



City of Neenah
Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Joint Finance and
Personnel Committee Agenda
Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 5:30 PM
Neenah City Hall – 211 Walnut Street
Hauser Room

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Public Appearances
Ten minutes divided among those wishing to speak on topics pertinent to the Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Joint Finance & Personnel Committee. Speakers must state their name and residential address and are allowed five minutes to speak on any topic.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Approval of Minutes from July 21, 2026
- V. Financial Report
 - A. Budget Report through July 31, 2026.
- VI. New Business
 - A. *Review of Innovative Public Advisors Organizational Structure Assessment and Future Needs Analysis*
 - B. Progress Report on Local 275's Tentative Agreement
- VII. Adjournment

Notice: Pursuant to the requirements of Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.84 (Open Meeting Notice Law), a majority of the Neenah Common Council may be present at this meeting. Common Council members may be present to gather information about a subject on which they have decision-making responsibility. This may constitute a meeting of the Neenah Common Council and must be noticed as such. The Council will not take any formal action at this meeting.

Menasha is committed to its diverse population. Our Non-English speaking population and those with disabilities are invited to contact the Menasha City Clerk at 967-3603 24-hours in advance of the meeting for the City to arrange special accommodations.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Neenah will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need assistance, or reasonable accommodation in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the Clerk's Office (920) 886-6100 or e-mail clerk@neenahwi.gov at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation.

Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue
Joint Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.
City of Neenah – Hauser Room

Present: Ald. Pollnow, Ald. Perkins, Ald. Grade, Ald. Steiner and Ald. Marshall

Excused: Ald. Bruno

Also Present: Chief Teesch, DC Krueger, Director Barber, Director Rassmussen, Director Sassman, CA Rashid, CA Struve and MA Ellis

Ald. Pollnow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public: Mayor Hammond, Mayor Borchardt, George Van Schyndel, Mike Novy, Jerry Mavroff, Nate Monfort, Josh Boelk, Al Wroblewski, Jaime Martinez, Nick Mostek, Josh Bluhm, Tim Patterson, Ryan Kane, Garrett Gee, Alex Fickel, Jason Peerenboom, Hunter Baar, Zach Janke, Bennett Krings, Nathan VanNoie, Shad Krueger, Nic Schroeder, Mitch Broeske, Chris Killeen and Danny Schultz.

Public Comment: Local 275 President George Van Schyndel, N5201 Whitetail Drive. Mr. VanSchyndel reviewed the working relationship that Local 275 has had with both Cities since consolidation. He briefly reviewed history of the Union's willingness to work collaboratively with both Cities, including opening their contract on two different occasions when the Cities were facing financial constraints. They said that they have proven that they always do what is right and are always willing to maintain a collaborate working relationship. They bargained in good faith and both parties bargained for a fair Tentative Agreement and Side letter. The Union voted on both the Tentative Agreement and Side letter and ratified it. The next day, after their ratification of the Tentative Agreement and Side Letter, they were told issues had come up and the Cities wanted changes. They asked the Committee's for support on moving the original Tentative Agreement and Side Letter forward as this was collaboratively agreed upon between Local 275 and both Cities.

Minutes: The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from June 16, 2026. **Motion made by Grade and Seconded by Perkins approve the meeting minutes from June 16, 2026, and place on file. Motion carried by a voice vote 5-0.**

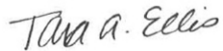
Call Summary Review: The Committee reviewed the call review from January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026. **Motion made by Grade and seconded by Perkins to approve the call summary from January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2026, and place on file. Motion carried by a voice vote 5-0.**

Motion made by Steiner and seconded by Grade to convene into closed session, pursuant to Wis. Stat 19.85 Section (1)(c) for the purpose of reviewing the Tentative Bargaining agreement between the Cities of Neenah and Menasha and Local 275. Motion carried by voice vote 5-0.

Motion made by Steiner and seconded by Perkins to reconvene into open session pursuant to Wis. Stats. 19.85(2). Motion carried by voice vote 5-0.

Motion made by Perkins and seconded by Marshall to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. Motion carried by voice vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tara A. Ellis".

Tara Ellis

Management Assistant

PREPARED 08/27/26, 14:53:41
PROGRAM 06071L
REPORT NAME BS FIRE

NEENAH MENSA FIRE RESCUE
MONTH END DEPARTMENT BUDGET REPORT
7/31/26 58% OF YEAR ELAPSED

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2025 Y-T-D ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH EXPEND	2026 Y-T-D ACTUAL	2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2026 REMAINING BALANCE	BUD % USED
Fire Department							
180-2301-712.01-01	Salaries	3,256,135	666,508	3,388,062	6,198,940	2,810,878	55
180-2301-712.01-04	Overtime Wages	165,809	99,684	186,902	265,000	78,098	71
180-2301-712.01-05	Reimbursement / Overtime	1,595-	0	0	10,000-	10,000-	0
180-2301-712.01-06	FLSA Overtime Wages	31,523	7,825	36,315	65,000	28,685	56
180-2301-712.01-10	Health Insurance	783,035	102,518	758,547	1,494,450	735,903	51
180-2301-712.01-11	Fringes	974,716	212,386	998,476	1,804,230	805,754	55
180-2301-712.01-15	Schools/Seminars/Training	19,890	3,846	15,447	39,000	23,553	40
180-2301-712.01-16	Test/Certification for Eq	8,866	0	9,788	18,000	8,212	54
180-2301-712.01-17	Outfitting Allowance	36,814	225	29,466	42,000	12,534	70
180-2301-712.01-18	Licenses Renewal	296	0	3,403	3,000	403-	113
180-2301-712.01-23	Auto Allowance	0	0	19	0	19-	0
180-2301-712.01-25	Employee School Reimbu	0	0	0	400	400	0
180-2301-712.01-28	Empol Recognition Awards	221	0	0	1,200	1,200	0
180-2301-712.02-02	Outside Printing	162	0	0	1,100	1,100	0
180-2301-712.02-03	Postage	287	1	89	1,300	1,211	7
180-2301-712.02-06	Advertising & Publication	0	0	0	200	200	0
180-2301-712.02-07	Dues & Memberships	615	50	1,523	2,100	577	73
180-2301-712.02-09	Maintenance of PPE/SCBA	3,913	748	5,004	10,250	5,246	49

180-2301-712.02-10	Mai nt of Computer Hardware	0	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
180-2301-712.02-11	Mai nt of Other Equipment	2,942	0	247	5,000	4,753	5
180-2301-712.02-13	Mai nt of Motor Vehicles	46,650	6,822	43,485	125,000	81,515	35
180-2301-712.02-14	Mai nt of Buildings	1,654	73	1,395	14,000	12,605	10
180-2301-712.02-15	Mai nt of Radio Equipment	798	0	560	1,300	740	43

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PROGRAM 0601L
REPORT NAME BS-FIRE

NEENAH MEMPHIS FIRE RESCUE
MONTH END DEPARTMENT BUDGET REPORT
7/31/26 58% OF YEAR ELAPSED

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2025 Y-T-D ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH EXPEND	2026 Y-T-D ACTUAL	2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2026 REMAINING BALANCE	BUD % USED
180-2301-712.02-16	Maint of Operating Equip	943	9-	1,654	4,000	2,346	41
180-2301-712.02-18	Maint of Software	77,012	40	92,239	114,870	22,631	80
180-2301-712.02-21	Telephone	690	99	592	1,220	628	49
180-2301-712.02-22	Electricity	24,814	4,017	21,996	57,580	35,584	38
180-2301-712.02-23	Natural Gas	18,826	872	16,185	28,910	12,725	56
180-2301-712.02-24	Water & Sewer	5,682	1,332	6,257	14,100	7,843	44
180-2301-712.02-26	Stormwater	1,788	549	1,866	3,790	1,924	49
180-2301-712.02-27	Cellular Telephone	9,828	1,977	14,242	20,000	5,758	71
180-2301-712.02-32	Auditing Services	0	0	2,520	2,500	20-	101
180-2301-712.02-36	Outside Services	7,349	1,154	7,628	15,000	7,372	51
180-2301-712.02-37	Pest Control	7	28	59	400	341	15
180-2301-712.02-38	Professional Services	25,925	50	15,025	30,000	14,975	50
180-2301-712.02-41	Tree Pruning & Landscape	0	61	61	1,000	939	6
180-2301-712.02-46	Liability Insurance	34,134	0	34,079	36,800	2,721	93
180-2301-712.02-47	Auto Physical Damage Ins	27,116	0	30,236	29,240	996-	103
180-2301-712.02-50	Maint of Training Grounds	123	0	0	500	500	0
180-2301-712.02-52	Rental of Equipment	301	52	351	1,400	1,049	25
180-2301-712.02-54	Printer / Copies	1,232	0	939	3,000	2,061	31

180-2301-712.02-55 Neenah G t y I / S S e r v i c e s	62,592	11,492	80,442	134,900	54,458	60
180-2301-712.02-56 Neenah G t y F i n a n c e S e r .	17,325	2,673	18,713	32,080	13,367	58
180-2301-712.02-57 Neenah G t y H R S e r v i c e s	43,663	6,737	47,157	80,840	33,683	58
180-2301-712.02-58 G S S e r v i c e s / I n t e r n a l	8,377	1,233	8,628	14,790	6,162	58
180-2301-712.02-62 P u b l i c R e l a t i o n s / S e r v i c e s	1,217	25	8,762	13,000	4,238	67

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PROGRAM 0601L
REPORT NAME ES FIRE

NEENAH MENSA FIRE RESCUE
MONTH-END DEPARTMENT BUDGET REPORT
7/31/26 58% OF YEAR ELAPSED

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2025 Y-T-D ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH EXPEND	2026 Y-T-D ACTUAL	2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2026 REMAINING BALANCE	BUD % USED
180-2301-712.03-01	Office Supplies	933	96	936	2,300	1,364	41
180-2301-712.03-06	Cleaning/Janitor Supplies	7,611	1,461	7,768	17,510	9,742	44
180-2301-712.03-08	Books and Periodicals	2,375	0	539	3,200	2,661	17
180-2301-712.03-10	Gasoline & Oil	22,632	5,757	22,968	48,960	25,992	47
180-2301-712.03-19	Safety Supplies	10	0	622	4,500	3,878	14
180-2301-712.03-20	Small Tools	2,427	0	83	3,300	3,217	3
180-2301-712.03-25	Consumable supplies	1,431	0	305	3,400	3,095	9
180-2301-712.03-26	Photography Supplies	17	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
180-2301-712.03-33	All Other Supplies	1,608	170	1,105	3,800	2,695	29
180-2301-712.03-44	Small Equipment	5,895	51	5,353	16,000	10,647	33
180-2301-712.03-47	Small Computer Hardware	551	0	0	0	0	0
180-2301-712.03-48	Protective Equipment	5,444	97	5,614	12,000	6,386	47
180-2301-712.03-50	Training Supplies	34	0	85	6,000	5,915	1
180-2301-712.81-08	Office Furniture & Equip	1,118	102	1,401	5,000	3,599	28
180-2301-712.81-13	Communication Equipment	585	0	0	12,000	12,000	0
180-2301-712.81-15	Computer Hardware Outlay	9,746	0	5,345	10,000	4,655	53
180-2301-712.81-33	All Other Equipment	6,166	1,255	1,299	35,000	33,701	4
180-2301-712.81-49	Household Purchases	2,771	1,537	2,859	20,000	17,141	14

*

Fire

5,773,027

1,143,592

5,944,641

10,926,360

4,981,719

54

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PROGRAM 04601L
REPORT NAME BS FIRE

NEENAH MENASHA FIRE RESCUE
MONTH END DEPARTMENT BUDGET REPORT
7/31/26 58% OF YEAR ELAPSED

ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2025 Y-T-D ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH EXPEND	2026 Y-T-D ACTUAL	2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2026 REMAINING BALANCE	BUD % USED
Reg Spec Oper Resp Team							
180-2314-712-01-04	Overtime Vages	45,007	1,305	33,208	65,000	31,792	51
180-2314-712-01-05	Reimbursement / Overtime	15,716	2,778	32,505	65,000	32,495	50
180-2314-712-01-11	Fringes	7-	339	8,624	16,880	8,256	51
180-2314-712-01-15	Schools/Seminars/Training	0	0	0	300	300	0
180-2314-712-02-16	Maint of Operating Equip	0	0	0	500	500	0
180-2314-712-03-20	Tools	0	0	0	250	250	0
180-2314-712-03-48	Protective Equipment	402	3,295	3,295	10,000	6,705	33
180-2314-712-03-50	Training Supplies	0	0	0	500	500	0
180-2314-712-81-33	All Other Equipment	520	0	0	750	750	0
* Reg Spec Oper Resp Team		30,206	2,161	12,622	29,180	16,558	43

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MONTH END DEPARTMENT BUDGET REPORT
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ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	2025 Y-T-D ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH EXPEND	2026 Y-T-D ACTUAL	2026 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2026 REMAINING BALANCE	BUD % USED
Joint Fire Commission							
180-2320-712-02-06	Advertising & Publication	0	0	0	0	0	0
180-2320-712-02-36	Outside Services	2,325	825	925	2,500	1,575	37
180-2320-712-02-61	Misc Expenses	515	0	442	3,000	2,558	15
* Joint Fire Commission		2,840	825	1,367	5,500	4,133	25
** Fire Department		5,806,073	1,146,579	5,968,630	10,961,040	5,002,410	54
*** Neenah Menasha Fire		5,806,073	1,146,579	5,968,630	10,961,040	5,002,410	54





NEENAH-MENASHA FIRE RESCUE

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1. Executive Summary

The City of Neenah and City of Menasha retained Innovative Public Advisors to conduct an Organizational Structure and Future Needs Assessment for the Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Department (NMFR). The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the department's organizational structure, staffing model, governance framework, funding methodology, and long-term organizational readiness while identifying opportunities to support continued operational excellence and regional service delivery.

Established on January 1, 2003, NMFR represents one of Wisconsin's longest-standing regional fire and emergency response organizations. Over more than two decades, the department has evolved into a highly capable public safety agency providing fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue response, fire prevention, inspections, emergency management, public education, and specialty operations. The department operates from four fire stations and maintains an ISO Class 1 rating, *a distinction achieved by only 1% of departments nationwide*.

The 2003 consolidation has largely achieved its intended objectives. Shared staffing, coordinated operations, and regional resource deployment have strengthened emergency response capabilities, improved operational flexibility, supported long-term capital planning, and reduced duplication of services and equipment. Stakeholders consistently described NMFR as a professional, respected, and operationally effective organization with dedicated personnel and a strong commitment to public service. Serving a population of the joint communities, NMFR represents an organization of a much larger city or village in Wisconsin—cumulatively serving approximately 45,856 residents with 18,356 in Menasha and 27,500 in Neenah. This presents a challenge to NMFR as the support resources are more limited in Neenah or Menasha individually.



While the department has matured operationally, there are opportunities to better align portions of the organizational structure, governance framework, and administrative functions with the complexity of the modern organization. Since consolidation, NMFR has assumed expanded responsibilities involving emergency management, inspections, technology systems, records management, training administration, payroll coordination, apparatus maintenance, and strategic planning. As these responsibilities have grown, several organizational processes and administrative structures have evolved incrementally rather than through comprehensive review.

Feedback gathered through stakeholder interviews and the employee survey revealed several recurring organizational themes, including communication, organizational alignment, administrative coordination, leadership visibility, and transparency in decision-making processes. Participants expressed strong confidence in the department's operational capabilities while identifying opportunities to improve communication consistency, leadership coordination, decision-making processes, and alignment between operational personnel, administration, and governance bodies.

The assessment also reviewed NMFR's governance structure and funding methodology. The current regional model continues to provide a stable foundation for service delivery and financial planning. However, increasing staffing costs, apparatus replacement needs, technology investments, and long-term service demands will require continued attention to organizational efficiency, financial sustainability, and strategic planning.

Looking ahead, continued residential development, economic growth, evolving emergency medical service demands, and workforce challenges will require ongoing evaluation of staffing, organizational structure, and service delivery models. The department is well-positioned to meet these challenges, provided it continues to adapt its organizational and administrative systems to support future needs.

This report recommends a series of practical improvements focused on organizational alignment, communication, staffing structure, governance coordination, and long-term sustainability. Importantly, this assessment does not recommend major operational restructuring or significant dismantling changes to the regional fire department model. Rather, it concludes that NMFR remains a strong and successful organization that would benefit from targeted refinements intended to improve efficiency, strengthen coordination, and support future growth and service demands.



