacation schedules shall be approved by the employee's Supervisor per the Chief's Vacation Picking Directive.

Command Staff working a 24 shift may carry 48 hours of vacation leave over from year-to-year. A 40 hour-a-week employee may carry over 80 hours of vacation leave from year-to-year. Any unused vacation leave time not used will be added to the employee's medical leave bank.

Part-time employees shall be granted vacation leave as outlined above on a pro-rated basis, based upon the number of hours worked.

Exempt employees working a 40-hour week are granted an additional 5 vacation days per year.

Uniform Allowance

Full-time employees employed a minimum of twelve (12) months prior to the first pay period in December shall receive an annual uniform allowance of six hundred twenty-five dollars (\$625), less all applicable state and federal withholding tax. Such payment will be made during the first pay period in December.

New full-time employees with less than twelve months of employment will be eligible for a pro-rated uniform allowance based on the number of full months worked, from the employee's date of hire to the following December 1st.

Wisconsin Retirement Fund

The Department shall make the required contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement Fund as established from time to time in Wis. Stats. § 40.05. Eligibility requirements and pension benefits shall be provided by statutes and the rules and regulations of the Wisconsin Retirement Fund.

Retirement/Death Benefit

*For employees hired prior to January 1, 2012, upon retirement under the Wisconsin Retirement System, death, or if an employee retires due to injuries or illness which prevent the employee from physically or mentally performing his/her duties (or comparable duties with any other public or private sector employer), a regular, full-time employee shall receive two full working days of pay for each year of continuous service with the Department as of January 1, 2012. The rate of pay shall be determined by the employee's regular pay rate as of January 1, 2012. No additional days shall be accumulated after 30 years of service.

If the fire chief was hired prior to January 1, 2012, and retires due to injuries or illness which prevent him/her from physically or mentally performing his/her duties, the employee shall receive three full working days for each year of continuous service with the Department. The rate of pay shall be determined by the employee's regular pay rate as of January 1, 2012. No additional days shall be accumulated after 30 years of service.

*Denotes legacy employees from the City of Mequon

General Employer Provided Insurance

Medical Plan

The Department offers a medical plan to all full-time employees. Part-time employees, who work on a regular basis at least 30 hours per week, may also be included under the Department's health insurance program.

New employees are eligible for health and dental insurance on the first of the month following the date of hire. The amount of an employee's contribution to health insurance will be a predetermined percent determined by the Department

Details of the plan(s) may be found in the benefit booklets. This Manual does not constitute such a legal document. The Department offers medical coverage for eligible employees and their eligible dependents. Your Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) contains more details. In the event of any conflict between the information contained in this Manual and in the Department's SPDs, the SPDs shall govern. The plan(s) is subject to change at the Department's discretion.

When an employee and/or dependent experiences a qualifying event that terminates their coverage on the Department's health insurance plan, the covered individual(s) will continue to maintain coverage through the end of the month in which they are terminating coverage.

When an employee and/or dependent experiences a qualifying event that begins coverage on the Department's health insurance plan, the date of the qualifying event will be the first date of coverage.

Dental Plan

The Department offers a supplemental dental plan for eligible employees. The Department pays a percent of the monthly premium and employees contribute the remaining amount. Please refer to the Dental Summary Plan Description (SPD) for an explanation of the plan's benefits and limitations.

Life Insurance Plan

Eligible employees are automatically enrolled in a group term life insurance program. Enrollees may designate or change the beneficiary for this policy at any time. The Department pays the basic premium for this coverage. The face value of this benefit is equal to one time the employee's annual salary. Employees may enroll in a supplemental program, and purchase additional units of coverage and/or spouse/dependent coverage at any time.

Employee Contribution Policy

The Department's benefit package is contributory; that is, an eligible employee is responsible for a portion of the premium for the corresponding benefits. A portion of the premium, up to a maximum per month, is contributed by the Department. The employee's contributory cost is deducted from their paycheck according to the following schedule:

1st Paycheck	2nd Paycheck
Health	Dental
Life	Vision

Eligibility

Regular full-time employees are eligible for the benefits as described in this section of the Manual.

Regular part-time employees who are scheduled to work thirty (30) or more hours per week year-round are eligible for pro-rated (to their normal weekly schedule) regular full-time benefits, as described in this Manual.

Part-time/seasonal/temporary employees are only eligible for benefits required by law, or approved for that position.

Communication

The Department uses an online platform to assist in the initial benefit enrollment process and the annual open enrollment process. Login information will be provided to all new employees during their first week of employment. The Summary Plan Descriptions (SPDs) and related benefit plan documents are all posted on the Employee Navigator site.

Details regarding each benefit plan are contained in the Department's Benefit & Enrollment Guide. Benefit plans governed by the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) may be further described in formal Summary Plan Descriptions or other legal documents, which are available for review through the Employee Navigate Benefits portal.

Employees meeting the eligibility criteria for particular benefits may participate in the various insurance programs offered by the Department. You may review the eligibility criteria for each benefit in the Benefit & Enrollment Guide and/or the Summary Plan Description for a particular benefit. Periodically there will be an Open Enrollment period. If you decline to participate in these programs on your initial eligibility date, you may request entry into the plan during Open Enrollment.

Open Enrollment

The Department's Open Enrollment period is usually in October/November each year. Notice is sent to all employees prior to the start date of the open enrollment period.

Special Enrollment/Qualifying Event

Special Enrollments may take place if a modification is made mid-year to benefits and/or if an employee experiences a qualifying event. If an employee experiences a qualifying event, they should contact the Fire Chief as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after the qualifying event as defined by the IRS to discuss enrollment changes.

Income Continuation Insurance/Short-Term Disability Plan

The Department furnishes short-term disability in accordance with the State of Wisconsin Income Continuation Insurance plan. The Department pays the total premium for the income continuation insurance program for the 180-day waiting period. If an employee wishes to have a shorter waiting period, he/she will pay the additional premium required via payroll deduction.

