

2026



Legislative Reference Bureau

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FIRE DEPARTMENT



2026 Proposed Plan and Executive Budget Review

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Budget Hearing: 9:00 am on Friday, October 10, 2025

Fire Department

\$165,408,632

Proposed 2026 Budget

+\$15,749,660

Overall Change from 2025

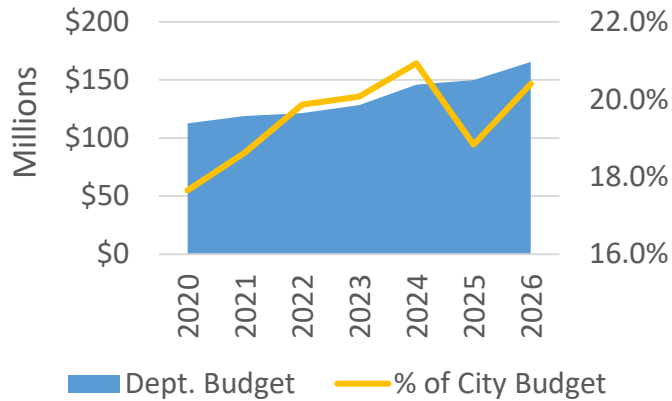
-\$5,886,344

Difference from Requested

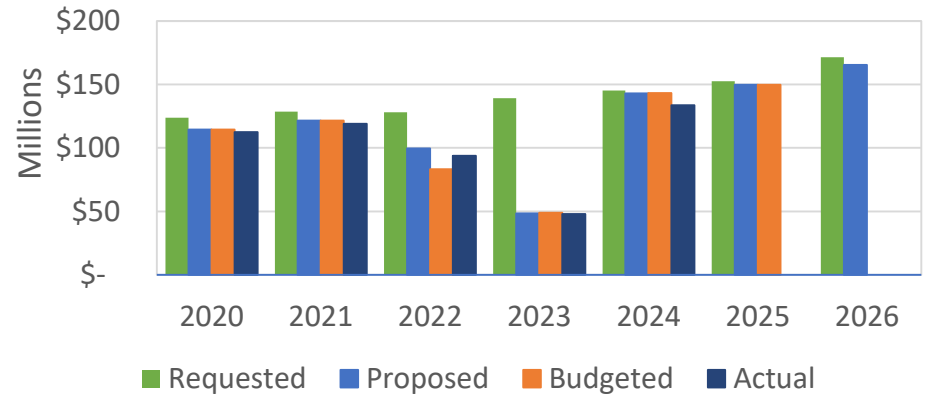
\$171,294,976

Requested 2026 Budget

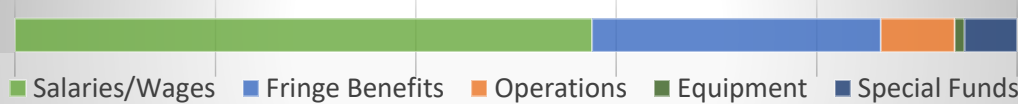
Total Departmental Budget



Comparative Funding



Levy Departmental Budget Appropriation by Category



\$95,251,712 \$47,625,857 \$12,200,688 \$1,682,125 \$8,648,250

58%

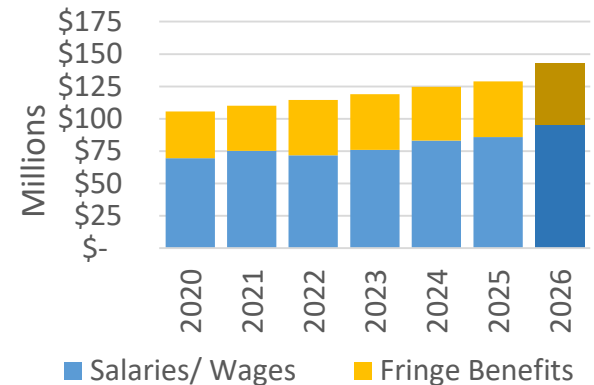
29%

7%

1%

5%

Personnel Budget



Fire Department

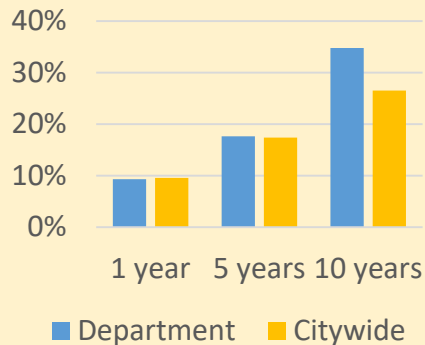
+10.9%

Change in Salaries and Wages
from 2025 Budget.