2. Organizational Assessment

2.1 Department Overview

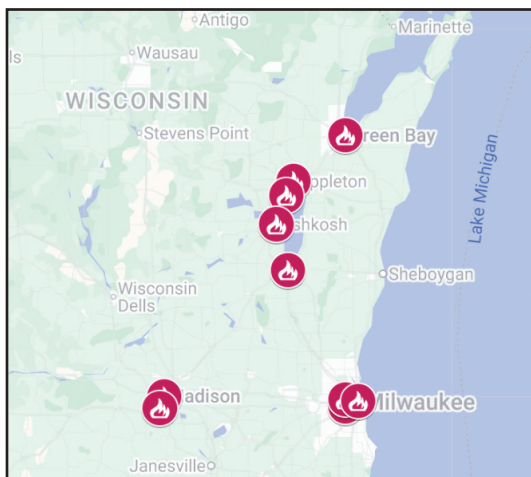
The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Department (NMFR) was established on January 1, 2003 through the consolidation of fire and emergency medical services operations between the Cities of Neenah and Menasha. The consolidation created a regional fire department designed to improve service delivery, increase staffing flexibility, strengthen emergency response capabilities, and reduce duplication of resources while maintaining local oversight and accountability.

Today, NMFR serves both communities through a regional service delivery model operating from four fire stations strategically located throughout the service area. The department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, technical rescue response, fire prevention and inspection services, public education, emergency management coordination, and specialty response functions.

NMFR operates under a joint governance structure involving the Cities of Neenah and Menasha, the Joint Fire Commission, and the Joint Finance and Personnel Committee. The Fire Chief reports to both mayors, while the City of Neenah serves as the fiscal agent for payroll, purchasing, accounting, and benefits administration. NMFR employs 68 personnel, including suppression personnel, command staff, administrative personnel, and support staff. Department operations are supported through 24-hour shift staffing, specialized assignments, prevention and inspection personnel, training functions, administrative support services, and apparatus maintenance personnel.

Since consolidation, NMFR has expanded significantly beyond traditional fire suppression operations. The department now manages a broad range of responsibilities including emergency medical services coordination, technical rescue operations, emergency management, inspections, training administration, records management, technology systems, payroll administration, apparatus maintenance, and long-term operational planning.

ISO Class 1 Wisconsin Departments



Operationally, NMFR maintains an ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating. According to the department's 2025 Annual Report, only ten fire departments in Wisconsin—NMFR, Green Bay Metro, Oshkosh, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Milwaukee, West Allis, Wauwatosa, Madison, and Fitchburg—and fewer than 500 communities nationwide currently maintain this distinction. The rating reflects the department's commitment to training, deployment, 9-1-1 communications, water supply, emergency response capabilities, and continuous organizational improvement.



Over the past two decades, NMFR has evolved into a mature regional public safety organization recognized for operational professionalism, regional cooperation, and high-quality service delivery. The department's continued success provides a strong foundation for evaluating future organizational, staffing, governance, and service delivery needs.

2.2 Organizational Strengths

There are numerous strengths that position NMFR as one of the premier regional fire and emergency medical services (EMS)—in partnership with Gold Cross Ambulance Service, Inc.—organizations in Wisconsin. Most notably, the 2003 consolidation has largely achieved its intended objectives. More than twenty years after formation, NMFR remains a stable and successful regional organization providing a high level of service to both communities. Stakeholders consistently identified regional coordination, resource sharing, staffing flexibility, and operational efficiency as significant benefits of the consolidated model.

NMFR maintains a strong reputation for professionalism, preparedness, and service delivery. The department's ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification reflects a longstanding commitment to training, emergency response readiness, water supply infrastructure, communications systems, and continuous improvement. Stakeholders consistently described department personnel as knowledgeable, dedicated, and committed to serving the public. The department has also successfully expanded its capabilities since consolidation. In addition to traditional fire suppression and emergency medical services functions, NMFR now provides technical rescue services, fire prevention and inspection programs, emergency management coordination, public education initiatives, apparatus maintenance, training administration, and numerous specialized operational functions. This evolution has allowed the department to adapt to changing community expectations and increasingly complex service demands.

Another significant strength identified throughout the assessment was organizational pride. Employees and stakeholders consistently expressed confidence in the department's operational capabilities and reputation. Personnel demonstrated a strong commitment to public service, professional development, and maintaining the department's high standards. This positive organizational culture provides a strong foundation for future improvements and organizational initiatives.

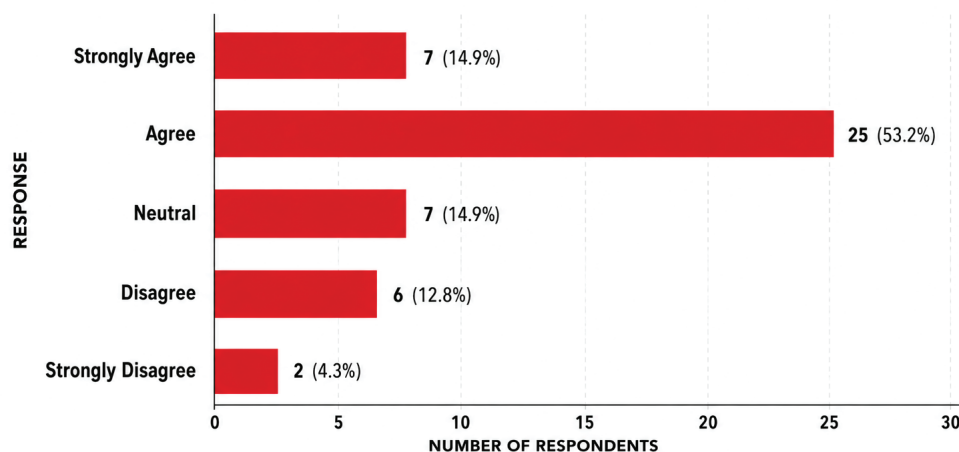
The department also benefits from strong regional relationships and a long history of collaboration. The Cities of Neenah and Menasha have demonstrated continued support for the regional model, allowing NMFR to develop into a mature organization capable of addressing the increasingly complex demands facing modern fire and emergency service providers.



2.3 Organizational Challenges and Opportunities

While NMFR maintains a strong operational foundation, there are several areas where organizational systems may have not evolved at the same pace as the department's growth and increasing complexity. The most consistent theme identified throughout stakeholder interviews and employee feedback involved communication and organizational alignment. Participants generally expressed confidence in the department's leadership and operational performance while identifying opportunities to improve communication consistency, information sharing, and coordination throughout the organization. Several stakeholders noted that communication becomes increasingly important as organizations grow, assume additional responsibilities, and operate across multiple levels of leadership and municipal governance.

Through a department-wide survey ([Appendix A](#)) and one-on-one interviews, employees generally viewed NMFR's organizational structure as supporting effective operations. More than two-thirds of survey respondents (68.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR is effectively organized to deliver high-quality services.



The governance structure remains effective overall and broadly supported by stakeholders. However, the requirement for coordination among multiple governing bodies, municipal leaders, and administrative systems can unintentionally slow progress on organizational initiatives, capital projects, staffing decisions, and operational improvements. While these processes provide important oversight and accountability, they can also create delays and administrative burdens that would not exist within a single-jurisdiction department. Opportunities exist to improve coordination, clarify decision-making authority, and streamline administrative processes while preserving the strengths of the regional governance model.

NMFR has opportunities to review staffing assignments and organizational responsibilities to ensure resources remain aligned with current and future service demands. Several positions have evolved significantly since consolidation, and administrative workload has increased substantially as the organization has matured. Periodic evaluation of staffing models, administrative support functions, supervisory responsibilities, and organizational structure will become increasingly important.



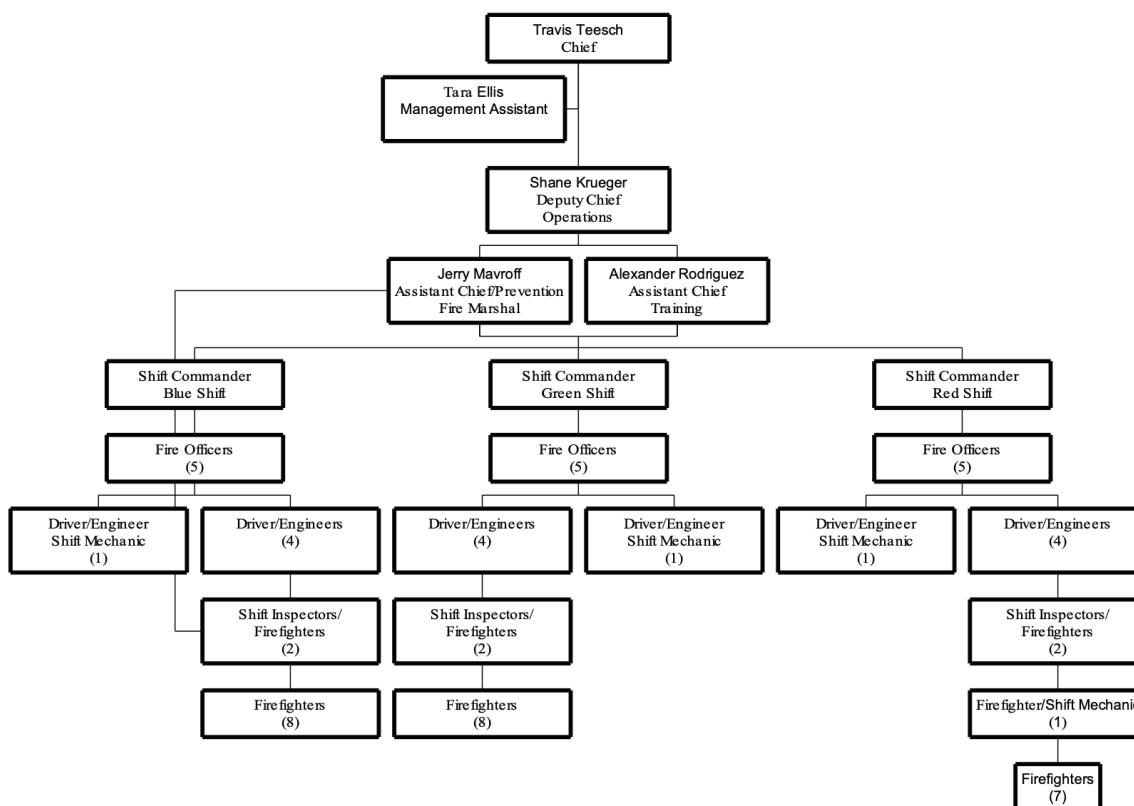
Future service demand presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Continued residential growth, commercial development, increasing emergency medical service demand, and changing workforce expectations will require ongoing evaluation of staffing, service delivery, and organizational readiness. While the department is well-positioned to meet these challenges, long-term planning and organizational adaptability will remain critical to maintaining the high level of service expected by both communities.

NMFR's challenges are not operational in nature. Rather, they reflect the realities of a successful regional organization that has matured substantially since its formation in 2003. The opportunities identified throughout this report are intended to strengthen organizational alignment, improve efficiency, enhance communication, and position the department for continued success over the next decade and beyond.



3. Organizational Structure, Staffing, and Governance

2026 Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Organizational Chart



3.1 Current Organizational Structure

NMFR operates under a regional service delivery model that combines traditional fire suppression and emergency medical services operations with specialized administrative and support functions. Established in 2003 through the consolidation of the Neenah and Menasha fire departments, the organization has evolved significantly over the past two decades while maintaining its core mission of providing high-quality emergency services to both communities. At the time of this assessment, NMFR employed 68 personnel, including command staff, suppression personnel, prevention personnel, administrative support staff, and four mechanic positions supporting apparatus and fleet maintenance. Department operations are delivered through four fire stations strategically located throughout the Cities of Neenah and Menasha.

The department maintains an ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating. According to the department's 2025 Annual Report, only nine departments in Wisconsin and fewer than 500 communities nationwide currently maintain this distinction. The rating reflects the department's continued investment in training, deployment, communications systems, apparatus, water supply infrastructure, and operational readiness.



Since consolidation, the scope of services provided by NMFR has expanded significantly. In addition to fire suppression and emergency medical response, the department now manages technical rescue operations, fire prevention and inspection services, emergency management coordination, public education programming, training administration, technology systems, records management, apparatus maintenance, payroll coordination, and long-term strategic planning.

The current organizational structure generally supports the department's operational mission and service delivery responsibilities. However, several positions and responsibilities have evolved incrementally over time as organizational demands increased. As a result, opportunities exist to ensure responsibilities, reporting relationships, and administrative resources remain aligned with the department's current workload and future needs.

3.2 Staffing and Role Analysis

NMFR benefits from a highly experienced workforce and strong leadership team. Stakeholders consistently identified department personnel as one of the organization's greatest strengths and repeatedly described employees as dedicated, knowledgeable, and committed to serving the public.

Position descriptions reviewed as part of this assessment demonstrate substantial growth in the responsibilities assigned to command staff, supervisors, and administrative personnel. Several positions now routinely manage budgeting, inspections, emergency management, records administration, technology systems, payroll coordination, labor administration, training compliance, strategic planning, and policy implementation in addition to traditional operational duties.

The department's administrative leadership structure currently includes a Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief of Fire Prevention, Assistant Chief of Training, and Management Assistant. Collectively, these positions oversee operational and administrative responsibilities that have expanded significantly since consolidation, resulting in a substantially greater administrative workload for the department's leadership team.

Stakeholder interviews and employee feedback identified opportunities to improve role clarity, better align responsibilities with organizational priorities, and ensure staffing resources remain positioned to support future service demands. While no significant operational staffing deficiencies were identified, continued attention to staffing assignments and organizational responsibilities will be important as administrative responsibilities and organizational demands continue to increase.

Specialized assignments have become increasingly important to organizational success. Functions involving emergency management, inspections, training, technology systems, records management, apparatus maintenance, and community risk reduction now require significant time, expertise, and coordination. These responsibilities have become essential components of modern fire and emergency medical service delivery and should continue to be considered when evaluating future staffing needs.



3.3 Administrative Capacity and Coordination

One of the most significant findings of this assessment involves the growth and complexity of NMFR's administrative functions. Since consolidation, the NMFR has assumed increasing responsibilities involving payroll administration, scheduling, budgeting, purchasing, inspections, records management, technology systems, emergency management, public education, grant administration, regulatory compliance, labor administration, and long-term planning. While these responsibilities are critical to organizational success, they often receive less attention than front-line emergency response operations.

Many administrative systems function effectively because of the experience, dedication, and institutional knowledge of department personnel. However, several stakeholders noted that portions of the department's administrative infrastructure remain heavily dependent on key individuals and informal processes developed over time. The department's Management Assistant position is particularly illustrative of this trend. The position is responsible for a broad range of duties involving payroll, scheduling, budgeting support, records management, purchasing, public communications, personnel tracking, committee administration, and operational coordination. Similar workload expansion was observed throughout several command and supervisory positions. As administrative complexity continues to increase, opportunities exist to improve communication, documentation, standardization, succession planning, and organizational resiliency. There are opportunities to improve coordination among administrative functions, command staff, and municipal support services to reduce duplication of effort and improve organizational efficiency.

These observations should not be interpreted as deficiencies. Rather, they reflect the realities of a successful organization that has expanded substantially since its original consolidation and now performs many functions that did not exist or were significantly less complex in 2003.

3.4 Governance Effectiveness and Decision-Making

The joint governance structure established during consolidation has provided stability, accountability, and regional oversight for more than twenty years. Stakeholders consistently expressed support for the regional partnership and recognized the benefits associated with shared governance and shared service delivery. The department currently operates under the oversight of the Joint Fire Commission and Joint Finance and Personnel Committee, with the Fire Chief reporting to both mayors. This structure has successfully maintained local representation and accountability while supporting regional operations. There are opportunities to improve decision-making efficiency and administrative coordination. Historical governance reviews conducted in 2017 identified several of the same themes raised during this assessment, including approval processes, purchasing authority, administrative consistency, budget coordination, and organizational flexibility.

The governance structure remains effective and broadly supported by stakeholders. However, the requirement for coordination among multiple governing bodies, municipal leaders, and administrative



systems can unintentionally slow progress on organizational initiatives, capital projects, staffing decisions, and operational improvements. While these processes provide important oversight and accountability, they can also create delays and administrative burdens that would not exist within a single-jurisdiction department.