Vision Plan

The Department offers a vision plan for eligible employees. Please refer to the Vision Summary Plan Description for an explanation of the plan benefits and limitations. Employees pay 100% of the premiums associated with the vision insurance plan.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

To provide for payment of medical expenses and for salary continuation in the event of a work-related accident or illness, employees are covered by workers' compensation insurance provided by the Department and based on state regulations. The amount of benefits payable, as well as the duration of payments, depends upon the nature of one's injury or illness. However, all medical expenses incurred in connection with an on-the-job injury or illness, as well as corresponding salary payments, are paid in accordance with applicable state law. If an employee is injured or becomes ill on the job, they must immediately report the injury or illness to their direct supervisor. This ensures that the Department can help affected employees obtain appropriate medical treatment. Failure to follow this procedure may delay benefits or may even jeopardize the receipt of benefits. Questions regarding workers' compensation insurance should be directed to the Fire Chief.

Income Continuation Insurance

Employees are eligible for the ETF Income Continuation Insurance. Employer and employee contributions will be determined annually by Employee Trust Funds.

Retirement/Pension Plan

The Department pays the employer contribution to the State of Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) for all employees. The employee and employer contributions are set by the WRS annually. Employees seeking to make additional contributions to their WRS account may do so and should contact the Fire Chief for additional information.

Becoming Vested: Vesting is the minimum number of years of employment employees need to qualify for a retirement benefit. WRS members must be vested (and at minimum retirement age) to be eligible for a retirement benefit that includes employer contributions and associated employees. You may have to meet one of two vesting laws depending on when WRS employment first began:

1. If an employee first began WRS employment after 1989 and terminated employment before April 24, 1998, then they must have some WRS-creditable service in five calendar years.

2. If an employee first began WRS employment on or after July 1, 2011, then the employee must have five years of WRS- creditable service.

If neither vesting law applies, the employee was vested when they first began WRS employment. If an employee first became WRS eligible on or after July 1, 2011, the employee needs five years of creditable service to be eligible for a retirement annuity or lump-sum retirement benefit.

The full-time equivalent of one year of creditable service for SOFD employees is 1,904 hours. If an employee is not vested when terminating all WRS employment, the employee is only eligible for a separation benefit, which includes employee contributions, additional contributions (if applicable), and interest. Therefore, the employee will lose the equivalent of any employer contributions and associated interest.

Minimum Retirement Age: If an employee is vested and terminates WRS employment, they may apply for a retirement benefit once they reach minimum retirement age. This is age 55 for most employees, and age 50 for protective category employees. Normal retirement age is when a member may apply for a full retirement benefit that is not subject to an age reduction factor. The normal retirement age by employment category is:

- General employees - age 65
- Protective occupation employees - age 56 or 54

For more information, visit the ETF website at etf.wi.gov.

Deferred Compensation

An employee may elect, pursuant to Section 40.81(2), Wisconsin Statutes, to defer from each paycheck a specified amount by having the Department deduct such amount from the employee's paycheck. The amount deducted from an employee's paycheck shall be transferred by the Department to one of the Employer-approved deferred compensation providers, as selected by the employee. An employee participating in the deferred compensation plan may change the amount of the deduction or eliminate the deduction by informing the Department's Administrative Assistant. Only the provider (not the Employer) is responsible for the administration of the deferred compensation plan, including the investment of the employees' funds.

Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Plan

The Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) Program is an optional, supplemental retirement savings plan for all working state and university employees. Local government and school district employees may also use the WDC if their employers offer it. The WDC is an Internal Revenue Code Section 457 deferred compensation plan. A 457 deferred compensation plan allows employees to save money directly from their paycheck for retirement and offers tax benefits and different investment options.

Group Health Insurance

1. Department officials will enter into Health Contracts with carriers as determined by the Department.
2. Coverage provided by the contracts is contained in the Group Health Booklet published by the carriers, which will be distributed to covered employees.
3. The Group Health master contract controls coverage limits, and the carrier has final control of eligible benefits.
4. It shall be the employee's responsibility to notify the Department of any change in status for health insurance coverage. This shall include, but not be limited to, changing from single to family coverage or from family to single coverage. Such notification shall take place within thirty (30) days of the change in status. Failure to notify the Department shall result in the employee assuming responsibility for additional costs until corrected.
5. The Department reserves the right to change health insurance, or self-fund coverage, at any time for current employees or retirees.
6. Upon retirement, the employee will be permitted to participate in the Department's Medical Insurance Plan, subject to the employee paying the full cost of his/her insurance.
7. No employee shall make any claim against the Department for additional compensation in lieu of or in addition to the Department's contribution.

Premium Contribution

1. All employees eligible for and participating in Health Insurance Program(s) will pay an amount to be determined annually. Health insurance premium payments by the Department are subject to the minimum and maximum payments as certified by the State Plan. However, it is understood that based on compliance with the provisions of the Employee Trust Fund 40.10 Wisconsin Administrative Code, employees may be required to make higher contributions towards the cost of their selected health insurance plan.
2. For regular, part-time non-line employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least twenty (20) hours per week, the Department will pay, on the same basis as offered to full-time employees, one-half of the cost of Single Plan Health Insurance coverage, three-fourths of the cost of Single Plan Health Insurance coverage after the employee complete three (3) years of service, and full Single Plan Health Insurance coverage after the employee completes five (5) years of service. The one-half-three-fourths and full single plan coverage will be based on the amount that the Department would pay for single plan coverage if the part-time employee were a full-time employee. All employee payments for Group Health Insurance will be made by means of payroll deductions.

3. The Department's contribution will continue during any approved absence with pay or any leave covered by Federal or State law. Employees on unpaid leave of absence that are not covered by Federal or State law may continue to maintain their Group Health Insurance coverage, provided they pay the full premium by the tenth day of each month.
4. Upon the death of an employee, the employee's spouse and/or dependent children may continue to maintain the Group Health Insurance coverage as provided for under COBRA. The Employer will make a monthly contribution toward the premium in the amounts specified in Section 24.19 (2) (a) of the Personnel Code for a period of time not to exceed one (1) month for each ten (10) days of accumulated, unused paid illness/injury leave at the time of death.

Notification of Group Insurance Continuation Policy

1. All regular, full-time employees covered under this Manual shall receive term life insurance in the amount equal to their gross annual salary, rounded off to the next one thousand (\$1,000.00) dollars. Any premiums for additional life insurance shall be paid by the employee through payroll deduction.
2. The Department shall pay the full premium for such insurance for regular employees that qualify under WRS.
3. Eligibility requirements and benefits shall be as provided by Statutes and the rules and regulations established by the Group Insurance Board of the State of Wisconsin. All insurance policies within this Manual (Group Health, Group Dental, Group Long-term Disability and Group Life) are subject to the underlying terms and conditions of the accompanying insurance policies, and may be changed at the discretion of the Department.