+\$9,356,538

Change in Salaries and Wages
from 2025 Budget.

Retirement Eligible



+26

Change in Positions

+2.7%

% Change in Positions

11

Current Vacancies

50

Voluntary Separations
in 2025

Staffing Update

Net Change: +26 positions

Firefighter Paramedic Service (+21)

+21 Firefighter/Paramedics

Fire Cause Investigation Unit (+3)

+3 Fire Lieutenants

Administration Division (0)

-1 Fire Captain

+1 Fire Contract Administrator

Construction and Maintenance Division (+2)

+2 Youth Fleet Apprentices (0.5 FTE)

Training Division (0)

-1 Media Specialist

+1 Media Producer

Staffing Vacancies

FIRE

(1) Captain

(23) Fire Lieutenant

(13) Heavy Equipment Operator

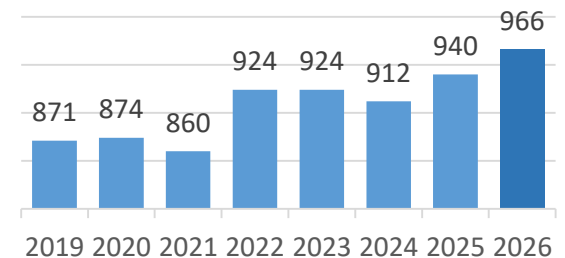
These vacancies are offset by an overfill of (26) Firefighters, will eventually fill some Fire Lieutenant and Heavy Equipment Operator positions.

STAFF

(1) Athletic Trainer

(2) Youth Fleet Apprentice (0.5 FTE)

Department Positions



Fire Department

\$1,540,000

Department's Grant funding for 2026, a \$1,210,000 increase from 2025.

\$5,000,000

Capital Improvements funding for 2 MFD projects, an increase of \$1,753,000 from 2025.

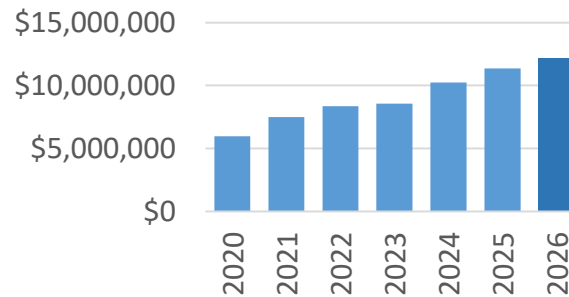
\$9.5 million

Projected MFD revenue in 2026, an increase of \$1,047,000 from 2025.

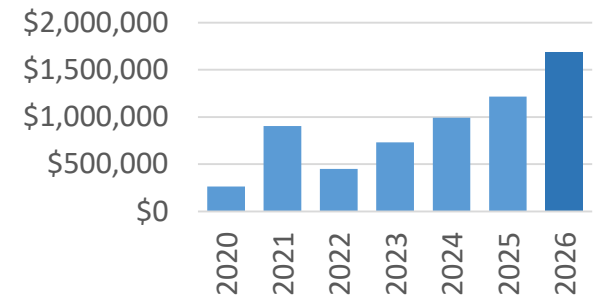
\$8.6 million

Special funds appropriation for 2026, \$7.8 million of which is for Basic Life Support subsidies.

Operating Expenditures Budget



Equipment Budget



Revenue

Ambulance Service License	\$5,000
Charges for Service	\$9,453,000
Total	\$9,458,000

Special Purpose Accounts

There are no special purpose accounts for this department.