Several stakeholders observed that the department's operational systems have evolved considerably over the past two decades, while portions of the governance and administrative framework have remained largely unchanged. As organizational complexity continues to increase, opportunities exist to improve coordination, clarify decision-making authority, strengthen communication, and streamline administrative processes while preserving the strengths of the regional governance model. The governance structure remains a significant organizational asset. The opportunities identified throughout this section involve refinement and modernization rather than structural change.

3.5 Funding and Financial Sustainability

NMFR operates under a long-standing shared funding model that allocates costs between the Cities of Neenah and Menasha. The model has provided stability and predictability throughout the department's history and has supported continued investment in personnel, facilities, apparatus, equipment, and service delivery. The assessment reviewed the current funding formula, historical modifications, and alternative funding approaches utilized by other regional fire departments. Historical review materials indicate that the funding formula has evolved over time, including revisions to allocation factors and adjustments intended to improve fairness and administrative practicality.

Stakeholders expressed support for maintaining the regional partnership and shared-service framework. The current funding model remains functional and generally equitable. However, like many public safety organizations, NMFR faces increasing administration and personnel costs, healthcare expenses, apparatus replacement needs, technology investments, facility maintenance obligations, and inflationary pressures. The department's recent and planned capital investments, including approximately \$5 million in apparatus and equipment purchases either recently completed or currently on order, demonstrate both the benefits and financial challenges associated with maintaining a modern regional fire and emergency response organization.

The assessment also examined alternative funding mechanisms and financial strategies utilized by fire departments throughout Wisconsin, including the Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Innovation Grant Program, fire protection fees, independent fire district governance structures, and other regional cost-allocation models. Of these, the Innovation Grant Program represents the most immediate opportunity for NMFR to pursue additional funding. The program provides state funding to support shared services, operational efficiencies, and regional collaboration, and could help offset the costs of future organizational initiatives. A detailed discussion of the program and its potential financial impact for NMFR is provided later in this report.



Fire protection fees have also gained interest in Wisconsin as a potential means of diversifying revenue sources and reducing reliance on the property tax levy. However, implementation has been complicated by ongoing litigation and evolving legal interpretations. Similarly, transitioning to an independent fire district may provide additional governance and funding flexibility in certain circumstances but would require careful evaluation of legal, financial, operational, and governance implications. While none of these alternatives present a compelling reason to immediately modify NMFR's current funding structure, they may warrant future consideration as legislation evolves, legal issues are resolved, and long-term financial pressures continue to increase.

Periodic review of funding assumptions, capital planning strategies, and long-range financial forecasts will help ensure the current model continues to support organizational needs while maintaining fairness between both partner communities. Maintaining financial sustainability will require continued collaboration among department leadership, elected officials, department heads, and governance bodies. The department is well-positioned to address future challenges, provided long-term planning remains a priority and funding discussions continue to focus on regional equity, service delivery expectations, organizational sustainability, and the evaluation of future funding opportunities as appropriate.

4. Future Service Demand and Industry Trends

4.1 Benchmarking and Best Practices

Nationally, fire departments continue to evolve beyond traditional fire suppression operations. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, approximately 65 percent of all fire department responses now involve EMS and rescue incidents, while less than 4 percent involve fires. According to NMFR's 2025 Annual Report, approximately 70 percent of all incidents involved EMS-related responses, while only 2.6 percent involved fire incidents. These trends have resulted in expanded responsibilities involving inspections, emergency management, training administration, technology systems, records management, and community risk reduction. NMFR has experienced similar organizational evolution since its formation in 2003.

NMFR's staffing model also compares favorably with regional peers. The department maintains 63 line personnel assigned to 24-hour shifts, supported by command staff, administrative personnel, prevention personnel, and four shift mechanics. The department's ability to maintain this staffing level for more than two decades has contributed significantly to operational consistency and service delivery. Historical annual reports note that NMFR has maintained staffing at approximately 68 personnel while continuing to meet national response and deployment standards.



4.2 Community Growth and Development Trends

Future service demand will be influenced by population growth, housing development, commercial investment, and demographic changes occurring throughout the Fox Valley region. While growth projections vary by community, both Neenah and Menasha continue to experience residential development, commercial expansion, and redevelopment activity. Additional housing units, industrial development, and commercial investment increase demand not only for emergency response services but also for inspections, public education, permit review, emergency planning, and community risk reduction programs.

Nationally and statewide, population aging is expected to become one of the most significant drivers of future emergency medical service demand. Wisconsin demographic projections indicate that residents age 60 and older will continue to represent an increasing percentage of the state's population through 2040. Aging populations are associated with higher utilization of emergency medical services, increased call frequency, and greater demand for healthcare-related emergency response.

NMFR's existing four-station deployment model positions the department well to accommodate foreseeable growth. Historical response time analyses indicate that the department consistently achieves response times that meet or exceed national standards for career fire departments. For example, NMFR reported an average first-arriving fire apparatus response time of 4 minutes and 37 seconds, meeting the National Fire Protection Association benchmark for first-arriving engine companies.

4.3 Future Service Demand

Future service demand is expected to be driven primarily by emergency medical service activity rather than fire incidents. This trend is already evident nationally and locally. Historical NMFR call volume data demonstrate that EMS incidents have represented the largest category of department responses for many years. Nationally, EMS and rescue incidents now account for approximately two-thirds of all fire department responses. Fire incidents, while critically important, account for a relatively small percentage of overall emergency activity.

Stakeholders consistently identified EMS demand as one of the most significant long-term issues facing the department. Increasing call volumes, hospital turnaround delays, healthcare workforce shortages, and regional population growth are placing additional pressure on emergency response systems throughout Wisconsin. At the same time, future service demand will affect far more than emergency response staffing. Increased activity levels generate additional workload involving scheduling, training compliance, inspections, records management, emergency management planning, data reporting, apparatus maintenance, and administrative support functions. Many of these responsibilities did not exist at their current scale when NMFR was formed in 2003.



NMFR is well-positioned to address these challenges. The department's four-station deployment model, experienced workforce, strong training culture, and regional service delivery structure provide a strong foundation for future success. However, continued evaluation of staffing, communications, organizational alignment, and administrative capacity will be important as service demands continue to evolve.

4.4 EMS and Ambulance Transport Considerations

Emergency medical services represent the most significant long-term strategic issue facing fire and EMS agencies nationwide. As EMS demand continues to increase, communities are increasingly evaluating ambulance transport capacity, response performance, workforce availability, and long-term financial sustainability. NMFR currently provides emergency medical response while ambulance transport services are provided through Gold Cross Ambulance Service. Stakeholders expressed varying perspectives regarding the long-term adequacy of the current arrangement. However, there was broad agreement that EMS demand will continue to increase and should remain a key focus of future planning efforts.

Ambulance transport capacity, hospital turnaround times, workforce availability, and EMS system resiliency should continue to be monitored. Nationally, many fire departments are evaluating ambulance transport models, expanded EMS partnerships with neighboring agencies or private companies, or alternative service delivery approaches in response to growing demand and workforce challenges.

This study was not intended to determine whether NMFR should assume ambulance transport responsibilities. Such a decision would require a separate operational and financial feasibility analysis. However, EMS transport and regional ambulance capacity represent important strategic considerations that should remain part of future organizational planning discussions. These trends suggest that emergency medical services will continue to shape staffing, budgeting, training, technology, and organizational structure decisions for NMFR over the next decade.





5. Recommendations

NMFR remains a strong and highly respected regional fire and emergency response organization. The department has successfully evolved since its formation in 2003 and continues to provide a high level of service to the residents of Neenah and Menasha. The recommendations contained within this section are intended to build upon the department's many strengths while addressing opportunities identified through stakeholder interviews, employee feedback, organizational review, benchmarking analysis, and future service demand projections.

These recommendations focus on improving organizational alignment, strengthening leadership capacity, enhancing communication, modernizing governance processes, and positioning the department for continued success over the next decade and beyond.

5.1 Organizational Alignment

Recommendation 1: Implement an organizational planning and alignment session.

NMFR's operational responsibilities, staffing needs, and service demands continue to evolve. A planning session involving department leadership, municipal leadership, staff, and governance representatives would improve communication, strengthen alignment, establish organizational priorities, and provide an opportunity to proactively address emerging challenges.



Recommendation 2: Strengthen internal communication and employee engagement processes.

Communication emerged as the most consistent organizational theme throughout stakeholder interviews and employee survey responses. Employees expressed confidence in NMFR's leadership, operational capabilities, and service delivery; however, many identified opportunities to improve communication, transparency, information sharing, and engagement between leadership, personnel, and between communities.

Implement a structured communication strategy that ensures employees across all shifts, stations, divisions, ranks, and work locations receive timely and consistent information regarding organizational initiatives, policy changes, governance activities, strategic priorities, operational developments, and major departmental decisions. Communication methods may include department-wide emails, leadership video updates, virtual and in-person staff meetings, station visits, shift briefings, internal newsletters, and electronic communication platforms.

Expand opportunities for two-way communication and employee involvement through listening sessions, employee committees, future surveys, strategic planning initiatives, and regular discussions between leadership and personnel. Strengthening communication and engagement practices will improve transparency, enhance organizational alignment, build trust, and help ensure employees remain informed, connected, and invested in NMFR's future direction.

Recommendation 3: Develop a formal succession planning and leadership development program.

Several key positions within the department possess significant institutional knowledge and specialized expertise. Formal succession planning will help ensure organizational continuity, reduce institutional risk, support employee development, and prepare future leaders for increasing organizational responsibilities. Leadership development efforts should include mentoring opportunities, professional development planning, cross-training, and identification of future organizational leaders.

5.2 Organizational Structure and Staffing

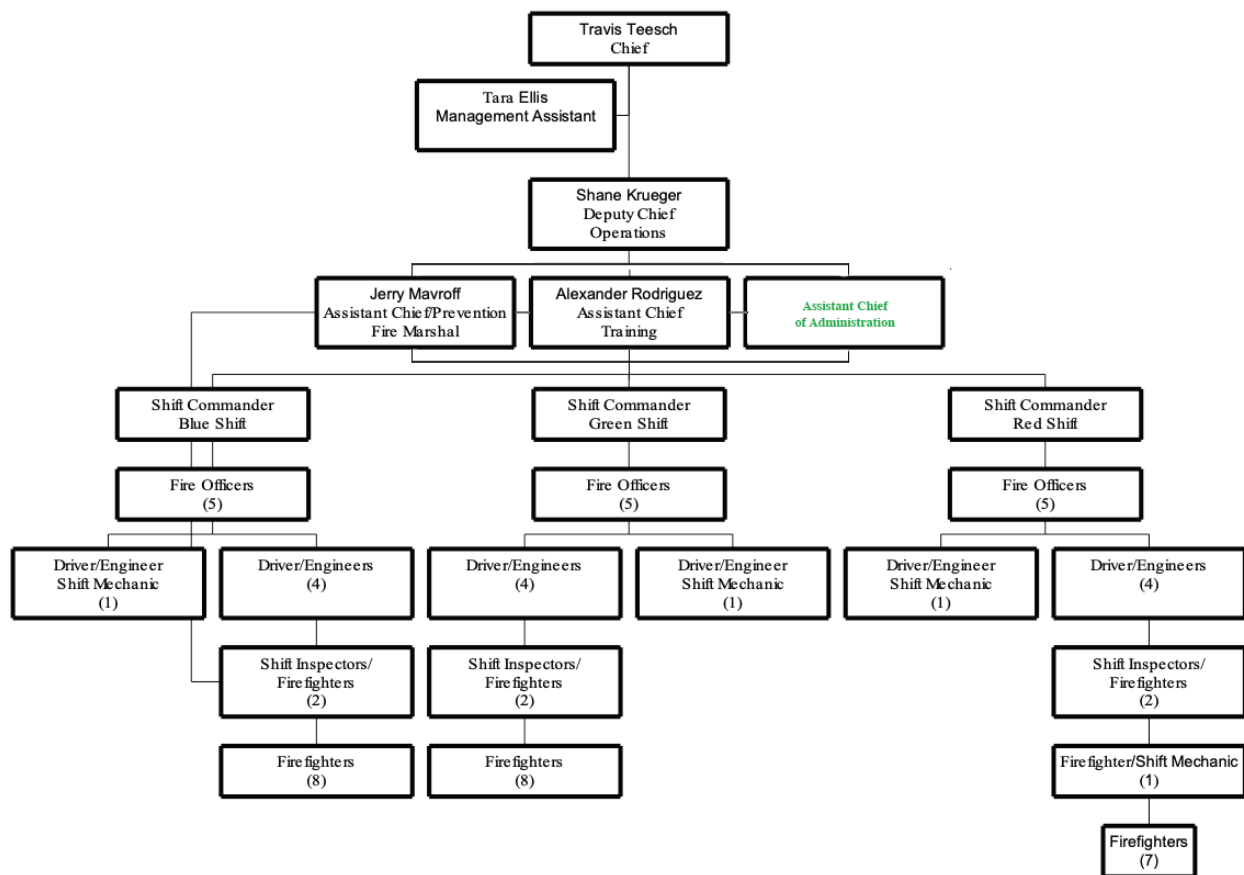
Recommendation 4: Reorganize the Command Structure to Add a Third Assistant Chief of Administration.

NMFR has evolved into a complex regional fire and EMS organization that requires dedicated executive leadership across its major functional areas. The organizational assessment, employee survey, and one-on-one interviews consistently identified internal communication as one of the department's greatest opportunities for improvement. Employees expressed a strong desire for more consistent, transparent, and intentional communication from executive leadership across all shifts, stations, and levels of the organization. To address these needs, it is recommended that NMFR establish a third Assistant Chief of Administration



reporting directly to the Deputy Chief of Operations. This position would assume responsibility for the department's logistics functions, including apparatus and equipment maintenance and replacement planning, facility and asset coordination, and other operational support services. This position would also serve as the department's communication liaison, ensuring information is consistently shared between the executive leadership team and personnel throughout the organization. Responsibilities would include coordinating department-wide communications, facilitating two-way feedback, supporting organizational initiatives, and promoting consistent messaging across all stations and shifts.

Transitioning to a three-Assistant Chief organizational structure will better distribute executive responsibilities, reduce span-of-control challenges, strengthen accountability, and provide dedicated leadership for communications and logistics while allowing the remaining Assistant Chiefs to maintain greater focus on their respective operational and administrative responsibilities. The proposed organizational chart below illustrates the recommended structure and reporting relationships.



Recommendation 5: Review and update key position descriptions.

Several position descriptions have evolved significantly since the department's formation in 2003. Updated position descriptions should clearly define responsibilities, reporting relationships, supervisory authority, performance expectations, and organizational priorities. This effort should be completed concurrently with implementation of the revised organizational structure.

Recommendation 6: Evaluate long-term administrative staffing needs.

Administrative responsibilities have expanded substantially over the past two decades. Payroll administration, scheduling, budgeting, records management, inspections, technology systems, training administration, emergency management, and regulatory compliance all require significant staff time and expertise. Evaluations of future staffing and administrative operations should be conducted jointly by both partner municipalities to ensure sufficient administrative capacity exists to support organizational growth, increasing regulatory requirements, and future service demands.

5.3 Governance, Funding, and Regional Collaboration**Recommendation 7: Conduct a governance modernization review.**

The current governance structure remains effective and broadly supported by stakeholders. However, opportunities exist to improve coordination, communication, and administrative efficiency. The requirement for coordination among multiple governing bodies, municipal leaders, and administrative systems can unintentionally slow progress on organizational initiatives, capital projects, staffing decisions, and operational improvements. A governance review should focus on clarifying responsibilities, streamlining administrative processes, and improving organizational agility while preserving accountability and municipal oversight. This could include conducting special meetings and an annual site visit to discuss current and future structure, operations, and streamline the approval process through the two municipalities.

Recommendation 8: Continue periodic review of the funding allocation model and long-term financial planning assumptions.

The current funding model remains functional and generally equitable. However, ongoing review is recommended to ensure the formula continues to reflect service demand, community growth, capital planning needs, and long-term organizational sustainability. Particular attention should be given to future apparatus replacement planning, facility investments, technology needs, and changing operational demands. Key elected and staff representatives from each partner municipality should work together to review.



Recommendation 9: Explore additional regional collaboration opportunities.

Regional cooperation has been a hallmark of NMFR's success since consolidation. As workforce challenges, financial pressures, and service demands continue to affect public safety organizations throughout Wisconsin, NMFR should proactively evaluate opportunities for additional collaboration with neighboring fire departments, emergency service agencies, and local governments.