Car and Expense Allowance

Due to limited staffing and the size of the organization, off-duty administrative members are relied upon to support the Department and are often called-in from home to provide that support. Below are guidelines for the assignment and use of take-home vehicles.

- Take home vehicles are provided to personnel who are considered critical to the provision of prompt service to the public for major fire, rescue and emergency medical incidents.
- Assignments of take-home vehicles are based on the availability of vehicles, and at the direction of the Chief or his/her designee.

Chapter 5: Paid-On-Call Staff

Paid Holidays

The holiday begins at 07:00 hours the morning of the holiday calendar date and concludes at 07:00 hours on the day following the holiday date.

Paid-on-Call Holidays

Paid-on-Call members who are scheduled to work within the defined period of a holiday will receive double time for on-call hours, and double time for call pay for the first hour, with straight time beyond one hour.

Paid on-Call members who are not scheduled, though who report to the station for an "All-Call", will be compensated at double time for the first hour, with straight time beyond one hour.

Paid-on-Premises

Paid-on-Premises employees who are scheduled to work within the defined period of a holiday will receive time-and-one-half their defined hourly rate. Paid-on-Premises employees are not entitled to per-Call-Pay.

Uniform/Clothing Allowance

All department members must adhere to current departmental uniform policies.

New employees will be issued uniforms upon being hired. These include: (1) pair of pants, (1) duty belt, (2) department t-shirts, (1) department polo, and (1) department jacket.

Full-time employees will be issued uniform items above including: (1) short sleeve uniform shirt, and (1) long sleeve uniform shirt.

Paid on-Call and Paid on-Premises members who attend 75% of the training from December 1st of the previous year to November 30 of the current year are eligible for an annual clothing allowance equal to the amounts listed in the chart below.

PAID-ON-CALL & PAID-ON-PREMISES EMPLOYEES

Hours Worked (January 1 - December 1)	Uniform/Clothing Allowance
2,000	\$400
1,500	\$200
500	\$100

Wisconsin Retirement System

The Department shall pay the Employer's required contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System. The Employee shall pay the full amount of the required employee contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System applicable to all other Department employees. Eligibility requirements and pension benefits shall be as provided by Statutes and the rules and regulations of the Wisconsin Retirement System.

Life & Disability Insurance

In addition to Workers' Compensation Insurance, the Employer shall provide Employees with the Accidental Death & Disability Insurance that provides not less than the following benefits and benefit levels:

CLASS 1: BENEFITS

Accidental Death & Dismemberment (Catastrophic Loss)	Principal Sum:	\$50,000
Accident Medical Expense Benefit	Maximum Benefit Amount:	\$1,000
	Deductible Amount:	\$0
Accident Total Disability	Weekly Benefit Amount:	\$200
	Maximum Payment Period:	To Age 65
Accident Partial Disability	Weekly Benefit Amount:	See Benefit
	Maximum Payment Period:	To Age 65
Rehabilitative Employment		Covered: See Benefit
Accelerated (Living Benefit Option)	Principal Sum:	See AD&D Benefit
	Maximum Benefit Amount:	\$25,000

Chapter 6: Standards of Conduct

Violation of Rules

1. Members shall not commit any acts or omit any acts which constitute a violation of any explicit rule, regulation, Special Order (SO), Policy, Administrative Directive or Standard Operating Guideline (SOG), whether stated in this policy or elsewhere.
2. Members shall abide by all policies, rules, and practices of the Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Department.
3. Members shall promptly communicate to their superior officer about any violation of Department Rules or disobedience of orders by any other member that may come to their attention/knowledge.
4. Members shall accept responsibility for their actions without attempting to conceal, divert, or mitigate their true culpability, nor shall they engage in efforts to thwart, or interfere with an internal or criminal investigation.

Unbecoming Conduct

1. Members shall not conduct themselves in any manner while on or off duty, that in words, deeds, or gestures, creates an atmosphere or situation that is detrimental to the Department or outside the accepted norms of conduct in society.
2. Unbecoming conduct shall include that which brings the Department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon a member of the Department, or that which impairs the operation or efficiency of the Department or member.
3. Members shall maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs which is in keeping with the highest standards of the firefighting profession.
4. Members shall not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude, which impairs their ability to perform their job or causes the Department to be brought into disrepute.
5. Members shall not engage in any sexual relations while on duty in any fire station, Fire Department vehicle, or on Department property.

Conformance to Laws

1. Members shall not knowingly violate any law of the United States and of any state or local jurisdiction. A conviction for a violation of any law, which is a crime, shall be prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

2. Members who are arrested, cited, or come under investigation for municipal ordinance violation, state forfeiture violation, and/or criminal violation shall report this fact to the Fire Chief within 24 hours of the initial law enforcement contact.
3. Members who are required to operate motor vehicles as part of their duties shall maintain a valid regular Wisconsin driver's license and immediately report to the Fire Chief any suspension and or revocation status.

Reporting for Duty

1. Members shall report for duty at the time and place required by assignment or orders and shall be physically and mentally fit to perform their duties.
2. Members shall be properly equipped and cognizant of information which can be reasonably foreseen as required for the proper performance of duty so that they may immediately assume their duties.

Attentiveness to Duty

1. Members shall be attentive to their duties. They shall not engage in any activities or personal business which would cause them to neglect or be inattentive to duty.
2. Inattentive behavior shall include that which adversely affects the operation and efficiency of the Department or the efficiency of the employees.

Reporting for Duty

1. Members shall remain awake while on duty except during authorized sleep periods. If unable to do so, they shall so report to their supervisor, who shall determine the proper course of action.

Leaving Duty Post

1. Members shall not leave their assigned areas or duties during a tour of duty unless directed to do so by their supervisor, authorized by a ranking officer/supervisor, or as the result of other urgent need.

Meals

1. Members shall be permitted to suspend assigned activity, subject to immediate call at all times, for the purpose of having meals during their tours of duty, but only for such period of time, and at such time and place, and in such a manner as established by departmental procedures.

Unsatisfactory Performance

1. Members shall maintain sufficient competency to properly perform their duties and assume the responsibilities of their positions.
2. Members shall perform their duties in a manner which will maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the Department.
3. Unsatisfactory performance may be demonstrated by a lack of knowledge of the application of Department procedures; an unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks; the failure to conform to work standards established for the member's rank, classification or position; being absent without leave; repeated poor evaluations, or a written record of repeated infractions of rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Department.