Grants

Wis. Emer. Medical Services	\$1,500,00
Special Teams Grant	\$20,000
Operations/Emergency Mgmt.	\$20,000
Total	\$1,540,000

Capital Programs and Projects

MFD Facilities Maintenance	\$3,000,000
Major Capital Equipment	\$2,000,000
Total	\$5,000,000

Fire Department

1

Firefighter recruitment class scheduled for 2026, down from 2 in 2025 to 1 in 2026.

+14

Cumulative increase to daily staffing level since 2023, as part of the City's Act 12 obligations (from 192 to 206).

\$1.2 million

Assigned to Milwaukee Opioid Response Initiative in 2026 Proposed Budget.

\$7.8 million

In Basic Life Service (BLS) Subsidy Payments in 2026 Proposed Budget, an increase of roughly \$1.2 million from 2025.

Special Funds

BLS Subsidy	\$7,823,250
Computer Replacement	\$425,000
Radio Replacement	\$400,000
Total	\$8,648,250

Service Highlights

Last year (2024), the MFD Dispatch Center processed 137,201 emergency incidents – a 3.3% decrease from 2023.

MFD provided:

Advanced Life Support Responses	46,383
Basic Life Support Responses	43,453
Transports	11,075
Fire Responses	2,920
Service Related Calls	53,844
Vehicle Extrications	568

Wisconsin Act 12

Along with establishing the basis for the City's new 2% sales tax, 2023 Wisconsin Act 12 imposed substantial restrictions on 1st class cities that particularly impact the Fire and Police Departments and the Fire and Police Commission.

Maintenance of Effort

Act 12 places restrictions on funds generated by the 2% sales tax, requiring them to be apportioned to police and fire. These restrictions expire in whatever year the City reaches a staffing level of 1,725 law enforcement officers and a daily staffing level of 218 for the Fire Department.

Daily Staffing Level

While the Act 12 maintenance of effort requirements use total staffing levels as a metric for the Police Department, they use 'daily staffing level' to measure the increase in MFD personnel. Daily staffing level measures simultaneous active fire staff, meaning an additional 15 FTEs to restore a 4-person Fire Engine increases the daily staffing level by 4. Daily staffing level measures only positions directly related to fire suppression.

Fire Department

Key Performance Measures

Measure	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2026 Planned
Opioid Harm Reduction distribution	2,036	2,436	3,600
Total Opioid Response (MORI) Contacts Attempted	780	644	966
911 Calls – Narcan administered	960	728	690
Opioid Litigation Funds Used	\$0	\$1.15M	\$1.25M
Smoke Detector Installations	426	10,000	10,000
Public Education /Fire Prevention Events Attended	1,407	1,500	1,600

Service Provision Year over Year Comparison

Year	ALS Calls	BLS Calls	Service Related Calls
2023	44,563	43,453	9,027
2024	46,383	34,058	53,844

Mobile Integrated Health Unit (MIH)

As in other US cities, a tiny percentage of Milwaukee residents utilize their local 911 system at rates exponentially higher than typical 911 callers. The Mobile Integrated Health Unit (MIH) aims to work with high-system-utilizers to provide support and reduce their usage of the 911 dispatch system.

Milwaukee Overdose Response Initiative (MORI)

Milwaukee Overdose Response Initiative provides services to residents suffering from addiction. The program aims to prevent overdose-related fatalities and to help victims of addiction find treatment.

By the end of 2025, the Department projects that the number of harm reduction kits distributed will increase from 2,036 to 2,436, but that the number of MORI contacts made will decrease from 780 to 644.

Building Leases

-Repair shop, 1900 W Fiebrantz. \$392K for 2026.

-Station 33, 4515 W Burnham St – houses Engine, Med Unit & Hazmat Team. \$217K for 2026, paid as credit for fees West Milwaukee pays MFD.

Service Restorations

In 2024, MFD reopened Station 17 with one engine. In 2025 MFD reopened Station 31 with one engine and one med unit. No further reopenings are planned for 2026.