Potential opportunities may include:

- Joint training initiatives with regional mutual aid partners that include fire departments, regional specialty teams, and EMS transport providers (e.g., Gold Cross Ambulance).
- Shared specialty teams.
- Cooperative purchasing programs.
- Shared administrative services.
- Fleet and apparatus maintenance partnerships.
- Regional emergency management coordination.
- Enhanced automatic aid and mutual aid agreements.
- Future EMS collaboration opportunities.

The intent of this recommendation is not to pursue additional consolidation. Rather, it is intended to identify opportunities that improve efficiency, resiliency, service delivery, and regional cooperation.

Recommendation 10: Evaluate opportunities for shared municipal support services.

There are potential opportunities to improve efficiency by evaluating municipal support services such as information technology, payroll administration, purchasing support, human resources functions, and other administrative services. Where appropriate, NMFR and the partner communities should evaluate whether certain support functions can be delivered more efficiently through one municipality, shared service arrangements, or other collaborative approaches.

In addition to potential operational and administrative efficiencies, certain shared service arrangements may create eligibility for financial assistance through Wisconsin Department of Revenue's Innovation Grant Program. The program provides financial incentives for qualifying service consolidations, transfers, and shared service initiatives between local governments. While additional analysis would be required to determine eligibility, administrative and support service collaborations may present opportunities to offset implementation costs, generate long-term savings, and enhance service delivery through state grant support.

If NMFR were to consolidate with another municipality and establish a new regional entity, the City of Neenah, City of Menasha, and the new municipality would each become eligible for the Wisconsin Innovation Grant. The Innovation Grant provides unrestricted funding equal to 25% of each participating municipality's prior-year cost of services. Based on projected 2026 operating expenses, the estimated annual grant awards would



total approximately \$1,671,758 for the City of Neenah (\$6,687,030 over four years) and \$1,074,384 for the City of Menasha (\$4,297,536 over four years). Funding could be used to offset transition and consolidation costs, invest in capital improvements, enhance service delivery, or reduce the financial impact on taxpayers.

If another municipality were to contract with NMFR beginning in 2027 without a formal consolidation, the Innovation Grant award would be based on the municipality's 2026 expenditures for the transferred fire and EMS services. NMFR would not be eligible for a grant award, however the funding is unrestricted and could be used to offset the costs associated with expanding NMFR services, integrating operations, and supporting the transition to a regional service delivery model.

The intent of this recommendation is not to reduce service levels, but rather to identify opportunities to improve organizational efficiency, reduce duplication, leverage available expertise, and strengthen regional cooperation while maintaining high-quality support for department operations.

5.4 Future Readiness and Strategic Planning

Recommendation 11: Develop a five-year organizational strategic plan.

While NMFR conducts annual planning and budgeting activities, a formal department-specific strategic plan would provide additional direction regarding staffing, facilities, apparatus replacement, technology investments, succession planning, and organizational priorities. The strategic planning process should include participation from department leadership, employees, governance representatives, and municipal leadership.

Recommendation 12: Continue monitoring emergency medical service demand and regional ambulance transport trends.

Emergency medical services represent the most significant long-term service delivery trend affecting the fire service industry. NMFR should continue evaluating EMS call volume trends, response performance, ambulance transport capacity, hospital turnaround times, workforce challenges, and regional EMS system developments. Regular communication and collaboration with Gold Cross Ambulance and medical control remain essential to maintaining a coordinated and high-performing EMS system. It is recommended that NMFR continually track the impact of Gold Cross Ambulance Service contracts with other regional departments.

Establish formal, recurring continuous quality improvement (CQI) meetings involving NMFR, Gold Cross Ambulance, and medical control to review patient care outcomes, clinical performance metrics, response times, system coordination, and opportunities for service improvement. Conduct routine joint training exercises involving all partner agencies to promote clinical consistency, reinforce standards of care, strengthen operational coordination, and build professional relationships among field personnel and medical providers.



Form an EMS Task Force consisting of NMFR leadership, operational personnel, Gold Cross representatives, medical control, and other regional stakeholders to evaluate emerging EMS trends, regional system challenges, service delivery opportunities, and future EMS needs. The Task Force should also evaluate the operational, financial, staffing, training, and service implications associated with a potential EMS license upgrade and provide recommendations regarding future EMS service delivery options.

These efforts will enhance patient care, improve system performance, strengthen inter-agency relationships, and position NMFR to effectively evaluate future ambulance transport considerations and EMS system opportunities as part of its ongoing strategic planning efforts.



Recommendation 13: Maintain organizational flexibility to respond to future growth and demand.

The department's current station network, staffing model, and deployment strategy position NMFR well for foreseeable growth. However, continued residential and commercial development, economic investment, demographic changes, and evolving service expectations will require ongoing evaluation of staffing, organizational structure, administrative capacity, and service delivery strategies. Future success will depend upon the department's ability to adapt organizational systems and leadership structures while maintaining the high level of service expected by the residents of Neenah and Menasha.

This assessment does not recommend major operational restructuring or significant changes to the regional fire department model. Rather, the recommendations contained within this report are intended to strengthen an already successful organization, improve organizational alignment, enhance communication and accountability, and position NMFR for continued success well into the future.

6. Implementation Plan

The recommendations contained within this report are intended to be implemented through a phased approach over the next three to five years. While several recommendations can be initiated immediately, others will require additional planning, stakeholder engagement, budget consideration, and governance review. Importantly, the recommendations are designed to build upon NMFR's existing strengths rather than fundamentally alter the department's service delivery model. It is not recommended to conduct major operational restructuring or significant changes to the regional partnership. Instead, the recommendations focus on organizational alignment, leadership capacity, communication, governance efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

The following implementation framework is intended to assist department leadership, the Joint Fire Commission, the Joint Finance and Personnel Committee, and both municipalities in prioritizing future actions.

6.1 Immediate Priorities (0–12 Months)

Recommendation

Organizational Planning Session

Internal Communication Improvements

Succession Planning Program Development

Review and Update Position Descriptions

Governance Modernization Review

EMS and Gold Cross Performance Monitoring Framework

Lead Responsibility

Fire Chief/Joint Fire Commission

Command Staff/HR from both Municipalities

Fire Chief

Command Staff/HR from both Municipalities

Joint Fire Commission/Fire Chief

Fire Chief

Immediate priorities primarily involve organizational alignment, communication, planning, and evaluation efforts that can be accomplished with minimal financial impact.



6.2 Short-Term Priorities (1–3 Years)

Recommendation

Implement Revised Organizational Structure
Transition to Three-Assistant Chief Leadership Model
Administrative Staffing Evaluation
Funding Formula Review
Shared Municipal Service Evaluation
Regional Collaboration Exploration

Lead Responsibility

Fire Chief/Joint Fire Commission
Fire Chief/Joint Fire Commission
Command Staff
Joint Finance and City Council Teams
Municipal Administrators
Fire Chief

Short-term priorities focus on organizational structure, leadership alignment, administrative capacity, and governance improvements. Implementation of the proposed organizational structure should occur thoughtfully and in coordination with succession planning efforts, budget development processes, and future staffing needs.

6.3 Long-Term Priorities (3–5 Years)

Recommendation

Five-Year Strategic Plan Updates
Long-Term Capital Planning Updates
Regional Service Collaboration Initiatives
EMS System Evaluation (Gold Cross Future)
Organizational Effectiveness Review

Lead Responsibility

Fire Chief/Joint Fire Commission
Department Leadership/Municipal Leadership
Joint Fire Commission
Fire Chief/Command Staff
All Parties Involved

Long-term priorities focus on maintaining organizational adaptability, monitoring service demand trends, and ensuring the department remains positioned to meet future community needs.

Measuring Success

Implementation success should be measured using both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. Suggested measures include:

- Employee engagement and communication survey results.
- Staff retention and succession planning outcomes.
- Retention of ISO 1.
- Response time performance.
- Organizational efficiency improvements.
- Completion of strategic initiatives.
- Governance process improvements.
- Long-term financial sustainability indicators.
- Community and stakeholder satisfaction.



Closing Perspective

NMFR has successfully evolved into one of Wisconsin's premier regional fire and emergency medical services organizations. The department's ISO Class 1 rating, strong operational reputation, experienced workforce, and successful regional partnership provide a solid foundation for the future. The recommendations contained within this report are intended to strengthen that foundation. By improving organizational alignment, enhancing leadership capacity, modernizing governance processes, and preparing for future service demands, NMFR can continue providing exceptional service to the residents of Neenah and Menasha while remaining a model for regional cooperation throughout Wisconsin.



Innovative Public Advisors

July 11, 2026

Dear Chief Teesch, Mayor Borchardt, and Mayor Hammond:

Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this Organizational Structure and Future Needs Assessment of the Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Department (NMFR). This study reflects the continued commitment of the Cities of Neenah and Menasha to maintaining a high-performing regional fire and emergency medical services organization.

This assessment was informed through numerous stakeholder interviews, employee feedback, organizational and financial analysis, benchmarking research, and review of operational data. We appreciate the time, insight, and collaboration provided by department personnel, elected officials, municipal leadership, and community stakeholders throughout the process.

Our assessment confirms that NMFR is a strong and successful regional organization. More than twenty years after consolidation, the department continues to provide exceptional service through a model that has improved operational capabilities, resource sharing, staffing flexibility, and long-term planning. The department's ISO Class 1 rating, experienced workforce, and strong reputation throughout the Fox Valley region reflect its commitment to excellence.

The study identifies opportunities to strengthen organizational alignment, communication, leadership structure, governance coordination, and long-term planning. Key recommendations include implementation of a three-Assistant Chief leadership model, enhanced communication and succession planning efforts, continued evaluation of regional collaboration opportunities, and development of a long-term strategic planning framework. This assessment does not recommend major changes to the regional fire department model. Rather, it concludes that NMFR remains a highly effective organization that would benefit from targeted organizational refinements designed to support future growth, service demands, and long-term sustainability.

Thank you again for the opportunity to partner with NMFR and both communities on this important initiative. We look forward to supporting the department's continued success.

Sincerely,



Jay Shambeau, ICMA-CM, MPA
Partner, Innovative Public Advisors



Jess Wildes, MPA, MS
Partner, Innovative Public Advisors



Paul Stephans
Fire/EMS Advisor







NEENAH-MENASHA FIRE
RESCUE DEPARTMENT
STAFF SURVEY REPORT

JUNE 10, 2026

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Innovative Public Advisors

Executive Summary

The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Department (NMFR) Employee Survey provided personnel with an opportunity to share candid feedback regarding NMFR's operations, workplace culture, leadership, communication, staffing, and future direction. A total of 47 employees participated in the survey, representing a broad cross-section of the organization. The responses offer valuable insight into both the strengths of NMFR and the areas employees believe warrant additional attention and investment.

Survey results reflect a workforce that is deeply committed to its mission of protecting life and property and serving the residents of Neenah and Menasha with professionalism and compassion. Employees consistently expressed pride in the work performed by NMFR and confidence in the operational abilities of their colleagues. Respondents frequently highlighted the dedication, experience, teamwork, and technical competence of personnel as defining characteristics of the organization. Many noted that despite ongoing challenges, employees continue to deliver exceptional emergency response services and maintain high standards of professionalism.

The survey findings also reveal a strong sense of camaraderie among operational personnel. Respondents regularly identified teamwork, mutual support, and commitment to one another as some of NMFR's greatest strengths. Employees described coworkers as knowledgeable, hardworking, and willing to go above and beyond to ensure the success of the organization and the safety of the communities served. These positive observations demonstrate a solid operational foundation and a workforce that remains highly invested in NMFR's success. Employee feedback gathered through the survey closely aligned with themes identified during numerous individual interviews conducted with NMFR personnel. This consistency strengthens the reliability of the findings and suggests employees share common perspectives regarding the department's strengths, challenges, and future priorities.

While the survey revealed many strengths, it also identified several recurring concerns that warrant consideration. Communication and transparency emerged as the most frequently discussed topics throughout the survey. Employees expressed a desire for clearer communication regarding organizational decisions, strategic priorities, and operational changes. Many respondents indicated that increasing transparency and providing more consistent opportunities for employee input would strengthen trust and improve organizational alignment. While respondents generally acknowledged the complexity of managing



a modern fire and EMS organization, there was a clear desire for greater engagement between leadership and frontline personnel.

Staffing and workload concerns were also prominent themes. Employees expressed concerns regarding staffing levels, increasing service demands, recruitment and retention challenges, overtime requirements, and the potential impact of these issues on employee well-being and organizational sustainability. While respondents recognized that many of these challenges are not unique to NMFR, they emphasized the importance of proactively addressing workforce concerns to maintain service quality and support employee morale.

The survey additionally identified opportunities to strengthen organizational culture and long-term planning. While many respondents described strong relationships among crews and positive station-level environments, some noted concerns regarding consistency, accountability, trust, and organizational cohesion. Employees expressed interest in a more clearly communicated vision for the future, enhanced leadership development opportunities, and greater collaboration across all levels of the organization. These comments suggest a workforce that is not only invested in day-to-day operations but also deeply interested in NMFR's long-term success.

Training and professional development were generally viewed positively throughout the survey. Respondents expressed confidence in NMFR's operational capabilities and training programs while also identifying opportunities to expand leadership development, succession planning, and career growth opportunities. Employees consistently recognized the importance of preparing the next generation of leaders and ensuring NMFR remains adaptable to future challenges.

Taken together, the survey and interview findings portray an organization with significant strengths and a workforce that remains committed to its mission, colleagues, and communities. The findings do not suggest an organization in crisis; rather, they indicate that NMFR is at an important point in its development where investments in communication, staffing, leadership, employee engagement, and strategic planning could further strengthen an already capable organization. Employees demonstrated a clear willingness to contribute ideas and solutions, reflecting a shared desire to see NMFR continue to evolve and succeed.

The themes and recommendations contained within this report are intended to support ongoing organizational improvement efforts and provide leadership with meaningful insight into employee perspectives. By building upon existing strengths and addressing identified concerns, NMFR can continue to foster a positive workplace culture, enhance organizational effectiveness, and maintain the high level of service that the residents of Neenah and Menasha have come to expect. These strengths are further reflected in NMFR's distinguished ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating, which places the department among a select group of fire departments nationwide recognized for operational excellence.



Survey Overview and Respondent Profile

The NMFR Employee Survey was conducted to gather employee perspectives regarding organizational operations, workplace culture, leadership, communication, staffing, training, and future priorities. The survey was designed to provide personnel with an opportunity to offer candid feedback regarding both the strengths of the organization and areas where improvements may be warranted.

A total of 47 employees participated in the survey and were supplemented by numerous individual interviews with NMFR personnel, providing additional context and insight into employee perceptions representing a broad cross-section of NMFR personnel. Responses included employees with varying levels of experience, assignments, and organizational responsibilities, providing a comprehensive view of employee perceptions throughout the organization.

The survey included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions. Quantitative questions measured employee perceptions regarding key organizational functions, while open-ended questions provided respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences, identify concerns, and offer recommendations for the future. This mixed-method approach allows both statistical trends and employee narratives to be incorporated into the findings.

While individual responses varied, several themes emerged consistently throughout the survey. Employees demonstrated strong pride in the services provided by NMFR and confidence in the professionalism and dedication of their coworkers. At the same time, respondents identified opportunities to improve communication, strengthen organizational alignment, address staffing challenges, and enhance employee engagement.

The findings presented in this report are organized around the major themes that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative responses. The results are intended to provide leadership, elected officials, and employees with a clear understanding of organizational strengths, employee priorities, and opportunities for continuous improvement.

Respondent Characteristics

The survey captured feedback from employees representing a variety of positions and years of service within NMFR. This diversity of perspectives helps ensure that the findings reflect experiences from across the organization rather than a single division, shift, or rank. Key demographic information collected through the survey included:

- Position or rank within NMFR
- Years of service
- Employment classification
- Assignment or division (where applicable)



Key Observation

The response rate and depth of comments indicate a workforce that is highly engaged and invested in the future of NMFR. Many respondents provided detailed feedback and thoughtful recommendations, demonstrating a strong desire to contribute to the continued success and improvement of the organization.

