

Executive Summary: 2011 City of Milwaukee Proposed Budget

Hearing Date: October 11, 2010

- 1. Continuation of Two Daily Brown-outs:** The 2011 Proposed Budget for the Fire Department continues the practice of two brown-outs on most days. A brown-out consists of not staffing an engine in a multi-apparatus company and removing the vehicle from service. The 2010 brown-outs do not seem to have had a major effect upon response times, with overall response times for the department increasing by an average of 9 to 12 seconds citywide.
- 2. Measurement of Response Times:** The Fire Department responded to 88% of its total calls for service within five minutes or less during 2009, and 2010 figures appear to be very similar. Average response time to fires remained well below five minutes during 2009, as it has through the first half of 2010. The department exceeds national standards by these measures, but efforts are underway to measure performance by the industry standard, NFP-1710.
- 3. Management Reorganization:** The Fire Chief is finalizing a plan to reorganize the management structure of the department, with the intention of making the administrative structure of the department more accountable and efficient. The proposed changes organize the department into functional units, establishing a clearer chain of command and promoting fiscal responsibility for the head of each division. The reorganization includes the elimination of the Fire Public Relations Manager and the creation of the Fire Cause Investigation Unit. The proposed three-person staff will consist of one Fire Captain and two Fire Lieutenants, and will work with the Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the State Fire Marshal and the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office to investigate and prosecute potential cases of arson.
- 4. Capital Projects:** The 2011 Proposed Budget includes three capital improvement items for the Fire Department totaling \$3,064,000, a decrease of \$992,000 (24%) from the \$4,056,000 in the 2010 Budget. The decrease was in the Facilities Maintenance Program, and reflects \$1.8 million in carryover borrowing authority available to pay for maintenance projects in 2011. Funding was not provided for the construction a new fire repair facility.

Category	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	% Change	2011 Proposed	% Change
Total Expenditures	\$109,909,413	\$99,820,902	-9.2%	\$103,047,292	+3.2%
Positions	1,133	1,027	-9.4%	1,026	-0.1%
FTE's (all)	1,097.16	1,033.55	-5.8%	1,032.55	-0.1%

**Continuation of Two Dally Brown-outs:** The 2011 Proposed Budget for the Fire Department continues the practice of two brown-outs on most days. A brown-out consists of not staffing an engine in a company and removing the vehicle from service. Brown-outs are only scheduled for stations that house both an engine and a ladder truck, insuring that a level of service is still provided by the affected station. Brown-outs were first used on a regular basis by the department during the 2010 budget year. Scheduled brown-outs can be cancelled due to conditions which have the potential to cause unacceptable response times, including severe weather, construction or unusually heavy traffic.

The 2010 brown-outs do not seem to have had a negative effect upon response times. Overall response times for the department have increased by an average of 9 to 12 seconds citywide, dependent upon type of service call. This minor increase could be due to several factors, including a significant increase in road construction during the current year.

The effects of a brown-out can be difficult to quantify. The first call to a company affected by a brown-out should not show any negative consequence, as the engine that is still in service will respond as usual. It is any subsequent calls from the area of a browned-out company that would experience a decrease in response time, as a neighboring company would be needed for the response. While the overall response times for 2010 remain similar to previous years and within national standards, the department has not provided data isolating the effect on response times in the area served by a company that has an engine currently browned out.

The following parameters are used to establish which companies are scheduled for a brown-out:

- o scheduling coincides with the department's 27-day work cycle
- o companies in single-apparatus or special team houses are exempt
- o medical units are exempt
- o companies for the same brown-out period are selected from separate battallions

**2010 Brown-Out Schedule**

Cycle	Date Range	1 <sup>ST</sup> Eng	2 <sup>ND</sup> Eng
1	12-27-09 to 1-31	E39 (except 1/9 & 1/10/10)	E23 (except 1/7 & 1/8/10), Plus T09 for 12/27 - 12/29/09, 12/31/09 - 1/6/10, 1/9 and 1/10/10)
2	2-01 to 2-27	E24	E11
3	2-28 to 3-26	E04	E10
4	3-27 to 4-22	E30	E35
5	4-23 to 5-19	E37	E14
6	5-20 to 6-13	E32	E23
7	6-14 to 7-12	E39	E11
8	7-13 to 8-8	E04	E10
9	8-9 to 9-4	E30	E35
10	9-5 to 10-1	E37	E23
11	10-2 to 10-28	E32	E11
12	10-29 to 11-24		
13	11-25 to 12-21		

Station 14 is no longer in considered for brown-out due to negative effect on response times.