Use of Alcohol on Duty or in Uniform

1. Members shall not purchase or consume intoxicating beverages while in uniform or on duty.
2. Members shall not appear for duty, or be on duty, while under the influence of intoxicants, or with an odor of intoxicants on their breath. Members shall submit to a drug and/or alcohol screening when a supervisor has reasonable suspicion that a member is using and/or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Use of Alcohol Off Duty

2. Members, while off duty and in public, shall refrain from consuming intoxicating beverages to the extent that it renders the members unfit to report for the next regular tour of duty.

Insubordination

1. Members shall promptly obey any lawful orders of their supervisor or a ranking officer. This will include orders relayed from their supervisor or a ranking officer by a member of the same or lesser rank.
2. Members shall willfully observe and obey the lawful verbal and written rules, duties, policies, procedures, and practices of this Department.
3. Members shall also subordinate their personal preferences and work priorities to the lawful verbal and written rules, duties, policies, procedures and practices of this Department as well as to the lawful orders and directives of supervisors and superior command personnel of the Department.

4. Members shall willfully perform all lawful duties and tasks assigned by supervisors and superior-ranked personnel. Direct, tacit, or constructive refusal to do so is insubordination.
5. Members shall be subordinate and display courtesy and respect in words, deeds, gestures, and actions toward superior-ranked officers of this Department and other public safety agencies with which this Department cooperates.

Unlawful Orders

1. Members shall not obey any order which they know, or should know, would require them to commit any illegal act. If in doubt as to the legality of an order, members shall request the issuing member to clarify the order or to confer with higher authority.

Gifts, Gratuities, Bribes or Rewards

1. Members may accept gratuities from members of the public without subsequent obligation to the donor subject to the following:
 - a. At no time should a member ask for or claim an entitlement to any reward, gift or gratuity, even if it has been the long-established policy of an enterprise to offer them.
 - b. A member shall offer to pay the full amount due for any purchases made while on duty and/or in uniform. Further, he/she shall have sufficient funds available to complete the purchase and shall proceed with payment unless directed otherwise by the vendor.
 - c. Gratuities offered having a value of greater than \$25 shall be declined. In the event of the donor insisting on offering a gratuity of greater value, the member shall ask that the donor convey the gratuity to the intended recipient via the Office of the Fire Chief, so that it may be properly acknowledged by the Department.
 - d. Gratuities shall not be accepted from any persons known to have a history of criminal convictions, known to be associated with any criminal enterprise, or known to be under investigation for any active criminal case.
 - e. Gratuities shall not be accepted from any persons or family members of persons currently seeking employment by the Fire Department.
 - f. Should any donor later raise the matter of a prior gratuity in the context of an expectation for subsequent special treatment, the member shall inform the donor that any gratuities offered with the stated intent of securing special treatment for the donor is a violation of the law.

Abuse of Position

1. Members shall not use their official position, official identification cards, or badges:
 - a. For personal or financial gain.
 - b. For obtaining privileges not otherwise available to them except in the performance of duty.
 - c. For avoiding consequences of illegal acts.
2. Members shall not authorize the use of their names, photographs, or official titles, which identify them as members, in connection with testimonials or advertisements of any commodity or commercial enterprise.

Endorsements and Referrals

1. Members shall not recommend or suggest in any manner, except in the transaction of personal business, the employment, or procurement of a particular product, professional service, bondsman, mortician, etc.
2. In the case of ambulance or towing service, when such service is necessary and the person needing the service is unable or unwilling to procure it or requests assistance, members shall proceed in accordance with established departmental procedures.

Citizen Complaints

1. Members shall follow established departmental procedures for processing citizen complaints. Members may attempt to resolve the complaint but shall never attempt to dissuade any citizen from lodging a complaint against any member of the Department.

Identification

1. Members shall carry their Department-issued identification card on their persons at all times when on duty.

Courtesy

1. Members shall be courteous to the public and other members of the Department.
2. Members shall be tactful in the performance of their duties, shall control their tempers, and exercise the utmost patience and discretion, and shall not engage in argumentative discussions even in the face of extreme provocation.

3. In the performance of their duties, members shall not use coarse, violent, profane, or insolent language or gestures, and shall not comment in an offensive manner concerning race, gender, religion, politics, national origin, lifestyle, or similar personal characteristics.
4. Members shall not engage in harassment as prohibited by the Department policy.

Requests for Assistance

1. When any person requests assistance or advice, or makes complaints or reports, either by telephone or in person, all pertinent information will be obtained in an official and courteous manner and will be properly and judiciously acted upon consistent with established Departmental procedures.
2. Members shall during the line of duty, come to the aid of another member when a request or need is made known.

Associations

1. Members shall avoid associations or dealings with persons whom they know, or should know, are persons under criminal investigation or indictment, except as necessary to the performance of official duties, or where unavoidable because of other personal relationships of the members.
2. Members in doubt as to the application of this rule should report the circumstances in question to the Fire Chief for review.

Visiting Prohibited Establishments

1. Members shall not knowingly visit, enter or frequent a house of prostitution, gambling house or establishment wherein the laws of the United States, the state or the local jurisdiction are regularly violated except in the performance of duty or while acting under proper and specific orders from a ranking officer.

Gambling

1. Members shall not engage or participate in any form of prosecutable illegal gambling at any time.

Personal Appearance

1. Members on duty shall wear uniforms or other clothing in accordance with established department procedures.

Political Activity

1. No member shall engage in any political activity, except voting, while in uniform or on duty. Nor shall any member use the influence of his or her office in any manner for political purposes.
2. Members shall not by means of their uniform, badge, ID, or affiliation with the Department attempt to influence the vote of any person for any political candidate or issue.
3. Members shall not solicit, distribute, post or display any literature, sign, or other items pertaining to any candidate or issue on Department equipment or property or personal items authorized for use by the Department.

Dissemination of Information

1. Members shall treat the official business of the Department as confidential. Information regarding official business shall be disseminated only to those for whom it is intended, in accordance with established Departmental procedures.
2. Members may remove or copy official records or reports from a Department installation only in accordance with established Departmental procedures.
3. Members shall not divulge the identity of persons giving confidential information except as authorized by proper authority.
4. Members shall not disclose, remove, or use in an unauthorized manner any report, record or other information belonging to or in the custody of the Department without the express permission of a Chief Officer.

