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# Washington County Fire Chiefs Association

— County Board Presentation —

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# Who Are We

Allenton Volunteer Fire Department

Boltonville Fire Department

Fillmore Fire Department

Germantown Fire Department

Hartford Fire and Rescue

Jackson Fire Department

Kewaskum Fire Department

Kohlsville Volunteer Fire Department

Newburg Fire Department

Richfield Volunteer Fire Company

St. Lawrence Fire Company

Slinger Fire Department

West Bend Fire Department

# Fire Service Mission

## 13 Organizations

- 5 Municipal entities
- 8 Private companies

## Services provided

- Suppression
- Prevention
- Inspection
- Investigation

# Emergency Medical Service Mission

- Emergency Medical Responder (EMR)
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT)
- Emergency Medical Technician - Intermediate (I-'12)
- Paramedic (EMT-P)

## Provided services

- First Respond
- Transport
- Intercept

# Staffing Models

- Volunteer
- Full-time
- Combination
  - Paid-on-call
  - Part-time
  - Full-time

## On-call systems

- Scheduled
- All-available

# County-Wide Collaborations

- Dive Team
- Hazardous Materials Team
- Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)
- Badger Firefighters Association
- Fire Training Officers Association
- EMS Training Officers Association
- Fire Investigators Association
- Fire Chiefs Association

# Strengths

Mutual Aid Responses

Associations and Teams

Shared training resources

# Challenges

Staffing- Lack applicants for paid, paid on time, and volunteers.

Financial- Need long-term sustainability instead of short-term solutions.

Generational Changes with Workforce

- o Available time

- o Commitment

- o Work time vs. personal time

Call volume doubling for EMS and projected to continue to grow.

Aging demographics- with personnel and throughout the community

Certification fail rates due to increased requirements and undisciplined students.

Training suffers due to increased call volume- training is interrupted and skipped.

Training levels have increased to achieve certification.

EMS- wide variety of calls and is frequently a primary gateway for people to receive healthcare (EMS as primary care due to individuals not having/visiting primary care doctor)

Four dispatch centers in the county can cause time delays for responses.

13% annual increase in ER visits at local hospitals

County radio system

Hard to keep up with ordinary volume, much less extraordinary calls- burden falls to West Bend with

full time staff.

Societal changes- dual income families, youth sports, higher mortgages

Service contracts are different between districts.

Cost of equipment and maintenance increasing- new equipment increases 7% every year.



# Challenges

- Budgetary constraints
- Obtaining Fire and EMS certifications
- Volunteer shortage
- Staffing shortage
- Number of staffed ambulances
- Recruitment doesn't fix everything
- Current system is Fragile
  - 2nd or 3rd Incident

# Opportunities

- Change state law to allow the formation of Fire Districts as their own taxing entity (e.g., IL). This may not work for everyone but would be another tool.
- Removing fire/EMS from levy and have as a separate fee based on square footage (e.g., Town of Ottawa). Able to charge the fee to tax exempt properties as well.
- County levy funds to support a countywide approach to address fire/EMS challenges- Count Board is interested in helping.
- Tech School recruitment (but need to change their teaching styles to align with next generation)
- Community Risk Reduction (CRR)- paramedic not in an ambulance and coordinated through hospitals.
- Fire department staff work well across departments and operate as one unit in their response.
- Consolidation may lead to efficiencies but may not result in cost savings.
- Consistent and standard contracts across districts.
- Preserve community support and pride for fire/EMS.
- Incentive for staff and volunteers (e.g., low/no income tax and paid health insurance).

# Working Toward Solutions

- All County Fire Service Entities
- Multifaceted
- Staffing  $\Rightarrow$  Budgetary  $\Rightarrow$  Volunteerism
- Consolidation W/O change = Shortages remain
- Reference: WI Office of Rural Health report

# Teamwork

Together we will create a solution