**Measurement of Response Times:** Timely response to events has a direct impact on the outcome of any emergency. The Fire Department has, traditionally, measured response time as time it takes from dispatch to first unit on scene. The MFD responded to 88% of its total calls for service within five minutes or less in 2009. Average response time to fires remained well below five minutes in 2009, as it has through the first half of 2010. The department exceeds national standards by these measures.

The Fire Department is making efforts to collect data and report on response time in a manner compatible with the National Fire Protection Association's publication NFPA-1710. These standards are much more complex than previous measures, resulting in the need for the department to record several new points of data and complicating reporting procedures. The Fire Chief reports that the department is currently meeting most of the NFPA-1710 standards, and hopes to be able to report on these results to the administration and Common Council during 2011.

**Management Reorganization:** The Fire Chief is finalizing a plan to reorganize the management structure of the department, with the intention of making the administrative structure of the department more accountable and efficient. The proposed changes organize the department into functional units, establishing a clearer chain of command and promoting fiscal responsibility for the head of each division. While the Fire Department has experienced changes to its management structure before, this will represent the first major reorganization in the department's command structure. Proposed changes will not be reflected in budget documents until the Fire and Police Commission and Department of Employee Relations have completed

their review of the changes. These reviews are currently ongoing.

The only position proposed for elimination in the reorganization is the Fire Public Relations Manager. The Fire Chief does not anticipate any negative effect to the department as a result of this change. The public relations responsibilities will be divided among several individuals and bureaus. Currently, the Deputy Chief of Operations handles questions and interviews concerning emergency operations. The Battalion Chiefs in the field talk to the media and perform interviews at emergency scenes if the Deputy Chief is not available. The new point of contact for the media will be the Battalion Chief assigned to training, with help from the Assistant Chief who oversees training. The Community Relations Division will handle public relations, media and the dissemination of information.

**Fire Cause Investigation Unit:** The Fire Chief's reorganization plan includes the reinstatement of the Fire Cause Investigation Unit. The proposed three-person staff, not currently funded in the Proposed Budget, will consist of one Fire Captain and two Fire Lieutenants, and will work with the Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the State Fire Marshal and the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office to investigate and prosecute potential cases of arson. The department currently has a high number of fires categorized as "undetermined", meaning the cause of the fire is unknown. This unit will focus on increasing the number of cases for which a cause can be determined and will aid in pursuing convictions against arsonists. The unit will also track trends in arsons, including time and place, in an effort to remove arsonists from the community as early as possible.

**Status of Labor Negotiations:** The City is currently operating under the 2009 agreement with the Milwaukee Professional Fire Fighters' Association, Local #215. Negotiations have thus far been unproductive and the City has filed for arbitration. Mediation, scheduled for December 15, 2010, is the next step in this process. The Fire Department's chiefs are not organized by a recognized labor body, and they are not covered under the City's management pay plan. Their employment terms are defined in the Code of Ordinances.

Fire Department clerical employees represented by AFSCME DC 48 are working under the contract in effect through 2011. The third union represented within the Fire Department is the Fire Equipment Dispatchers, Local #494, which has settled with the City on a contract through 2011. The contract is similar to that of AFSCME DC48, with the exception that the no-layoff clause is effective for only 2010. There is one point of contention in the contract, related to accrual of overtime, which will be settled through binding arbitration. The previous contract for Local #494 established overtime pay as any accrual of hours over 40 for a work week. Despite this provision, the Fire Department had been administering overtime for any time accrued over eight hours in a single day. The City prefers to keep the provision as previously written, with an understanding that Fire Department procedures will change to reflect the contract. The union seeks a continuance of the past overtime practice and has argued that the new contract should reflect the practice.

**Return to Work Program:** The Fire Department established its Return to Work program during Pay Period 3 of 2009. The primary focus of the program is to monitor injury leave and promote the importance of returning from leave. Starting in 2011, the program will

institute an alternate work schedule for those returning from leave. Under the new initiative, employees on light duty will work a 40-hour week instead of the 49.8-hour week typically scheduled for a firefighter in the field.

Currently, returning employees report to their stations and are assigned jobs as needed, until they are ready for full service. In addition to the change to an 8-hour work day from a 24-hour shift as typically worked by firefighters in the field, the program will temporarily reassign staff to fill needs throughout the department, providing less physical duties for the participants. Examples of assignments that can be performed by employees returning from leave include staffing the safety academy or fire repair shop, staffing public relations events, entering fire data into department databases and helping with billing procedure.

Additional efforts to reduce injury leave in the department include a new safety program for 2011. Program materials have been rewritten, under a mandate by the Chief, for a renewed emphasis on safety for the department. The new program is based upon current research in the field and research performed by Fire Department staff.