Intervention

1. Members shall not interfere with duties being handled by other members of the Department or by any other governmental agency unless:
 - a. Ordered to intervene by a ranking officer, or
 - b. The intervening member believes a safety issue exists.

2. Members shall not undertake any investigation or other official action, not part of their regular duties without obtaining permission from their supervisor unless the exigencies of the situation require immediate action.

Required Reports

1. Members shall submit all required reports on time and in accordance with established Departmental procedures.
2. Reports submitted by members shall be truthful and complete, and no member shall knowingly enter, or cause to be entered, any inaccurate, false or improper information.

Use of Department Property

1. Members shall utilize Department property only for its intended purpose, in accordance with established Departmental procedures, and shall not abuse, negligently damage or negligently lose Department property.
2. Damage shall be reported to a supervisor as soon as practical. All Department equipment issued to members shall be maintained in proper order and returned upon request.

Operating Vehicles

1. Members shall operate official vehicles in a careful and prudent manner and in conformance with all laws and all Departmental directives pertaining to such operation.
2. In the event of an accident, the operator shall immediately notify the duty supervisor.
3. Loss or suspension of any driving license shall be reported to a supervisor immediately.

Truthfulness

1. Members shall not willfully or knowingly make an untruthful statement, verbally or written, or knowingly omit pertinent information pertaining to his/her official duty as a member of the Department.

Unauthorized Equipment

1. Members shall not possess any unauthorized personal equipment while on duty. Members shall not duplicate, or procure Department badges, identification, or insignia without the authorization of the Fire Chief or the Chief's designee, nor shall members possess unauthorized keys, badges, identification, or insignia at any time.

Civil Actions

1. Members shall not commence civil actions for damages sustained in the line of duty without first submitting a report detailing the circumstances and the nature of the matter to the Fire Chief.

Public Criticism

1. Members of the Department shall not publicly criticize the operations or personnel of the Department if such criticism clearly undermines the discipline, harmony, or general efficiency of the Department. The Department recognizes that its members retain rights to expression and freedom of speech granted by the Constitution, whether on or off-duty; however, these rights do not allow for conduct which is disruptive to the function of the Department's business.
2. Generally, conduct prohibited by this regulation includes critical public statements or overt actions regarding specific employees, order, or operations, and includes abusive, frivolous, or deliberately constructed false criticism.

Concealed Recording Devices

1. Members of the Department are not to use recording devices surreptitiously for Department business/relations on or off-duty, unless there is prior permission from a supervisor.

Committing Unsafe Acts or Endangering Self or Others

1. Members shall not commit acts or behave in such manner that has the potential for endangering or injuring themselves, property, or another person.

Cooperation with other Members, Employees, and Other Officials

1. Members are to seek affirmative ways to cooperate and work with other members, employees, supervisors, command staff, public officials and employees of any Department with whom this Department needs to have a good working relationship in order to deliver effective, efficient, and safe services. Members shall follow the chain of command.
2. Supervisors shall treat subordinates with the same courtesy and respect that is required of subordinates to display toward supervisors. Criticisms of a member or member's performance will be made directly to the subordinate and, when practical, in a private setting.

Knowing, Observing, and Obeying all Directives, Rules, Policies, and Procedures

1. Members shall make an affirmative, consistent effort to observe and comply with the directives, rules, policies, standard operating guidelines, and traditions established for the effective, efficient, and safe operations of this Department. This standard applies to policies, standard operating guidelines, and traditions that are written as well as those established by past practice patterns.
2. Affirmative effort as the term is used here means to self-initiate acceptable ways to comply. In other words, look for ways to comply with the standard and do not look for exceptions to the standard.

Personal Use of Property, Equipment or Supplies

1. Members shall not use any Department or Department property, equipment, or supplies for personal use unless specifically authorized to do so by a Chief Officer.

Possession of Weapons

1. Members shall not possess or introduce into Department buildings or vehicles or equipment, any firearm, other weapon, or item that could be viewed as a weapon.



**Southern Ozaukee Fire &
Emergency Medical Services Department
11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-2530
(262) 242-5042 Fax**

Date: March 12, 2025

To: SOFD Full-Time Members

From: David L. Bialk, Fire Chief

Subject: Administrative Directive 001: Holiday Usage Payout/Time Off Request

Employees may take part or all their holiday hours as “time off” in lieu of pay. Employees wanting “time off” in lieu of pay shall obtain prior approval by the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Those hours which have not been taken off or have not been approved to be taken off as of the last day of the last payroll period of November, shall be paid on the first pay period in December. Any hours which have been approved to be taken off after November 15th and subsequently, for any reason, are not taken off shall be paid on the next pay period in the new year at the previous year’s rates.



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(262) 242-5042 Fax**

Date: March 12,, 2025

To: SOFD Full-Time Members

From: David L. Bialk, Fire Chief

Subject: Administrative Directive 002: Compensatory (Comp) Time Accumulation & Usage

Employees working overtime hours, attending training, or coming in for call back may receive their payment for such additional time added to their paycheck, or converted to Compensatory Time. Members may accumulate up to 96 hours of Comp Time per year. Employees taking Comp Time must submit a request prior to the next month's schedule being posted, and must have approval by the Fire Chief or his designee.

Comp Time requests may be canceled by the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Those hours which have not been taken off or that have not been approved to be taken off as of the last day of the last payroll period of November shall be paid on the first pay period in December. Any hours which have been approved to be taken off after November 15th and subsequently, for any reason, are not taken off shall be paid on the next pay period in the new year at the previous year's rates.

No amount of Compensatory Time can be rolled over from year-to-year.



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Date: March 12, 2025

To: SOFD Full-Time Members

From: David L. Bialk, Fire Chief

Subject: Administrative Directive 003: Work Mandates

Employees (who meet the requirements of the needed position) who are not currently scheduled to work will be contacted in order of Department seniority (least first). Once a mandate shift is worked, the individual will move to the bottom of the mandate list.

Employees on vacation or directly entering off-time connected to selected personal time, are not eligible for work mandates.

A work mandate cannot result in an employee working more than 96 hours consecutively. There must be a minimum of 24 consecutive hours off-duty in between 96-hour shifts.