Chart 1: Respondents Years of Service

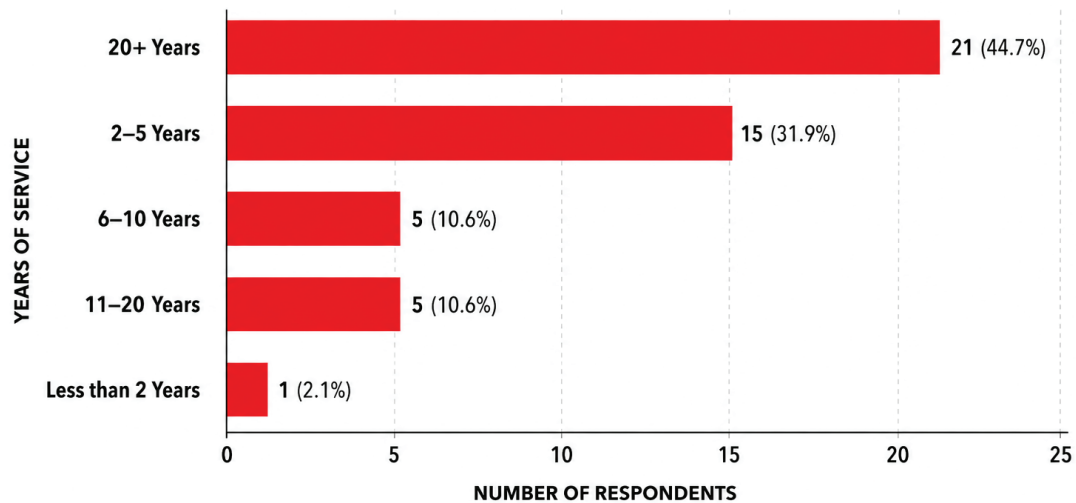
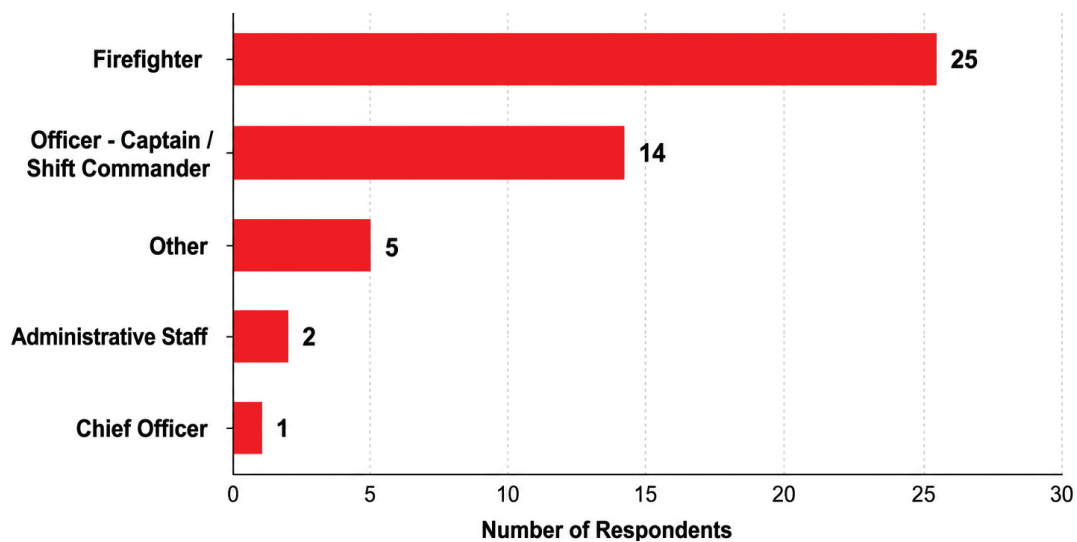


Chart 2: Respondents by Position Classification



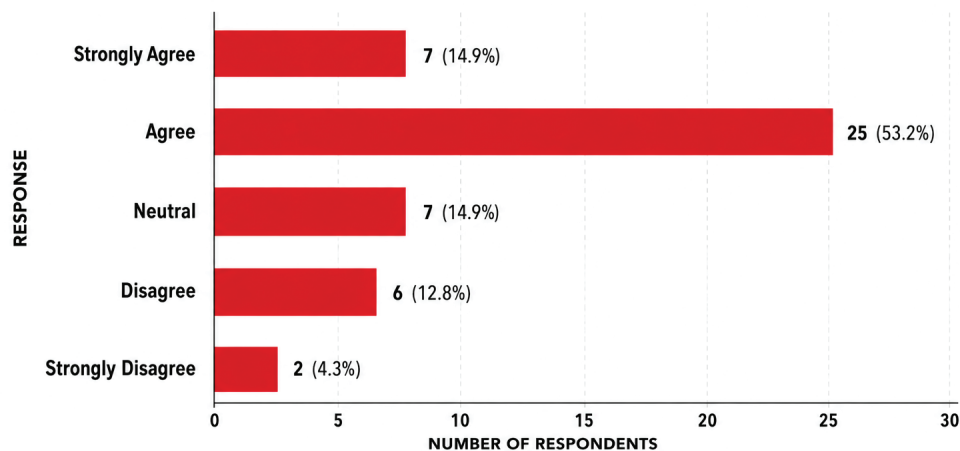
Organizational Effectiveness

The Organizational Effectiveness section of the survey assessed employee perceptions regarding NMFR's ability to deliver high-quality services, maintain adequate staffing, establish clear organizational expectations, communicate effectively, make informed decisions, prepare for future demands, and support employee development.

Respondents expressed confidence in NMFR's ability to provide quality emergency services and fulfill its mission. Employees generally viewed the organization as capable and operationally effective. However, survey results also revealed significant concerns regarding communication, decision-making processes, future planning, and staffing sustainability. The findings suggest that while employees remain confident in the dedication and professionalism of personnel, many believe improvements are needed in organizational leadership processes, communication practices, and long-term strategic planning.

NMFR is Effectively Organized to Deliver High-Quality Services

Employees generally expressed positive perceptions regarding NMFR's ability to provide high-quality emergency services.

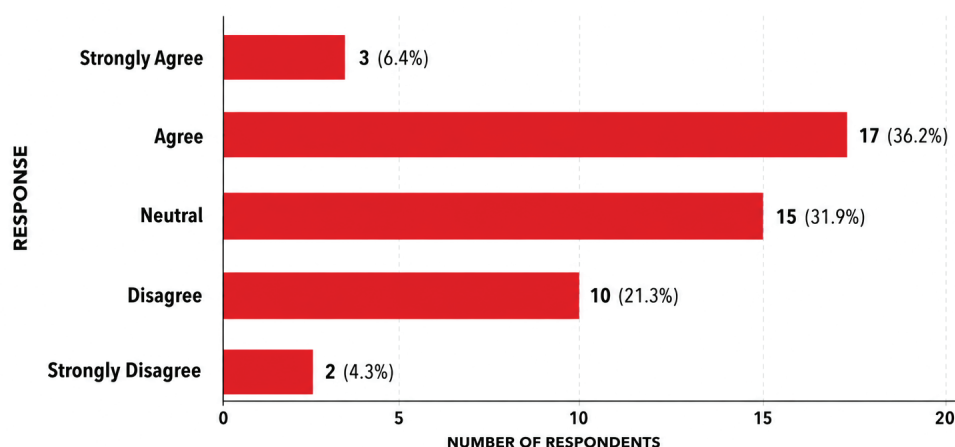


More than *two-thirds of respondents (68.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR is effectively organized to deliver high-quality services*. This represents one of the strongest ratings within the Organizational Effectiveness section and reflects employee confidence in the department's operational capabilities and commitment to serving the community. While some respondents expressed concerns regarding organizational processes and leadership practices elsewhere in the survey, the findings suggest employees remain confident in NMFR's core service delivery functions. These findings are particularly noteworthy given NMFR's ISO Class 1 rating, which independently validates the department's operational capabilities and effectiveness.



Staffing Levels Are Adequate to Meet Current Service Demands

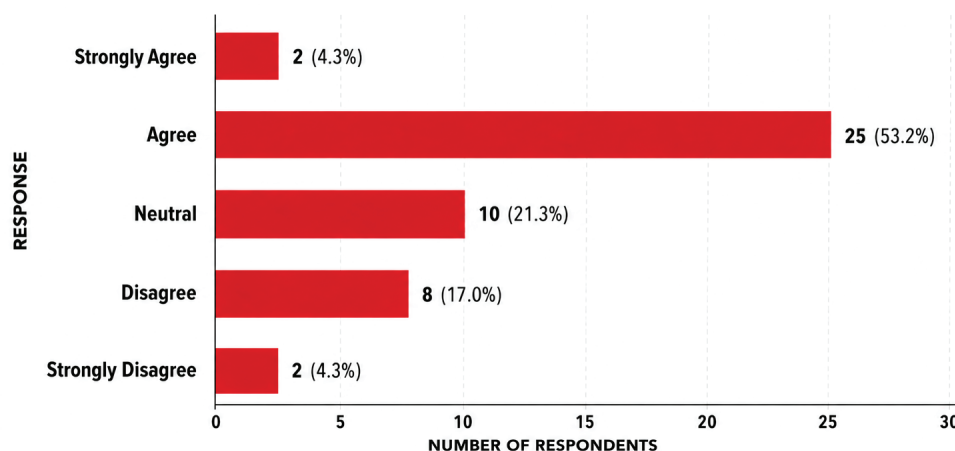
Employee perceptions regarding staffing were more mixed.



While 42.6% of respondents agreed that staffing levels are adequate, 25.6% disagreed and nearly one-third of respondents remained neutral. These results suggest employees recognize that NMFR is currently meeting service demands but may have concerns regarding long-term staffing sustainability, workload distribution, and future growth. The staffing-related concerns identified in this section were reinforced throughout the survey, particularly within the Staffing and Workforce section and open-ended comments.

Roles and Responsibilities Within the Department Are Clearly Defined

Respondents generally indicated that organizational roles and responsibilities are understood.

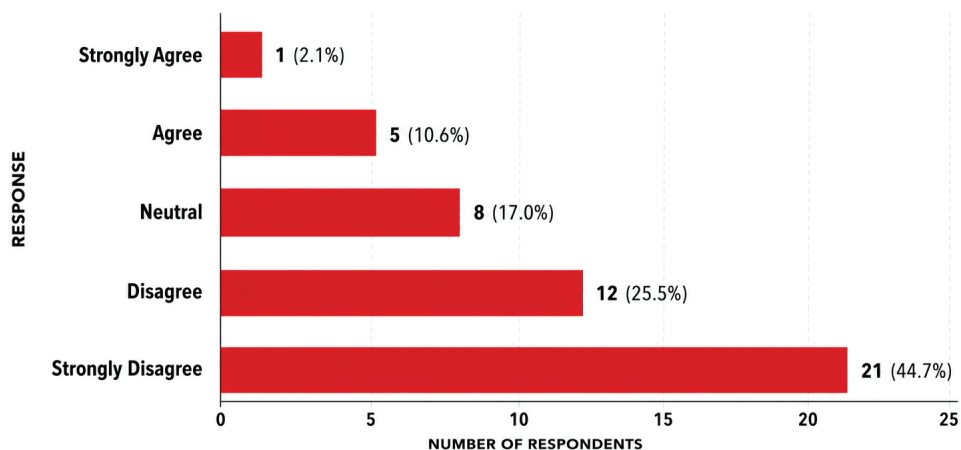


A majority of respondents (57.5%) agreed that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. However, more than one in five respondents expressed uncertainty, and another 21.3% disagreed. These findings suggest that while day-to-day operational expectations are generally understood, there may be opportunities to clarify responsibilities, authority, and expectations in certain areas of the organization.



Communication Between Leadership and Staff Is Effective

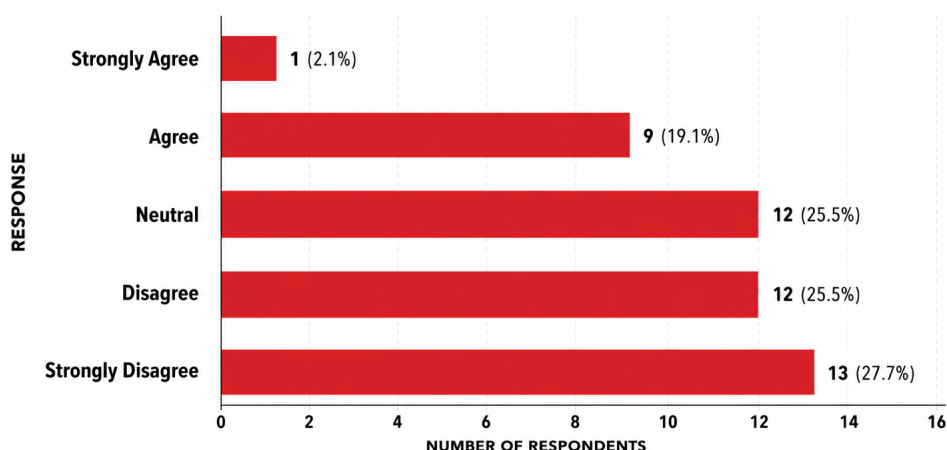
Communication emerged as the lowest-rated area within the Organizational Effectiveness section.



Communication received the lowest rating in the Organizational Effectiveness section and emerged as the most consistent concern identified throughout the survey. More than 70% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that communication between leadership and staff is effective. This represents the most significant area of concern identified within the Organizational Effectiveness section and one of the most consistent themes throughout the entire survey. Employees frequently referenced communication challenges in open-ended comments, including concerns regarding transparency, information sharing, employee engagement, and communication regarding organizational decisions. The findings suggest communication improvements may represent one of the greatest opportunities for strengthening organizational effectiveness and employee confidence.

Decision-Making Processes are Clear and Efficient

Employee perceptions regarding decision-making were generally negative.



A majority of respondents (53.2%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that decision-making processes are clear and efficient. Employees frequently expressed a desire for greater transparency regarding how decisions are made and how organizational priorities are established. The results indicate that while personnel may understand operational expectations, many are uncertain about broader organizational decision-making processes and would benefit from increased visibility into leadership discussions and strategic initiatives.



NMFR Is Well-Positioned to Meet Future Service Demands

Responses regarding future readiness were mixed. Employee perceptions regarding NMFR's preparedness for future service demands were divided. Approximately one-third of respondents expressed confidence in the organization's future readiness, while nearly 40% expressed concern.

Many open-ended comments referenced staffing growth, EMS expansion, leadership succession, and long-term planning as critical issues that will influence NMFR's ability to meet future community needs. The findings suggest employees recognize the challenges associated with changing service demands and are seeking greater confidence in long-term planning efforts.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities Meet Operational Needs

Employee perceptions regarding training and professional development were generally neutral to slightly positive. While employees generally expressed confidence in operational training programs, responses indicate opportunities exist to further strengthen professional development and career growth opportunities. Approximately one-third of respondents viewed current training opportunities positively, while nearly 30% expressed dissatisfaction.

Comments throughout the survey suggested interest in expanded leadership development, succession planning, EMS advancement opportunities, and continued investment in employee development.

Organizational Effectiveness Summary

The Organizational Effectiveness section presents a mixed but informative picture of employee perceptions. Employees expressed strong confidence in NMFR's ability to provide quality emergency services and generally viewed organizational roles and responsibilities as reasonably clear. These findings reflect a workforce that remains committed to its mission and confident in its operational capabilities.

Respondents also identified significant concerns regarding communication, decision-making transparency, staffing sustainability, and future planning. Communication between leadership and staff received the lowest rating of any question in this section and emerged as one of the most frequently discussed concerns throughout the survey.

The findings indicate NMFR's operational foundation remains strong, but opportunities exist to strengthen organizational alignment, communication practices, employee engagement, and long-range planning.



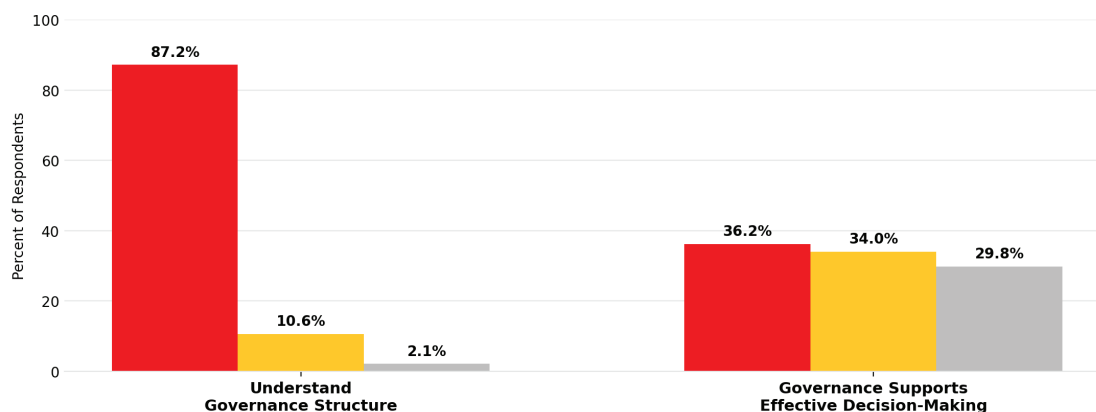
Joint Governance and Organizational Structure

The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue Department operates under a unique joint governance model that requires coordination between the City of Neenah, the City of Menasha, the Joint Fire Commission, municipal administrators, elected officials, and department leadership. This structure has allowed the communities to share resources, provide regionalized fire and EMS services, and maintain a single department serving both municipalities.