**Vacancies and Recruitment:** The Proposed Budget includes funding for one firefighter class of 35 recruits and one paramedic class of 8 recruits in 2011. As of August 5, 2010, the department had 40 vacancies of sworn positions. Recruit classes of 49 firefighters and 10 paramedics began service in February of 2010, and the current recruit class of 31 firefighters will be available for staffing by mid-October of this year.

### Capital Projects

The 2011 Proposed Budget includes three capital improvement items for the Fire Department totaling \$3,064,000, a decrease of \$992,000 (24%) from the \$4,056,000 in the 2010 Budget. Capital projects include the following:

Major Capital Equipment \$2,854,000: This program provides for the replacement of major fire fighting equipment and apparatus including ambulances, fire engines and ladder trucks. Funding for this program has decreased each year since 2005. Proposed 2011 funding for major capital equipment, which was provided as requested, represents an overall decrease of \$1,416,000 (33%) from 2005 and an increase of 3% over the 6-year budgeted average.

To date in 2010, one ladder truck has been purchased. Anticipated purchases prior to year-end include one additional ladder truck, three engines and three ambulances.

The total 6-year request for major capital equipment is \$20,210,676. This level of funding provides a replacement cycle of 5 years for ambulances, 13 years for engines and 9.5 years for ladder trucks.

Capital Equipment Expenditures (as of Oct 1)				
	2009	2010	2011 (Proposed)	Total
Engines	\$1,345,908		\$1,004,000	\$2,349,908
Medical Units	\$891,315		\$430,000	\$1,321,315
Ladder Units		\$659,999	\$1,420,000	\$2,079,999
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,237,223</b>	<b>\$659,999</b>	<b>\$2,854,000</b>	<b>\$5,751,222</b>

6-Year Proposed Capital Equipment Purchases							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Engines	2	3	3	3	3	3	17
Medical Units	2	3	2	2	3	3	15
Ladder Units	2	2	2	2	1	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>

Fire Facilities Maintenance \$100,000: This program funds the repair and maintenance of Internal, external and mechanical systems within the Fire Department's 36 Engine Houses. Funding for this program was reduced from the requested amount by \$661,300 (87%). Carryover borrowing authority for \$1.8 million will be used to complete necessary projects in 2011. Carryover borrowing amounts are excluded from budget totals to avoid duplication,

MFD is undertaking an apparatus floor facilities survey. Twelve fire stations have basement space below the apparatus floor where equipment is stored. The increased size and weight of ladder trucks and engines raises concerns about the structural integrity of the flooring where the equipment is parked. The results of this study will influence future capital requests for this program.

Auxiliary Power Supply \$110,000: This program provides funding for the purchase and installation of back-up generators at each of MFD's 36 engine houses. Nineteen stations have been retrofitted with generators. One or two generators are replaced each year.

Fire Repair Shop \$0: A capital request of \$5,945,000 to construct a new repair facility for firefighting apparatus is not funded in the Proposed Budget. The old facility no longer serves the needs of the department. MFD believes that construction of the new facility could result in significant savings, primarily through operational efficiencies and a reduction in the need to utilize outside vendors to facilitate repairs. In addition, revenue opportunities may exist to provide training opportunities and repair services to fire departments in surrounding communities. Savings and potential revenues have not been quantified.

## Issues to Consider

- While brown-outs during 2010 do not appear to have had a major effect upon response times, the department is only providing figures at a citywide scale. Further analysis could be performed to identify the number of calls affected by each specific browned-out engine and any associated effects upon response time.

Though the Fire Department's response time exceeds national standards, as measured from time of dispatch to arrival on scene, the National Fire Protection Association standards, detailed in NFPA-1710 are much more complex and require additional time to measure and analyze. The Fire Chief reports that the department is currently meeting most of the NFPA-1710 standards, but these results are not currently shared with the administration or the Common Council.

- The Fire Chief does not anticipate any negative effect to the department as a result of the elimination of the Fire Public Relations Manager position. However, the sharing of public relations duties among several individuals and bureaus will need to be carefully managed, as lack of communication between the responsible parties could lead to inconsistent messaging by the department and inefficiencies in coordinating responses to the media.
- The Fire Department replaces units in the Fire Suppression and Response Fleet at rates that exceed national standards. However, more analysis is required to determine the current state and future needs for the non-capital, staff vehicle fleet.

- The Fire Chief believes that construction of the new fire repair facility could result in significant savings, primarily through operational efficiencies and a reduction in the need to utilize outside vendors to facilitate repairs. The potential benefits of this facility, as well as any alternate strategies to address the issues, will require further analysis. Regardless of the strategy chosen, future capital funding is likely to be required for the continued maintenance of the MFD fleet.