NON-FULL-TIME SWORN EMPLOYEES

CLASSIFICATION	Hourly Pay Rate - 2025
Captain	\$27.40
Paramedic	\$26.74
Paramedic-on-Premises (POP)	\$33.99
Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	\$26.48
Employee-on-Premises (EOP)	\$20.40
Motor Pump Operator	\$26.48
Firefighter and/or EMT	\$26.27
Probationary - Step 3	\$21.09
Probationary - Step 2	\$18.71
Probationary - Step 1	\$16.34
Station Work	\$20.00
Weekday On-Call	\$3.06
Weekend On-Call	\$7.14
Call Response Premium	\$10.00
Lieutenant	\$27.02

Individual rates are paid while attending a call, with a one hour minimum, and paid in fifteen-minute increments over one hour.

On-call rates are paid hourly, and in addition to applicable pay rates.

Individual rates are paid for training, assigned vehicle inspections, and community education.

Employee-on-Premises (EOP) and Paramedic-on-Premises (POP) are not entitled to individual call pay or a call response premium when scheduled in these roles.

A call response premium is added once to each on-call response, and do not accrue based on time.

FULL-TIME SWORN EMPLOYEES, NON-EXEMPT

Firefighter/Paramedic, 2024 (2.75%)						
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
\$57,041.00	\$62,102.00	\$67,164.00	\$72,225.00	\$77,287.00	\$82,349.00	\$87,415.00
Firefighter/Paramedic, 2025 (2.75%)						
Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
\$58,609.63	\$63,809.81	\$69,011.01	\$74,211.19	\$79,412.39	\$84,613.60	\$89,818.91

Full-time sworn firefighter/non-paramedics will be paid eight percent less than their applicable step, until they have completed and received a paramedic endorsement.

Full-time sworn firefighter/paramedics will be placed at a step at their time of appointment by the Fire Chief. Employees will become eligible for a step increase at subsequent one-year anniversaries, pending approval of the Fire Chief.



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
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(262) 242-2530
(262) 242-5042 Fax

TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Cedarburg Joint Response Plan

Background

In November, City leaders and fire chiefs from Mequon and Cedarburg respectively met to discuss fire and EMS responses to properties along shared boundaries. There are three locations on the south side of Pioneer Road that have City boundary lines running along or through them. Each of these properties has a Mequon address, making SOFD responsible for their fire inspections. However, Cedarburg Fire Department is physically closer in the event of an emergency.

Analysis

As a result of the meeting, it was decided going forward that all fire and EMS calls to the following locations will now be joint responses from both the Cedarburg and Southern Ozaukee fire departments:

- **Ozaukee Ice Center**
- **Carlson Tool (All Buildings)**
- **Port Washington State Bank Soccer Field**

Following this decision, Chief Vahsholtz contacted the Ozaukee County Dispatch Center on November 9, 2024, and set up a joint response protocol, similar to the dual paging used for paramedic intercept calls. The dispatch center will simulcast all fire and EMS requests to both the Cedarburg and Southern Ozaukee fire departments, and both departments will respond.

SOFD will continue to perform the fire inspections, however SOFD will coordinate training with Cedarburg Fire Department to ensure members of both departments are familiar with the buildings and any hazards.

Fiscal Impact

None

Recommendation

See attached Joint Response memo.

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
Emergency Medical Services Department
11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-2530
(262) 242-5042 Fax

TO: Cedarburg Fire Department
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: February 11, 2025
SUBJECT: Joint Responses

This memo serves as formal confirmation that effective immediately, all fire and EMS responses to the following locations will be a joint response from the Cedarburg and Southern Ozaukee fire departments:

- **Ozaukee Ice Center**
5505 Pioneer Rd, Mequon, WI 53092
- **Carlson Tool (All Buildings)**
W57N14386 Doerr Way, Cedarburg, WI 53012
- **Port Washington State Bank Soccer Field**
N143 W6499 Layton St, Cedarburg, WI 53012

The Ozaukee County Sheriff's Department dispatch center will simulcast all fire and EMS requests to both the Cedarburg and Southern Ozaukee fire departments. Both departments will respond, and the first-arriving unit will determine the appropriate level of resources required for the situation.

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
 Emergency Medical Services Department
 11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
 Mequon, WI 53092
 (262) 242-2530
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TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Truck Usage Ladder

Background

The SOFD currently maintains two ladder trucks. Prior to the merger between Mequon and Thiensville, Mequon had two ladder trucks, and Thiensville had one. After the merger, the SOFD sold one of the ladder trucks, leaving two ladder trucks in the fleet.

Analysis

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides recommendations on the service life of fire trucks. Annex D of NFPA 1900: *Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances* outlines lifecycle recommendations for frontline and reserve apparatus. It suggests that fire apparatus should serve for 15 years as frontline vehicles before being transitioned to reserve status. Apparatus older than 15 years should be evaluated for refurbishment according to NFPA 1912: *Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing*. Additionally, NFPA 1901 Annex D recommends that apparatus more than 25 years old should be retired from service.

The two ladder trucks currently operated by the SOFD are from 2007 and 2006, making them 18 and 19 years old, respectively. Using the suggested timeline from the NFPA, a new ladder truck should be purchased and delivered in 2031. The cost today of a new ladder truck is approximately \$1.2 million to \$1.7 million dollars.

The table below shows the number of times each ladder truck responded to a call in 2023 and 2024:

Ladder Truck Usage by Number of Responses		
	2023	2024
Westside Ladder Truck 91	27	36
Eastside Ladder Truck 92	6	6

Professional Analysis of Ladder Truck Usage and Downsizing Consideration

Following the merger of the Mequon and Thiensville Fire Departments, the long-term capital plan does not include replacing the two existing ladder trucks, which are both the same age and expected to reach the end of their service life around the same time. The department is now considering whether to downsize from two ladder trucks to one in 2025, rather than waiting until 2031 for replacement. This analysis explores the operational impact and available data regarding this decision.

Ladder Truck Usage and Data Review

A review of the operational data from the past two years reveals that both ladder trucks were only used for firefighting operations on two occasions. While the trucks are equipped with ground ladders and other tools, their firefighting capabilities have been underutilized. This suggests that the demand for the full capabilities of both ladder trucks has been limited.