The survey results reveal that employees generally understand the governance structure and recognize many of its benefits. At the same time, respondents expressed concerns regarding decision-making, representation of departmental needs, administrative support, and the impact that differing priorities between the two cities can have on the organization. While personnel overwhelmingly remain focused on delivering high-quality emergency services, the findings suggest opportunities exist to strengthen communication, alignment, and understanding of governance-related decisions. Employee concerns were generally focused on governance outcomes rather than governance structure. Personnel largely understand how NMFR is governed but expressed less confidence in the efficiency, responsiveness, and effectiveness of governance-related decision-making.

Understanding vs. Effectiveness of Joint Governance

Employees overwhelmingly understand how NMFR is governed, but they are considerably less confident that the governance structure consistently supports effective decision-making.

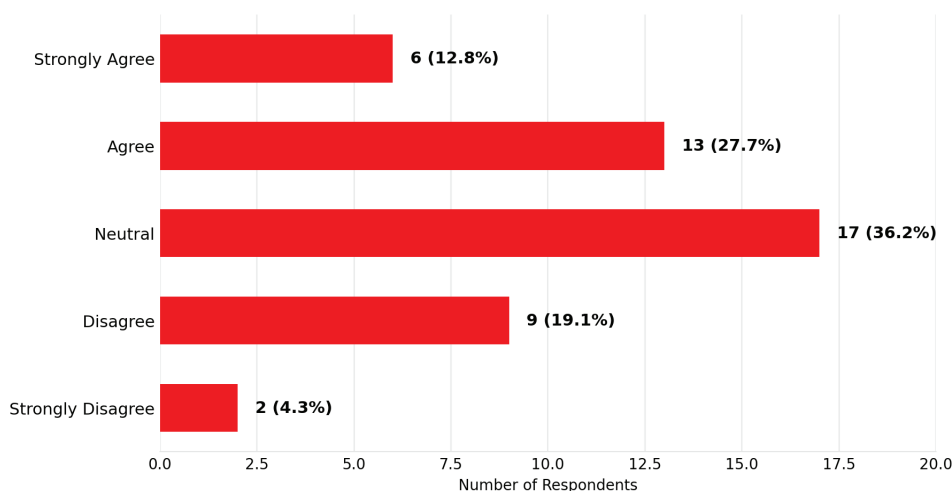


Governance Challenges Identified by Employees

Employees' greatest governance-related concerns center on representation of departmental needs, competing municipal priorities, and the effectiveness of administrative support functions. These themes suggest opportunities to strengthen organizational alignment, communication, and advocacy for operational priorities.



Employee Perceptions Regarding Whether Differing Priorities between Neenah and Menasha create Challenges for NMFR staff:



Key Themes

- ***Employees Understand the Governance Structure:*** One of the strongest findings in this section is that employees generally understand how NMFR is governed. Nearly nine out of ten respondents (87.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the governance relationship between the two cities and NMFR. This suggests that confusion regarding organizational structure itself is not a significant issue.
- ***Employees Are Less Certain the Structure Produces Effective Outcomes:*** While employees understand the structure, considerably fewer believe it consistently supports effective decision-making. Only 36.2% agreed that the governance model supports effective decision-making, while nearly one-third disagreed and another one-third remained neutral. These findings suggest concerns are less about the structure itself and more about how governance processes function in practice.
- ***Representation of Departmental Needs Remains a Concern:*** One of the most significant findings involved employee perceptions regarding whether departmental needs are adequately represented in governance discussions. More than 40% of respondents disagreed that departmental needs are clearly represented in decision-making processes, while nearly half selected neutral. These findings suggest many employees are uncertain how operational concerns are communicated and prioritized.
- ***City Priorities Influence Organizational Decision-Making:*** Employees generally acknowledged that operating under two municipalities creates challenges. Nearly half of respondents indicated that differences between the cities impact operations, while 40.5% agreed that conflicting municipal priorities create challenges for staff. Open-ended responses frequently referenced concerns regarding differing priorities, organizational alignment, and the pace of decision-making.



- **Confidence in the Joint Fire Commission Remains Relatively Strong:** Despite concerns regarding governance processes, employees generally expressed confidence in the Joint Fire Commission structure itself. More than half of respondents viewed the Commission positively, while only 10.7% expressed disagreement. This suggests employees may differentiate between the governance framework and the day-to-day challenges associated with implementing decisions within that framework.

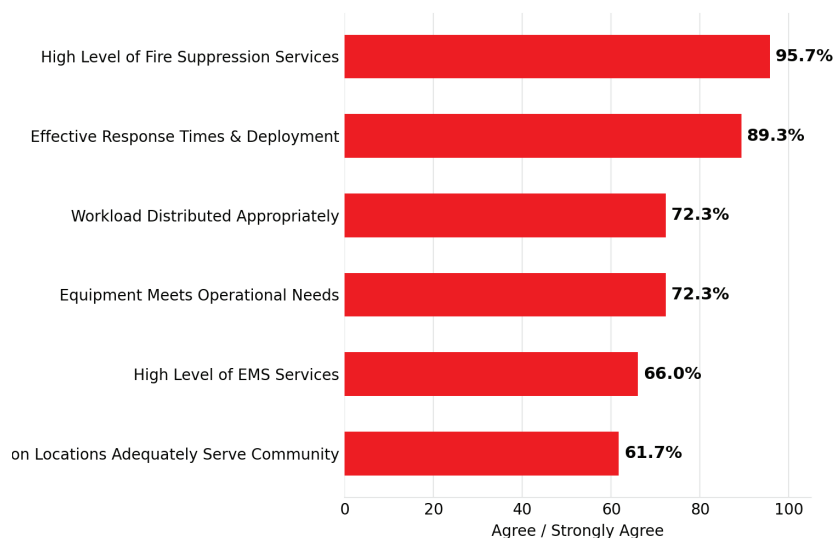
Operations and Service Delivery

The Operations and Service Delivery section assessed employee perceptions regarding NMFR's ability to provide effective fire suppression and emergency medical services, deploy resources appropriately, maintain operational readiness, and meet the needs of the communities it serves. This section produced the strongest results in the entire survey. Employees expressed overwhelming confidence in NMFR's fire suppression capabilities, response effectiveness, deployment strategies, and operational performance. The findings reflect a workforce that takes pride in the organization's ability to deliver high-quality emergency services and maintain a strong reputation within the communities it serves.

While operational performance received consistently positive ratings, employees also identified several opportunities for improvement. These opportunities generally focused on EMS service delivery, staffing sustainability, communication, equipment replacement planning, and preparing the organization for future growth and service demands. Importantly, these concerns were not indicative of dissatisfaction with current operations but rather reflected a desire to ensure NMFR remains well-positioned to maintain operational excellence into the future.

Operational Strengths

Survey results demonstrate strong employee confidence in nearly every aspect of NMFR's operational performance. The chart below identifies the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with statements regarding NMFR's operational performance and service delivery.



The highest-rated operational categories included fire suppression services and response effectiveness. Nearly all respondents agreed that NMFR provides a high level of fire suppression services, while a similarly large majority expressed confidence in response times and deployment strategies. Additional areas receiving strong ratings included workload distribution, equipment and apparatus readiness, EMS services, and station locations.

Key Findings

- **Fire Suppression Services:** Fire suppression services received the highest rating of any operational category. A total of 95.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR provides a high level of fire suppression services. This finding reflects substantial confidence in the department's training, staffing, operational readiness, equipment, and overall ability to respond effectively to fire emergencies. Employees consistently identified professionalism, operational competence, and dedication to service as defining strengths of the organization. Employee perceptions align closely with NMFR's ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating, further validating the department's reputation for operational excellence and high-quality emergency service delivery.
- **Response Times and Deployment:** Nearly 90% of respondents agreed that NMFR's response times and deployment strategies are effective. These findings indicate strong confidence in station locations, apparatus deployment, staffing assignments, and the department's ability to provide timely emergency response throughout the service area. Employees generally believe the current deployment model effectively supports operational needs and community expectations.
- **Workload Distribution:** More than 72% of respondents agreed that workload is distributed appropriately across shifts and stations. While staffing concerns emerged elsewhere in the survey, employees generally believe current deployment and workload practices are effective. These findings suggest personnel view operational assignments as equitable and manageable under current conditions.
- **Equipment and Apparatus:** Employees also expressed confidence in the department's equipment and apparatus. More than 72% agreed that current resources meet operational needs. While positive overall, open-ended responses identified several areas where future capital investments may be warranted, particularly regarding apparatus replacement planning and specialty equipment.
- **EMS Services:** Employee perceptions regarding EMS services were generally positive, though ratings were lower than those associated with fire suppression services. Approximately two-thirds of respondents agreed that NMFR provides a high level of EMS services. Several respondents identified EMS delivery as an area with opportunities for continued improvement and future investment.
- **Station Locations:** A majority of respondents indicated that current station locations adequately serve the community. While support for the current station configuration remains strong, several employees referenced future growth patterns and suggested that continued evaluation of deployment needs may be appropriate as the communities continue to develop.



- **Operational Improvement Opportunities:** Although employees expressed strong confidence in current operations, several recurring themes emerged regarding opportunities for improvement.

Open-ended responses identified several common areas where employees believe additional attention and resources may further strengthen service delivery.

Communication and Organizational Alignment

Communication was the most frequently identified operational improvement opportunity. Numerous respondents referenced communication challenges between administration and line personnel, a desire for clearer organizational priorities, and opportunities to improve information sharing throughout the organization. Representative comments included:

"Lack of communication between admin and line personnel."

"Lack of clear defined objectives, goals and communications from admin staff."

These comments mirror findings identified throughout other sections of the survey and suggest communication improvements could positively influence several aspects of organizational performance.

- **EMS Service Delivery:** Employees frequently identified EMS services as an area deserving additional focus. Several respondents suggested exploring opportunities to enhance EMS training, expand EMS capabilities, and evaluate future service delivery models. While employees generally expressed confidence in current EMS services, many believe additional investment could further strengthen this area.
- **Staffing and Workforce Capacity:** Staffing concerns were also identified as an operational priority. Respondents expressed concerns regarding workforce sustainability, recruitment, retention, and ensuring adequate staffing levels to meet future service demands. Employees generally acknowledged that NMFR continues to provide high-quality services despite these challenges but emphasized the importance of proactive workforce planning.
- **Equipment Replacement and Capital Planning:** Several respondents identified equipment replacement and capital planning as areas requiring continued attention. Specific concerns included apparatus reliability, specialty equipment, and long-term replacement planning. Employees generally support current equipment resources but recognize the importance of maintaining a proactive approach to capital investment.
- **Future Growth and Service Demands:** Multiple respondents referenced future community growth and changing service demands. Suggestions included evaluating future station locations, deployment strategies, staffing models, and EMS resources to ensure NMFR remains prepared to meet evolving community needs.



- **Operations and Service Delivery Summary:** The Operations and Service Delivery section reflects an exceptionally high-performing organization that enjoys strong confidence from its employees. Personnel overwhelmingly believe NMFR provides exceptional fire suppression services, maintains effective deployment strategies, and consistently delivers high-quality emergency response services to the communities it serves.

Employees identified professionalism, operational competence, and dedication to public service as defining strengths of the organization. These findings suggest NMFR's operational foundation remains exceptionally strong and serves as one of the department's greatest organizational assets. At the same time, respondents identified several opportunities for continued improvement, including communication, EMS service delivery, staffing sustainability, equipment replacement planning, and preparing for future growth. These concerns should not be viewed as indicators of operational weakness. Rather, they reflect a workforce that is invested in the organization's future success and committed to maintaining the high level of service that currently defines NMFR.

Staffing and Workforce Sustainability

The Staffing and Workforce Sustainability section evaluated employee perceptions regarding staffing levels, workload, recruitment, retention, workforce participation, organizational growth, and NMFR's ability to maintain a sustainable workforce into the future. While employees generally expressed strong confidence in NMFR's ability to provide high-quality emergency services, staffing-related concerns emerged as one of the most significant themes throughout the survey. Respondents frequently identified workforce sustainability, staffing levels, recruitment, retention, and employee participation as important challenges facing the organization.

The findings suggest employees recognize the dedication and commitment of the current workforce but remain concerned about maintaining adequate staffing levels and preparing the organization for future service demands. Several survey results illustrate this tension. For example, while **72.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that workload is distributed appropriately across shifts and stations, only 42.6% agreed or strongly agreed that staffing levels are adequate to meet current service demands.** This suggests employees generally believe NMFR is managing current deployment and workload effectively, but have less confidence that staffing levels are sufficient or sustainable over time. Overall, employees appear supportive of efforts to strengthen recruitment, improve retention, increase workforce participation, and ensure NMFR remains adequately staffed to meet future community needs.

Current Staffing Levels

Employee perceptions regarding staffing adequacy were mixed. Only 42.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staffing levels are adequate to meet current service demands. By comparison, 25.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 31.9% remained neutral. These results suggest that employees recognize NMFR



is currently meeting operational expectations but may have concerns regarding workforce sustainability, staffing depth, workload distribution, and future service demands. The relatively high neutral response also suggests some employees may view staffing as adequate under current conditions but uncertain as call volume, service expectations, and community growth continue to evolve.

This finding is particularly important when compared with the strong operational service delivery ratings identified earlier in the report. Employees expressed very high confidence in fire suppression services, response times, deployment, and overall operational performance. The contrast suggests NMFR's current service delivery success is being achieved despite employee concerns regarding staffing capacity and long-term workforce sustainability.

Workload Distribution

Although staffing adequacy received mixed ratings, employees viewed workload distribution more positively. ***A total of 72.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that workload is distributed appropriately across shifts and stations.*** Only 8.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 19.1% remained neutral.

This finding suggests employees generally believe current shift and station assignments are functioning effectively. However, positive perceptions regarding workload distribution do not eliminate broader staffing concerns. Rather, the data indicates that employees distinguish between how existing workload is being distributed and whether staffing levels are sufficient to meet current and future demands. NMFR appears to be managing workload effectively within the current staffing model, but employees remain concerned about whether that model is sustainable.

Role Clarity and Workforce Expectations

Respondents generally indicated that organizational roles and responsibilities are understood. A total of 57.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that roles and responsibilities within the organization are clearly defined. However, 21.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and another 21.3% selected neutral. These findings suggest that while most employees understand their roles and responsibilities, opportunities remain to clarify expectations, responsibilities, and accountability in certain areas. This is particularly relevant in a fire and EMS organization where full-time staff, officers, administrative staff, and municipal partners may interact within a shared service delivery model.

Clear expectations are especially important when discussing staffing, participation, training, committee involvement, special assignments, and future workforce development. Several respondents referenced the importance of participation, accountability, and shared responsibility for organizational success.

Recruitment and Hiring Challenges

Recruitment emerged as one of the most frequently discussed workforce concerns in open-ended responses. Many respondents identified challenges associated with attracting qualified candidates, maintaining workforce participation, and competing with neighboring organizations for talent. Employees frequently referenced recruitment challenges, declining participation levels, workforce availability, and the need to prepare for future staffing demands. Several comments suggested that workforce expectations



have changed significantly over time and that NMFR will need to continue adapting recruitment strategies to remain competitive.

The survey results suggest that recruitment is not viewed as a short-term issue alone. Rather, employees appear to recognize recruitment as a long-term organizational challenge that will influence staffing capacity, succession planning, service delivery, and organizational stability.

Retention and Employee Commitment

While recruitment concerns were common, employees consistently expressed confidence in the dedication and commitment of current personnel. Across multiple sections of the survey, respondents described coworkers as professional, experienced, dedicated, and willing to support one another. At the same time, employee retention remains closely connected to communication, morale, leadership, professional development, and organizational direction. Several respondents indicated that maintaining employee engagement and retaining experienced personnel will require continued attention to workplace culture, employee involvement, recognition, and career development. Retention efforts may be strengthened through improved communication, greater employee involvement, leadership development opportunities, recognition of employee contributions, and clearer pathways for advancement and continued service.

