



Southern Ozaukee Fire & EMS Board
MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, September 10, 2025

LOCATION: 250 Elm Street, Thiensville,
WI

TIME: 5:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nerbun called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Mequon

Mayor Andrew Nerbun

Administrator Will Jones

Alderman Gregg Bach

Alderman William Gebhardt (Excused)

Citizen Lynn Streeter

Thiensville

President John Rosing

Trustee Kristina Eckert

Administrator Colleen Landisch-Hansen

Citizen Doug Chimenti

Alternate Trustee David Lange

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. July 9, 2025 (att)

Citizen Streeter noted a correction to the end of the minutes. Paramedic and paramedicine should be swapped.

MOTION to approve with amendment by Trustee Rosing **SECONDED** by Trustee Streeter. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye:

No:

Abstain:

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. FINANCE

A. Review and Action Regarding the Ambulance Rate Survey (att)

Chief Bialk explained the survey information and corresponding recommendations.

Chief Bialk clarified that while some departments may appear to have lower costs, those departments often use itemized billing, whereas SOFD uses batch billing. The survey compared the SOFD to other departments and provided recommendations for potential rate adjustments.

Alderman Bach inquired about associated costs for patients transported to Froedtert Hospital by private ambulance.

Citizen Chimenti believed it to be about \$3,000.

Citizen Streeter explained that reimbursement is a fixed amount for patients who are covered by Medicare, meaning that regardless of the rate charged, those payments are not variable. This is notable given that the majority of the transports the Department performs are for Medicare patients.

Trustee Eckert inquired about the differences between residents and non-residents for various services.

Mayor Nerbun indicated that the only item with a different cost is transport, which is not used often.

Trustee Eckert suggested that, for consistency, all rates should differ between residents and non-residents.

The Board discussed using a flat rate increase versus a percentage.

Mayor Nerbun pointed out that one flat rate for all items could potentially be too punitive for lower-cost items.

The Board agreed on two different flat rate increases. A flat increase of \$50 for non-residents for rates under \$1,000, and \$100 for rates over \$1,000.

MOTION to Approve with Modification of a Flat Increase of \$50 for Non-Residents for rates Under \$1,000, and \$100 for rates Over \$1,000 by President Rosing **SECONDED** by Trustee Eckert. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 0

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

No: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. Review and Action Regarding the 2026 Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Budget (att)

Chief Bialk noted that Administrator Landisch-Hansen clarified prior to the meeting that the attached budget document was a working version, and not the final draft. The only change reflected in the current version was a \$1 balance adjustment.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen summarized the 2026 draft budget, highlighting a \$155,000 Capital Contribution as the most significant change to address the Department's growing capital needs.

The majority of the budget increase from 2025 is attributed to employee wages and benefits.

Chief Bialk noted that the 2.3% increase in health insurance was favorable compared to the higher increase in the prior year.

Citizen Streeter inquired about the staffing assumptions for 2026, and whether this staffing level would address the previous concerns regarding staff roles and shift coverage. Chief Bialk replied that the plan includes the hiring of one additional full-time staff member, with the goal of maintaining seven staff members per shift at any given time, with a recommendation for eight. The intention is to utilize paid-on-call personnel to fill the eighth position in 2026 following the new hire.

Administrator Landisch-Hansen emphasized that staffing is a major point of discussion during the budget process, requiring balance between adequate coverage, competitive compensation, and fiscal responsibility.

Administrator Jones provided additional budget details, noting a significant reduction in legal fees. Chief Bialk also conducted a mid-year salary review, which resulted in adjustments to command-level pay to align with market benchmarks. All positions will receive a 3.5% cost-of-living adjustment, compared to last year's 2.75%.

Administrator Jones pointed out a new \$10,000 budget allocation for building rental expenses, payable to the City of Mequon. This amount reflects ongoing discussions regarding cost-sharing for building usage and anticipated future increases for utilities, supplies, and insurance, which are currently covered by the City of Mequon.

Administrator Jones identified the upcoming purchase of new timekeeping software, which will improve efficiency by reducing the time spent on manual payroll processing.

Mayor Nerbun noted that the CPI amount only allowed for the hiring of one additional full-time position, while leaving just enough room for the cost-of-living increases.

Alderman Bach questioned whether Paid-On-Call staff were paid when not in service. Chief Bialk explained that Paid-On-Call positions pay \$3 per hour for being on call, with increased pay for responding to incidents. Chief Bialk also noted that SOFD remains one of the few area departments that continues to operate a Paid-On-Call program, which has aided in recruitment.

MOTION to Adopt the 2026 Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Budget by President Rosing **SECONDED** by Alderman Bach. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 0

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

No: None

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VI. GOVERNANCE

A. Review and Action Regarding the Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Strategic Plan (att)

Chief Bialk stated that the Strategic Plan was presented for review at the July Board meeting and that feedback has been incorporated into the updated version. Some initiatives were pushed farther in the future to create a balanced and achievable workload.

Citizen Streeter emphasized the importance of establishing a method to monitor the progress of the Strategic Plan. Mayor Nerbun agreed that this should be incorporated into the Department workplan.

Citizen Streeter also emphasized the importance of regularly aligning the implementation of the Strategic Plan in conjunction with the budget to ensure coordination between planning and financial priorities.

Mayor Nerbun suggested including Strategic Plan progress as a discussion item on future agendas, especially for more near-term objectives.

MOTION to Approve the Southern Ozaukee Fire and EMS Department Strategic Plan by Citizen Chimenti **SECONDED** by President Rosing. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 0

B. 2025 Workplan Update and Action Items (att)

Chief Bialk provided a summary of the current status of the workplan and reported on the progress of individual items.

VII. CAPITAL

A. Update on Ladder Truck Sale

Chief Bialk reported that the ladder truck was sold earlier in the day for \$375,000, and about \$20,000 of work still needs to be done on the truck to get it in a state where it can be fully sold.

Administrator Jones inquired about initial offers received. Chief Bialk replied that Cedarburg offered \$150,000, and the wholesaler offered \$273,000.

Chief Bialk notified the Board that a request for the purchase of another ambulance would be coming soon to ensure timely delivery.

VIII. OPERATIONS

A. Bi-Monthly Update

Chief Bialk gave the bi-monthly update.

Citizen Streeter inquired what percentage of the department's roster covers the majority of available shifts.

Deputy Chief Boehlke replied, that the Department primarily relies on individuals who take a large number of hours. Department members who assume significant hours are more valuable than just the sheer number of individuals.

Chief Bialk added that the larger pool is beneficial during fire calls. The Department cannot

always be staffed at the level needed for a fire, so having the larger pool is an asset in that case.

Trustee Eckert inquired about the fire inspection process, including oversight responsibilities. Trustee Eckert also noted that during an inspection, it appeared there was some overlap and redundancy in the process.

Chief Biak answered that the inspections are done by whoever is on shift.

Deputy Chief Boehlke reported that efforts are underway to address undone work from previous periods. A citizen complaint about the inspection process led to a review that identified additional procedural issues. The inspection process remains a priority project, and will receive more dedicated time around November.

Citizen Streeter noted during interviews, Department members expressed that the inspection process requires more review and improvement. Citizen Chimenti added that Department members want a dedicated inspector, rather than having it handled by whoever was on shift.

IX. NEXT MEETING

A. November 12, 2025

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn at 6:30 PM by Trustee Rosing **SECONDED** by Trustee Eckert . **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Aye:

No:

Abstain:

Submitted by,

Ben Honeck
Deputy clerk

Signed by,

Colleen Landisch-Hansen
Village Administrator/Clerk