Impact of Downsizing

Given the limited usage of the ladder trucks, downsizing from two to one in 2025 is unlikely to significantly affect firefighting operations. The department can rely on MABAS (Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) to request ladder trucks from neighboring communities when additional resources are needed for large-scale incidents.

Comparative Analysis

For comparison, the North Shore Fire Department, which responds to 13,000 fire and EMS calls annually, operates two ladder trucks (one in service, one in reserve). In contrast, the City of Milwaukee, with a population of 560,000, maintains five staffed ladder trucks for its Northside. This demonstrates that fewer ladder trucks can still meet operational needs, especially when mutual aid systems are in place.

Additional Considerations

The carrying costs for the ladder trucks are as follows:

Expense	Westside Ladder Truck 91	Eastside Ladder Truck92
Fuel	\$315	\$250
Insurance	\$1,611	\$1,611
Repairs	\$5,689	\$3,143
Ground Ladder Testing	\$525	\$525
Aerial Ladder Testing	\$1,500	\$1,500
Total Carrying Cost	\$9,640	\$7,029

While having two ladder trucks provides better geographical coverage, staffing constraints prevent both from responding simultaneously, as they are typically staffed by paid-on-call personnel who respond from home.

Additionally, the old Mequon ladder truck, sold after the merger, went for \$86,000 despite being 26 years old, indicating that older vehicles still retain some resale value.

Conclusion

Given the limited usage data, downsizing to one ladder truck in 2025, rather than waiting until

2031, is a viable option that would not compromise firefighting capabilities. The department can continue to respond effectively to large-scale incidents through mutual aid agreements. Downsizing now would align with current usage patterns, reduce costs, and ensure efficient fleet management while maintaining operational readiness.

Fiscal Impact

The original Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) stipulates that any disposal or sale of equipment valued over \$100,000 requires approval from the SOFD Board. The sale of the ladder truck is projected to generate between \$100,000 and \$200,000. Given current market conditions, the sale of the ladder truck now would yield a higher return compared to waiting for six years at its end of life.

Recommendation

Downsize the fleet of ladder trucks from two to one.

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department

**Southern Ozaukee Fire Department
Workplan 2025**

Project	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Finalize Employee Handbook (Holdover 2024)	■	■	■									
Finalize Financial Polices (Holdover 2024)	■	■	■									
Hire 1 Fulltime FF/Paramedic (Done)			■	■	■							
Review Capital Equipment and Funding		■	■	■	■	■						
Recruit for and Hire a Deputy Chief (In Progress)			■	■	■							
Provide Management Training for Command Staff (In Progress)					■	■	■	■	■			
Create an Acting Battalion Chief Handbook (In Progress)		■	■	■	■	■	■					
Provide Training on EMS Documentation (Done)			■	■	■	■						
Amend IGA for Building Usage								■	■	■	■	
Create 2026 Budget							■	■	■			
Create Strategic Plan (May 1st and 2nd)				■	■	■	■					
Create a Fire Commission Handbook									■	■	■	



Southern Ozaukee Fire and
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11300 N. Buntrock Avenue
Mequon, WI 53092
(262) 242-2530
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TO: SOFD Board
FROM: Fire Chief David L Bialk
DATE: March 12, 2025
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update

Background

As part of the Southern Ozaukee Fire Department's (SOFD) 2024/25 Workplan, the development of a strategic plan is underway. Initially, planning commenced in May 2024, but was delayed for several months due to personnel changes. In late December 2024, a date and venue for the planning session were confirmed. The strategic planning will be held on the afternoon of Thursday, May 1, and the morning of Friday, May 2, 2025, at the River Club of Mequon. These dates and times were presented to the SOFD Board during their January 2025 meeting.

Analysis

Lynn Streeter, Doug Chimenti, and the fire department staff have been actively preparing for the upcoming planning session. The team has developed three key documents: the Stakeholder List, the SOFD Strategic Planning Discussion Guide, and the SOFD Logistics Guide. All three documents have been before the Board before and are currently updated with the latest information.

The next step is to seek approval of the stakeholder list from the SOFD Board on March 12. Once the list is finalized, a "Save the Date" letter, prepared by the Mequon City Mayor and the Thiensville Village President, will be mailed to the identified stakeholders. Following the distribution of these letters, fire department staff will meet with Lynn and Doug before April to continue the preparation and planning for the strategic planning workshop.

Fiscal Impact

A request for reimbursement of up to \$4,500 was submitted to the Mequon Community Foundation for expenses related to the strategic planning workshop.

Recommendation

None

Fire Chief David L Bialk

David L Bialk

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department

Southern Ozaukee Fire Department Strategic Planning Stakeholder List

May 1st and 2nd

Name	City	State	Zip	Organization	Position
Will Jones	Mequon	WI	53092	City of Mequon	City Administrator
Colleen Landisch	Thiensville	WI	53092	Village of Thiensville	Village Administrator
Justin Schoenemann	Mequon	WI	53092	City of Mequon	Assistant City Administrator
Davdi Bialk	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD	Fire Chief
Rick Lemke	Mequon	WI	53097	SOFD	Battalion Chief
Amy Boll	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD	Battalion Chief
Brandon Boettcher	Franklin	WI	53132	SOFD	Battalion Chief
Jeremiah Bradley	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD	Lieutenant SOFD
Nick Boehlke	Mequon	WI	53097	SOFD	Lieutenant SOFD
Mackenzie Haase	Waukesha	WI	53188	SOFD	Member SOFD
Lynn Streeter	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
Greg Bach	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
Doug Chimenti	Thiensville	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
Dale Mayr	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
Mayor Andrew Nerbun	Mequon	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
President John Rosing	Thiensville	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
John Wirth	Mequon	WI	53097	Past SOFD Board	Former Mayor
Van Mobley	Thiensville	WI	53092	Past SOFD Board	Former President
Kristina Eckert	Thiensville	WI	53092	SOFD Board	Board Member
Robert Whitaker	Glendale	WI	53209	North Shore Fire Rescue	Fire Chief
Jeff Vahsholtz	Cedarburg	WI	53012	Cedarburg Fire Department	Fire Chief
Mark Riley	Mequon	WI	53092	Mequon Police Department	Police Chief
Curt Kleppin	Thiensville	WI	53092	Thiensville Police Department	Police Chief
Dr. Jason Staszko	Mequon	WI	53092	Ascension Columbia St. Mary's H	EMS Medical Director
Christy Knowles	Port Washingl	WI	53074	Ozaukee County Sheriff 's Office	Sheriff
Samantha Sullivan	Mequon	WI	53092	Teal Shores	Community Relations Manager
Julie Irvine	Mequon	WI	53092	Newcastle Place	Director of Sales Marketing
Chris Anderson	Mequon	WI	53092	Newcastle Place	Executive Director
Justin Saldutte	Mequon	WI	53092	Aurora Health Center	Manager of Clinic Operations