Workforce Participation and Organizational Engagement

A recurring theme throughout the survey involved participation and engagement beyond emergency response activities. Several respondents expressed concern regarding uneven participation levels in training, committees, organizational initiatives, and special projects. Employees generally indicated a desire for broader involvement throughout the organization and suggested that participation expectations should be clearly communicated and consistently applied. These comments connect closely with survey findings regarding role clarity, accountability, communication, and leadership. The findings suggest employees value an engaged workforce and believe participation should extend beyond emergency incident response. Strengthening expectations around involvement, training, committees, mentorship, and organizational initiatives may improve shared ownership and workforce sustainability.

Preparing for Future Workforce Needs

Employees expressed concern regarding NMFR's readiness to meet future service demands. Confidence declines noticeably when employees evaluate NMFR's future readiness compared to its current operational performance. ***Only 34.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR is well-positioned to meet future service demands***, while 38.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 27.7% remained neutral. This result is one of the more important findings in the Staffing and Workforce Sustainability section. It indicates that employees are not only focused on current staffing levels but are also concerned about future organizational capacity. Respondents identified future workforce planning, succession planning, staffing models, leadership development, and service demand growth as issues that will influence NMFR's long-term success.

Similarly, only 36.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that training and professional development



opportunities meet operational needs, while 29.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 34.0% remained neutral. This suggests employees see a connection between workforce sustainability and continued investment in training, development, and preparation for future roles.

Staffing and Workforce Sustainability Summary

The Staffing and Workforce Sustainability section reveals one of the most important organizational challenges identified in the survey. While employees remain highly confident in NMFR's operational performance and service delivery capabilities, many expressed concerns regarding staffing adequacy, recruitment, workforce participation, training, and future readiness.

The data shows that employees generally believe NMFR is managing current workload distribution effectively, with 72.3% agreeing that workload is appropriately distributed. However, confidence declines when respondents evaluate staffing adequacy, future readiness, and workforce development. Only 42.6% agreed that staffing levels are adequate to meet current service demands, only 34% agreed that NMFR is well-positioned to meet future service demands, and only 36.1% agreed that training and professional development opportunities meet operational needs.

These findings suggest NMFR's workforce remains a significant organizational asset, but continued investment in recruitment, retention, employee engagement, leadership development, training, and long-term workforce planning will be essential to maintaining the high level of service that employees and the community have come to expect.

Administrative Support and Leadership

This section evaluated employee perceptions regarding human resources support, finance and budgeting processes, purchasing procedures, administrative workload, and the broader effectiveness of administrative leadership in supporting NMFR personnel and operations. Compared with the strong operational ratings identified earlier in the survey, perceptions of administrative support were noticeably more mixed. Employees generally expressed moderate confidence in HR support functions, but responses regarding finance, purchasing, and administrative workload revealed substantial uncertainty and dissatisfaction. Open-ended comments frequently referenced communication challenges, governance complexity, administrative responsiveness, and concerns regarding organizational priorities.

The findings suggest employees believe administrative functions are supporting the organization in some areas, but opportunities exist to improve communication, responsiveness, process efficiency, and alignment between administrative decisions and operational needs.



Human Resources Support

Employee perceptions of HR support were mixed but somewhat more positive than other administrative categories. A total of 34.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that HR services effectively support NMFR personnel, while 29.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 36.2% remained neutral.

The relatively large neutral response suggests many employees may have limited direct interaction with HR processes or are uncertain how to evaluate HR support. At the same time, nearly one-third of respondents expressed dissatisfaction, indicating opportunities to improve responsiveness, communication, and employee support services.

Finance and Budget Processes

Employee perceptions of finance and budget processes were generally uncertain and somewhat negative. Only 21.2% agreed or strongly agreed that finance and budget processes support operational needs, while 27.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. More than half of respondents selected neutral. These findings suggest many employees do not have enough visibility into budget processes to evaluate them confidently. However, among employees who expressed an opinion, negative responses outnumbered positive responses.

Several open-ended comments referenced concerns regarding administrative priorities, resource allocation, and the complexity of obtaining approvals within a joint governance structure.

“There are too many meetings to accomplish any goals by admin officials. Having to go through joint finance, two Mayors, two City Councils, and then if any one makes changes having to redo the process is inefficient.”

Purchasing Process Efficiency

Purchasing processes received some of the lowest ratings within the Administrative Support section. Only 21.2% of respondents viewed purchasing processes positively, while 36.2% expressed dissatisfaction. Comments suggest employees perceive purchasing as slow, overly bureaucratic, or insufficiently aligned with operational needs. Several respondents referenced delays, approval layers, and difficulty obtaining needed equipment or resources. These findings indicate purchasing efficiency may represent a meaningful opportunity for administrative process improvement.

Administrative Workload

Employee perceptions regarding administrative workload were also mixed. Only 21.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that administrative workload is reasonable, while 27.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Again, more than half of respondents selected neutral. The neutral responses likely reflect that many operational employees have limited visibility into administrative workloads. However, among those expressing an opinion, negative perceptions were more common than positive perceptions.



Communication and Leadership Themes

Open-ended comments revealed several recurring themes that extend beyond administrative processes and into broader leadership perceptions.

Common Themes

- **Communication and Accessibility:** Many respondents expressed concern about communication between administration and line personnel, leadership visibility, and responsiveness to employee concerns.

"The lack of communication, lack of understanding what we do in a day. Management is never around, they are impossible to reach if they are not here."

- **Organizational Priorities:** Several employees questioned whether administrative priorities align with operational and workforce needs.

"Too much of a focus on equipment, stations and other superficial items rather than training opportunities, educational opportunities and individual fire fighting hand equipment."

- **Decision-making and Bureaucracy:** Respondents frequently referenced the complexity of the joint governance and approval structure.

"Having to go through joint finance, two Mayors, two City Councils . is inefficient."

- **Leadership Trust and Alignment:** A smaller but notable group of respondents expressed concern regarding leadership credibility, community connection, and organizational alignment.

"The current administration do not have any ties to the cities or the communities."

Administrative Support and Leadership Summary

The Administrative Support and Leadership section reveals a meaningful gap between employee confidence in NMFR's operational performance and confidence in certain administrative processes and leadership practices. Employees generally expressed moderate confidence in HR support but considerably less confidence in finance, purchasing, and administrative workload management. The data also shows a high degree of uncertainty, with more than 40% of respondents selecting neutral for most administrative questions, suggesting limited visibility into many administrative functions.

Open-ended responses consistently emphasized communication, transparency, responsiveness, organizational priorities, and decision-making efficiency as areas requiring attention. These themes mirror findings from other sections of the survey and suggest that improvements in communication, administrative



process efficiency, leadership visibility, and organizational alignment may strengthen employee confidence in administrative support functions. The findings do not suggest deficiencies in operational performance. Rather, employees are seeking more accessible leadership, clearer communication, more efficient administrative processes, and stronger alignment between administrative decisions and operational realities.

Culture and Communication

The Culture and Communication section explored employee perceptions regarding teamwork, workplace relationships, leadership's role in shaping organizational culture, communication effectiveness, and overall employee experience within NMFR. The findings reveal a culture characterized by strong operational relationships, commitment to service, and pride in the organization. Employees frequently identified teamwork, dedication, experience, and professionalism as defining strengths of NMFR. At the same time, *communication emerged as one of the most significant organizational challenges* identified throughout the survey.

While respondents generally expressed positive perceptions regarding teamwork and collaboration among personnel, confidence declined considerably when evaluating leadership communication, organizational transparency, and communication between administration and staff. These findings mirror themes identified throughout the Organizational Effectiveness, Joint Governance, Staffing, and Administrative Support sections of the survey. Employees appear committed to NMFR's mission and value the people they work alongside. However, many respondents believe improvements in communication, transparency, and employee engagement would significantly strengthen workplace culture and organizational alignment.

Teamwork and Organizational Relationships

Teamwork emerged as one of the strongest aspects of NMFR's organizational culture. A total of 59.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is a strong sense of teamwork across the department. Only 17.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 23.4% remained neutral. Employees consistently identified coworkers, operational personnel, and the department's commitment to service as some of NMFR's greatest strengths.

Common themes included:

- Dedicated personnel.
- Strong operational teamwork.
- Experienced and knowledgeable members.
- Commitment to serving the community.
- Pride in the organization and profession.



When asked what is working well and should be preserved, many respondents highlighted the relationships among personnel and the willingness of members to support one another during emergency incidents and daily operations. These findings suggest that the foundation of NMFR's culture remains strong and is rooted in the professionalism and commitment of its workforce.

Communication Between Shifts and Stations

Employees generally expressed positive perceptions regarding communication between shifts and stations. A total of 72.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that communication between shifts and stations is effective. Only 12.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 14.9% remained neutral. These findings suggest communication challenges identified elsewhere in the survey are not primarily occurring between crews, stations, or operational personnel. *Employees generally view peer-to-peer communication positively.* This distinction is important because it indicates that operational communication systems and relationships among employees are functioning more effectively than communication between administration and staff. These findings indicate communication concerns are concentrated between administration and department personnel rather than among operational crews, shifts, or stations.

Leadership's Influence on Workplace Culture

Employee perceptions regarding leadership's role in fostering a positive work environment were mixed. Only 27.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that leadership fosters a positive work environment, while 40.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 31.9% remained neutral. These findings suggest many employees believe workplace culture is influenced by leadership practices, communication styles, and employee engagement efforts.

Several open-ended comments referenced concerns regarding leadership visibility, accessibility, responsiveness, and employee involvement in organizational decisions. Respondents frequently expressed a desire for greater interaction with leadership and more opportunities to provide input on organizational issues.

- *"Management is never around, and they are impossible to reach if they are not here."*
- *"Better communication from administration."*
- *"Lack of clear defined objectives, goals and communications from admin staff."*
- *"The administration does not seem interested in hearing concerns from the membership."*
- *"More transparency regarding decisions that affect the department."*
- *"Include personnel in discussions before major decisions are made."*
- *"There needs to be more interaction between administration and the members."*

The findings do not necessarily indicate dissatisfaction with individual leaders. Rather, they suggest employees believe stronger communication, engagement, and relationship-building efforts could positively influence workplace culture.



Communication Between Administration and Staff

Communication between administration and department personnel emerged as the lowest-rated category in the entire Culture and Communication section and one of the lowest-rated areas in the overall survey. *Only 12.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there is clear and consistent communication between fire administration and department staff.* In contrast, 74.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

This finding represents one of the clearest and most consistent themes identified throughout the survey. Employees frequently cited communication concerns in responses across multiple survey sections, including organizational effectiveness, staffing, administrative support, and workplace culture. The consistency of respondent comments suggest communication challenges are not isolated concerns but rather a recurring organizational issue that influences employee perceptions in numerous areas.

What Employees Want to Preserve

When asked what is working well within NMFR and should be preserved, several themes consistently emerged:

- Dedicated and experienced personnel.
- Strong operational teamwork.
- Commitment to public service.
- High-quality emergency response.
- Pride in the organization.
- Positive relationships among coworkers.
- Professionalism and operational competence.

These findings reinforce the positive ratings associated with teamwork and operational effectiveness. Employees clearly value the people they work with and the services they provide to the community.

What Employees Believe Would Improve Workplace Culture

When asked what would improve workplace culture, communication was the most frequently identified theme.

- Improve communication and transparency.
- Increase leadership visibility and accessibility.
- Improve employee involvement in decision-making.
- Establish clearer organizational priorities and expectations.
- Increase trust between administration and staff.
- Improve consistency and follow-through.
- Strengthen collaboration across the organization.



Notably, many of these recommendations align closely with findings identified in previous sections of the survey. This consistency suggests employees view communication and organizational alignment as foundational issues that influence many aspects of the workplace experience.

Culture and Communication Summary

The Culture and Communication section presents a clear contrast between the strengths and challenges within NMFR's organizational culture. Employees expressed strong confidence in their coworkers, operational teamwork, and commitment to service. Teamwork and communication between shifts and stations received generally positive ratings, and respondents consistently identified dedicated personnel and strong operational relationships as organizational strengths worth preserving.

At the same time, communication between administration and staff emerged as one of the most significant concerns identified in the survey. Nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that communication between administration and personnel is not clear and consistent, while perceptions regarding leadership's role in fostering a positive work environment were also mixed.

Overall, the findings suggest NMFR benefits from a strong workforce culture built on professionalism, teamwork, and service. Future improvement efforts should focus on strengthening communication, increasing leadership visibility, improving transparency, and creating additional opportunities for employee engagement and involvement. Addressing these themes may significantly improve organizational alignment, employee trust, and overall workplace culture.

Future Outlook and Strategic Direction

The Future Outlook and Strategic Direction section explored employee perceptions regarding NMFR's readiness to meet future service demands, adapt to changing community needs, and effectively plan for the future. Respondents were also asked to identify priorities, challenges, and strategic considerations that should guide the organization over the next five to ten years.

The findings reveal a workforce that remains confident in NMFR's operational capabilities but less certain about the organization's long-term preparedness and strategic direction. Employees generally recognize that fire and EMS service delivery is evolving and that NMFR must continue adapting to changing community expectations, workforce trends, staffing challenges, and increasing EMS demand.

Throughout the survey, respondents consistently identified staffing, EMS service delivery, training, leadership development, and workforce sustainability as critical issues that will influence the department's future success. Many employees expressed a desire for more proactive planning, clearer strategic priorities, and greater employee involvement in shaping the organization's future direction.



Overall, the findings suggest employees are committed to NMFR's future and recognize the need for continued investment in people, services, and organizational development to maintain the high level of service currently provided to the communities of Neenah and Menasha.

Readiness for Future Growth and Demand

Employee perceptions regarding NMFR's preparedness for future growth and service demands were mixed. Only 31.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR is well-prepared for future growth and demand, while 38.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Nearly one-third of respondents remained neutral.

These findings indicate that many employees are uncertain whether current staffing levels, service models, facilities, and organizational structures are sufficient to meet future community needs. While employees generally expressed confidence in current operations, there appears to be less confidence regarding the organization's long-term readiness. Several respondents specifically referenced concerns regarding staffing sustainability, future workload demands, workforce participation, and organizational planning.

Adapting to Changing Service Demands

Employees generally acknowledged that NMFR is adapting to changing service demands, although perceptions were far from unanimous. A total of 46.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that NMFR is adapting to changing service needs, while 42.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. These responses suggest employees recognize efforts to evolve the organization but remain divided regarding whether those efforts are occurring quickly enough or are focused on the right priorities.

The most common future-focused comments centered on EMS service delivery, workforce development, and staffing capacity. Many respondents specifically identified higher levels of EMS care, paramedic services, and ambulance transport as future priorities. Representative comments included:

- *"Increase EMS response levels. Paramedic engines at a minimum."*
- *"EMS. Going to paramedic engines and then NMFR ambulance."*
- *"Higher level of EMS care."*
- *"Increasing staffing levels to include starting paramedic ambulance service."*

These comments suggest employees view EMS evolution as one of the most significant strategic opportunities facing NMFR.

Long-Term Planning

Long-term planning emerged as one of the weakest-rated areas within the Future Outlook section. Only 17.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that long-term planning is effective. In contrast, 36.2%



disagreed or strongly disagreed, while nearly half of all respondents remained neutral. The high neutral response suggests many employees may not have visibility into long-term planning efforts or strategic discussions. However, the relatively low positive response indicates that employees would benefit from greater communication regarding organizational goals, future initiatives, and strategic priorities.

This finding aligns closely with survey themes identified throughout other sections related to communication, leadership visibility, organizational transparency, and employee involvement.

Strategic Priorities for the Next Five to Ten Years

When asked to identify NMFR's most important priorities for the future, several themes emerged consistently:

- **Staffing Increases:** Staffing was the most frequently identified future priority. Employees consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining adequate staffing levels, increasing workforce capacity, and ensuring the department remains positioned to meet future service demands.
- **EMS Expansion and Transport Services:** EMS service delivery emerged as another dominant theme. Numerous respondents advocated for expanded EMS capabilities, paramedic-level services, and evaluation of ambulance transport operations.
- **Training and Professional Development:** Employees frequently emphasized the importance of training, officer development, leadership development, and preparing future generations of firefighters and EMS providers.
- **Equipment and Apparatus Investment:** Several respondents identified apparatus replacement, equipment modernization, and capital investments as important long-term priorities.
- **Organizational Development:** A smaller but notable group of respondents identified governance, organizational structure, leadership development, and decision-making processes as priorities for future evaluation.