Kalli	VandenHeuvel	Mequon	WI	53092 Children's Wisconsin	Practice Manager
Dr. Matthew	Joynt	Mequon	WI	53092 Mequon Thiensville School District	Superintendent
Jenna	Schoenke	Mequon	WI	53092 Lumia Mequon	Community Relations Manager
Lindsay	Scholz	Mequon	WI	53092 Charter Senior Living of Mequon	Director
Jennifer	Hylter	Thiensville	WI	53092 Willowbrook Place	Executive Director
Dr Steven	Taylor	Mequon	WI	53092 Concordia University	VP for Innovation
Dr Michael	DeGere	Menomonee Falls	WI	53051 Froedtert Menomonee Falls Hospital	Chief Medical Officer Community Hospital Division
Jo	Steinberg	Milwaukee	WI	53226 Midland Health Testing, Inc.	Chief Executive Officer
Carrie	Timm	Mequon	WI	53092 StoryPoint Mequon	Community Specialist
Kathleen	Schneider	Mequon	WI	53092 FOOFD	Past FOOFD Member
Melissa	Bleidorn	Mequon	WI	53092 FOOFD	Past FOOFD Member
Kirsten	Hildebrand	Mequon	WI	53092 FOOFD	Past FOOFD Member
Kristin	Lundeen	Mequon	WI	53092 City of Mequon	DPW Director
Kim	Tollefson	Mequon	WI	53092 City of Mequon	Director of Community Development
Brenda	Arnett	Mequon	WI	53092 City of Mequon	Finance Director
John	Kukla	Thiensville	WI	53092 Thiensville Volunteer Fire Department	President Corporation

Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Strategic Plan Logistics Guide March 2025 v1

Invitations:

- Finalize list. Will need to obtain mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers.
- Confirm list during March SOFD Board meeting
- Letters of invitation written by and signed by John and Andy. Recommend that letter go out USPS, immediately following the Board meeting.
- Request a yes/no response (provide deadline) and track it

Interviews

- Review “no” list and consider interviews
- Interviews to be scheduled in late March or early April
- Lynn to develop interview questions
- Lynn and Doug to participate in interviews
- Administrative support person to schedule in person interviews
- Lynn to write interview summary document

Preparation for Planning Retreat

- Lynn to create/revise the supply list
- Administrative support person to procure supplies (note: some supplies donated by MTCTF)

River Club

- Administrative support person has primary responsibility to coordinate with RC
- Board leadership to confirm schedule, food and expenses
- Day 1: beverages, snacks and reception
- Day2: breakfast (prior to retreat start time) snacks, beverages
- Walk through to review room layout- tables, sign in, food, podium for speakers, av set up, microphone etc.
- Take away thank you gift (optional)

SOFD Member Sessions

- Chief to schedule two sessions, communicate and encourage participation
- Lynn to design and facilitate sessions with assistance from Doug
- Lynn to write summary document with administrative assistance if needed

Retreat

- Board Leadership to determine /confirm speakers
- Identify pre-reads (Chief and Board Leadership) and send out via USPS approximately two weeks in advance
- Lynn to develop and send out a high-level agenda to include with pre-reads
- Lynn to develop a detailed facilitators’ agenda (confidential) and review with Doug
- Doug to coordinate a single presentation deck for speakers and manage av logistics

- Chief, Lynn and Doug to create table assignments for Day 1
- Lynn to be primary facilitator. Doug to be secondary facilitator.
- Chief, Lynn and Doug to create Day 2 seating assignments at the end of Day 1
- Administrative support person on-site for entire retreat

Strategic Plan Retreat Supply List v1

- Post-it super sticky easel pads (one per table and one for facilitators)
- Floor easels (one per table and one for facilitators)
- Name tags
- Table numbers (or something more creative)
- Blue painters' tape
- Scotch tape
- Mr. Sketch colored, scented markers (one package per table)
- Pens
- Post-it pads (numbers and colors TBD)
- Index cards
- Other?

Southern Ozaukee Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department Strategic Plan Discussion Guide March-April v4

Project Background: The SOFD, formed in 2023, seeks to complete a five-year strategic plan. Critical to the process is the involvement of internal and external stakeholders, including members of the Board of Directors and the Department.

Key Assumptions: (to be validated)

- Our Mission, Vision and Values are foundational to our work
- Participants will need a solid understanding of our current state
- Participants will need to learn about future trends in fire and EMS services
- The SOFD will need to align with the strategic priorities of the municipalities we serve
- The SOFD will involve others, as needed, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of issues, and obtain engagement and future support.

Discussion Items

- Identification of a core working group as well as a broader Strategic Planning Committee. This participants will include members of the SOFD Board and the leadership of the SOFD. Senior staff from the municipalities we serve will be available for consultation as requested.
- Validation of the proposed timeline
- Awareness of the level of administrative support that will be needed
- Identification of retreat participants (estimated at 35-40): SOFD Board of Directors, representation from the municipalities we serve, SOFD members and others if appropriate.

Project Deliverables:

- Incorporate key learning into the process to ensure that participants are knowledgeable about current state and future trends
- Facilitate two group sessions with members of the SOFD to ensure voice and engagement
- Conduct external interviews, if needed, beyond what was completed for the 2023 Mission, Vision and Values project.
- Conduct a facilitated strategic planning retreat (two half day sessions)
- Synthesize materials and develop a draft strategic plan to be presented to the SOFD Board of Directors for review and approval
- Create a process and tracking tool for ongoing monitoring of our strategic plan. Align with tools that are familiar to the municipalities we serve.

Proposed Timeline:

March-April 2025– Complete data gathering activities

April 2025- Facilitated sessions with SOFD members

April-May 2025– Complete the education and facilitated retreat

May-June 2025 - Synthesis and document development

July 2025- Present to SOFD Board of Directors. Following approval by the SOFD Board, the Strategic Plan will be shared with the City of Mequon Common Council and the Village of Thiensville Board of Trustee