What Employees Believe Should Change

When asked to identify the single most important change NMFR should consider for the future, several themes emerged repeatedly. The most common recommendation involved advancing EMS capabilities. Employees frequently suggested:

- Paramedic engine staffing.
- Ambulance transport services.
- Higher levels of EMS care.
- Increased EMS training and specialization.

Many respondents emphasized the importance of adding personnel, improving workforce sustainability, and reducing firefighter burnout. Examples included:



- Staffing increase.
- Adding personnel for a Heavy Rescue or Ambulance.
- Future growth and firefighter burnout.
- Leadership Development and Employee Involvement

Several respondents emphasized developing internal leaders and increasing employee involvement in organizational decisions. One respondent noted: “The men and women on the line are the future of the department. Focus on developing the staff you have.” Others advocated for greater involvement of line personnel in hiring, strategic planning, and organizational decision-making.

Additional Concerns Identified by Employees

When provided an opportunity to identify concerns not addressed elsewhere in the survey, several recurring themes emerged. *Employees frequently referenced concerns regarding trust, communication, and relationships between administration and personnel.* Representative comments included:

- “The morale and culture at this department need to be addressed ASAP.”
- “Admins unwillingness to seek out and take input from line staff.”
- “There has been a degradation in the relationship between firefighters, administration, and the cities.”

Several respondents expressed concern that employee feedback may not be acted upon and emphasized the importance of involving line personnel in future decisions. One respondent stated:

- “The concern I have is that none of the concerns addressed on this survey will be acted upon.”

Another commented:

- “Line staff should have a bigger role in the hiring process.”

These comments reinforce themes identified throughout the survey regarding communication, transparency, trust, and employee engagement.

Employees remain highly confident in NMFR’s current operational capabilities but express significantly less confidence regarding future staffing, workforce sustainability, EMS growth, and organizational preparedness. This contrast suggests future planning and communication regarding long-term priorities represent important opportunities for leadership.

Future Outlook and Strategic Direction Summary

This section reveals a workforce that is focused on the future and invested in NMFR’s long-term success. Employees generally expressed confidence in the department’s current operational capabilities but less confidence in the organization’s preparedness for future growth, long-term planning efforts, and workforce sustainability. The most significant future priorities identified by employees include staffing increases, EMS expansion, training and professional development, workforce sustainability, and continued investment in equipment and infrastructure. Many respondents specifically advocated for expanded EMS capabilities, increased staffing, and greater investment in developing future leaders within the organization.



At the same time, employees emphasized the importance of improving communication, strengthening trust, increasing employee involvement, and clearly articulating a strategic vision for the future. Collectively, these findings suggest employees are eager to contribute to NMFR's continued success and want greater visibility into how the organization plans to address future challenges and opportunities.

Overall, the survey findings indicate that NMFR possesses a strong operational foundation and a committed workforce. Continued investment in strategic planning, workforce development, EMS evolution, and organizational communication will be critical to ensuring the department remains prepared to meet the changing needs of the communities it serves over the next decade and beyond.

Conclusion

The Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue (NMFR) Employee Survey and accompanying interviews provide a comprehensive assessment of the organization's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Employees from across the organization shared candid feedback regarding operations, leadership, governance, staffing, workplace culture, and future priorities. The consistency between survey responses and individual interviews strengthens the reliability of the findings and highlights several clear organizational themes.

NMFR operates from a position of considerable strength. Employees expressed overwhelming confidence in the department's ability to provide high-quality fire suppression services, effective emergency response, and professional service to the community. Teamwork, operational competence, dedication to public service, and pride in the organization emerged as defining strengths throughout the assessment. These perceptions are reinforced by NMFR's distinguished ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating, an achievement attained by only a small percentage of fire departments nationwide. This designation reflects the department's commitment to excellence in emergency response, training, staffing, communications, and community protection and serves as objective evidence of the high level of service being delivered. Few organizations receive such strong validation of operational excellence while simultaneously receiving such clear feedback regarding opportunities for communication and organizational alignment. This contrast illustrates that NMFR's greatest opportunities for improvement are organizational rather than operational.

The assessment also identified several areas requiring continued attention. Staffing sustainability, workforce development, EMS service delivery, administrative processes, leadership development, and long-term planning emerged as recurring themes. Employees recognize the evolving challenges facing the fire and EMS profession and understand the importance of preparing the organization for future service demands.

Communication emerged as the most significant and consistent opportunity for improvement. Employees raised communication concerns across nearly every section of the survey and interview process. Respondents expressed a desire for greater transparency, more frequent communication regarding organizational priorities, increased visibility into decision-making processes, and stronger engagement



between leadership and personnel. Employees want to understand not only what decisions are being made, but also the rationale behind those decisions and how they support the department's mission and long-term objectives.

Strategic communication represents the single greatest opportunity to strengthen organizational alignment moving forward. Effective communication builds trust, improves transparency, supports employee engagement, and creates a shared understanding of organizational priorities. Improvements in communication will have a positive impact on many of the challenges identified throughout this report, including morale, workforce engagement, leadership visibility, organizational trust, and change management.

The assessment revealed a workforce that cares deeply about the future of NMFR. Employees offered constructive feedback, thoughtful recommendations, and a genuine willingness to contribute to organizational improvement efforts. NMFR possesses the people, operational capabilities, and organizational foundation necessary for continued success. The department's distinguished ISO Class 1 Public Protection Classification rating reflects the exceptional level of service provided to the communities of Neenah and Menasha and reinforces NMFR's reputation as one of Wisconsin's premier fire and EMS organizations. By building upon these strengths while prioritizing communication, workforce development, employee engagement, and long-term planning, NMFR will be well-positioned to continue delivering exceptional service and meeting the evolving needs of the communities it serves.



Innovative Public Advisors



DRAFT Position Description Assistant Chief of Administration

This is a management position responsible for the development, coordination, and administration of the department's logistics, fleet and apparatus management, equipment replacement, facilities coordination, communications, and organizational support functions. The position serves as a strategic liaison between executive leadership and department personnel, ensuring consistent, timely, and transparent communication across all shifts, all stations, and all levels of the organization.

The Assistant Chief of Administration is responsible for managing the lifecycle of department apparatus and equipment, coordinating repairs and maintenance, developing long-range replacement plans, overseeing logistics during major incidents and special projects, and supporting operational readiness.

The position requires a considerable degree of independent judgment and includes participation in the formulation, determination, and implementation of departmental policies and strategic initiatives. This position possesses effective authority to commit department resources necessary to achieve program goals, supervises assigned personnel and projects, coordinates with municipal departments and outside vendors, and represents the department on matters related to logistics, communications, and organizational initiatives.

This position works under the direction of the Fire Chief with supervision by the Deputy Chief of Operations.

ESSENTIAL JOB DUTIES

The following duties are representative of this position and are not intended to be all-inclusive.

- Develop, implement, and administer the department's logistics and resource management program.
- Coordinate the maintenance, repair, testing, and replacement of fire apparatus, emergency response vehicles, and specialized equipment.
- Develop long-range apparatus and equipment replacement plans, including capital improvement recommendations.
- Coordinate purchasing, inventory management, equipment specifications, and vendor relationships.
- Oversee department facilities, station equipment, furnishings, and operational support resources.
- Coordinate department fleet maintenance schedules and ensure operational readiness of emergency response equipment.
- Develop and maintain departmental inventory control systems.
- Serve as the department's communications liaison between executive leadership and department personnel.

- Coordinate department-wide communication initiatives to ensure consistent messaging across all shifts, stations, and divisions.
- Develop communication strategies that improve employee awareness of organizational priorities, operational updates, policy changes, and strategic initiatives.
- Facilitate two-way communication by gathering employee feedback and communicating operational concerns to executive leadership.
- Coordinate internal newsletters, video updates, briefing materials, digital communication platforms, and other communication tools.
- Support organizational change initiatives through structured communication planning.
- Coordinate logistics during major incidents, planned events, emergency activations, and special operations.
- Develop policies, procedures, and standard operating guidelines related to logistics and communications.
- Prepare and administer assigned operating and capital budgets.
- Analyze operational data and equipment performance to support strategic planning and budget development.
- Conduct performance evaluations of assigned personnel.
- Represent the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief of Operations on committees, regional workgroups, and municipal projects as assigned.
- Serve as Shift Commander as needed and when directed.
- Maintain required emergency response certifications and operational competencies.

ADDITIONAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assist with strategic planning initiatives.
- Coordinate grant-funded equipment purchases and reporting requirements.
- Develop reports and presentations for the Fire Chief, governing bodies, and partner agencies.
- Recommend revisions to departmental policies and standard operating procedures.
- Participate in department accreditation, ISO activities, and organizational improvement initiatives.
- Assist with emergency management planning and continuity of operations.
- Coordinate intergovernmental equipment sharing and regional logistics initiatives.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Associate's degree in Fire Science or relevant field, Bachelor's degree preferred.
- Five years progressively responsible fire service supervisory experience required.
- Wisconsin Firefighter I, Wisconsin Firefighter II, Driver/Operator-Pumper, Driver/Operator – Aerial,
- Wisconsin Fire Officer I certifications and Wisconsin Fire Instructor I and Wisconsin Fire Instructor II upon hire.
- Wisconsin Fire Officer II and Wisconsin Fire Instructor III required within 18 months of hire.
- National Registry Emergency Medical Responder.
- Employees with equivalent out of state certifications must receive the Wisconsin certifications within 12 months of hire.
- NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400, and 700 certifications must be completed within 9 months of hire.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The successful candidate demonstrates the ability to:

- Lead complex organizational initiatives and manage multiple priorities.
- Develop effective communication strategies for internal and external stakeholders.
- Build trust and credibility across all levels of the organization.
- Manage fleet, apparatus, equipment, facilities, and capital assets.
- Assist in the development of operating and capital budgets.
- Analyze operational data and recommend strategic improvements.
- Negotiate with vendors and contractors.
- Prepare clear written reports and professional presentations.
- Communicate effectively with employees, elected officials, municipal departments, vendors, and community partners.
- Foster collaboration and employee engagement throughout the organization.
- Exercise sound judgment in emergency and administrative situations.
- Manage organizational change while maintaining positive employee relationships.

SUPERVISORY CONROLS

- Under the direction of the Deputy Fire Chief, performs assignments in alignment with departmental goals and objectives with limited oversight.

GUIDELINES

- Guidelines include city policies and procedures; department standard operating procedures; city, state, and federal statutes, codes, and regulations; collective bargaining agreements, and other regulatory agencies. These guidelines are not always generally clear and specific and require regular interpretation in application based on the situation.

PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS

- Contacts are typically with vendors, contractors, developers, Council, Department Heads, coworkers, other city personnel, citizens, media, and the general public.
- Contacts are typically to give or exchange information, to resolve problems, make and/or influence decisions and to provide services.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Ability to operate a variety of equipment such as computer terminal, phone and fax machine.
- Ability to perform under conditions involving danger, requiring physical effort.
- Use proper methods while using tools or equipment.

**Public Protection Classification
(PPC®)
Summary Report**

Neenah Menasha FPSA

WISCONSIN

Prepared by

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Background Information

Introduction

ISO collects and evaluates information from communities in the United States on their structure fire suppression capabilities. The data is analyzed using our Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) and then a Public Protection Classification (PPC®) grade is assigned to the community. The surveys are conducted whenever it appears that there is a possibility of a PPC change. As such, the PPC program provides important, up-to-date information about fire protection services throughout the country.

The FSRS recognizes fire protection features only as they relate to suppression of first alarm structure fires. In many communities, fire suppression may be only a small part of the fire department's overall responsibility. ISO recognizes the dynamic and comprehensive duties of a community's fire service, and understands the complex decisions a community must make in planning and delivering emergency services. However, in developing a community's PPC grade, only features related to reducing property losses from structural fires are evaluated. Multiple alarms, simultaneous incidents and life safety are not considered in this evaluation. The PPC program evaluates the fire protection for small to average size buildings. Specific properties with a Needed Fire Flow in excess of 3,500 gpm are evaluated separately and assigned an individual PPC grade.

A community's investment in fire mitigation is a proven and reliable predictor of future fire losses. Statistical data on insurance losses bears out the relationship between excellent fire protection – as measured by the PPC program – and low fire losses. So, insurance companies use PPC information for marketing, underwriting, and to help establish fair premiums for homeowners and commercial fire insurance. In general, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good PPC grade is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC grade, assuming all other factors are equal.

ISO is an independent company that serves insurance companies, communities, fire departments, insurance regulators, and others by providing information about risk. ISO's expert staff collects information about municipal fire suppression efforts in communities throughout the United States. In each of those communities, ISO analyzes the relevant data and assigns a PPC grade – a number from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents an exemplary fire suppression program, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

ISO's PPC program evaluates communities according to a uniform set of criteria, incorporating nationally recognized standards developed by the National Fire Protection Association and the American Water Works Association. A community's PPC grade depends on:

- **Needed Fire Flows**, which are representative building locations used to determine the theoretical amount of water necessary for fire suppression purposes.
- **Emergency Communications**, including emergency reporting, telecommunicators, and dispatching systems.
- **Fire Department**, including equipment, staffing, training, geographic distribution of fire companies, operational considerations, and community risk reduction.
- **Water Supply**, including inspection and flow testing of hydrants, alternative water supply operations, and a careful evaluation of the amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires up to 3,500 gpm.

Data Collection and Analysis

ISO has evaluated and classified over 39,000 fire protection areas across the United States using its FSRs. A combination of meetings between trained ISO field representatives and the dispatch center coordinator, community fire official, and water superintendent is used in conjunction with a comprehensive questionnaire to collect the data necessary to determine the PPC grade. In order for a community to obtain a grade better than a Class 9, three elements of fire suppression features are reviewed. These three elements are Emergency Communications, Fire Department, and Water Supply.

A review of the **Emergency Communications** accounts for 10% of the total classification. This section is weighted at **10 points**, as follows:

- Emergency Reporting 3 points
- Telecommunicators 4 points
- Dispatch Circuits 3 points

A review of the **Fire Department** accounts for 50% of the total classification. ISO focuses on a fire department's first alarm response and initial attack to minimize potential loss. The fire department section is weighted at **50 points**, as follows:

- Engine Companies 6 points
- Reserve Pumpers 0.5 points
- Pump Capacity 3 points
- Ladder/Service Companies 4 points
- Reserve Ladder/Service Trucks 0.5 points
- Deployment Analysis 10 points
- Company Personnel 15 points
- Training 9 points
- Operational considerations 2 points
- Community Risk Reduction 5.5 points (in addition to the 50 points above)

A review of the **Water Supply** system accounts for 40% of the total classification. ISO reviews the water supply a community uses to determine the adequacy for fire suppression purposes. The water supply system is weighted at **40 points**, as follows:

- Credit for Supply System 30 points
- Hydrant Size, Type & Installation 3 points
- Inspection & Flow Testing of Hydrants 7 points

There is one additional factor considered in calculating the final score – **Divergence**.

Even the best fire department will be less than fully effective if it has an inadequate water supply. Similarly, even a superior water supply will be less than fully effective if the fire department lacks the equipment or personnel to use the water. The FSRs score is subject to modification by a divergence factor, which recognizes disparity between the effectiveness of the fire department and the water supply.

The Divergence factor mathematically reduces the score based upon the relative difference between the fire department and water supply scores. The factor is introduced in the final equation.

PPC Grade

The PPC grade assigned to the community will depend on the community's score on a 100-point scale:

PPC	Points
1	90.00 or more
2	80.00 to 89.99
3	70.00 to 79.99
4	60.00 to 69.99
5	50.00 to 59.99
6	40.00 to 49.99
7	30.00 to 39.99
8	20.00 to 29.99
9	10.00 to 19.99
10	0.00 to 9.99

The classification numbers are interpreted as follows:

- Class 1 through (and including) Class 8 represents a fire suppression system that includes an FSRs creditable dispatch center, fire department, and water supply.
- Class 8B is a special classification that recognizes a superior level of fire protection in otherwise Class 9 areas. It is designed to represent a fire protection delivery system that is superior except for a lack of a water supply system capable of the minimum FSRs fire flow criteria of 250 gpm for 2 hours.
- Class 9 is a fire suppression system that includes a creditable dispatch center, fire department but no FSRs creditable water supply.
- Class 10 does not meet minimum FSRs criteria for recognition, including areas that are beyond five road miles of a recognized fire station.

New PPC program changes effective July 1, 2014

We have revised the PPC program to capture the effects of enhanced fire protection capabilities that reduce fire loss and fire severity in Split Class 9 and Split Class 8B areas (as outlined below). This new structure benefits the fire service, community, and property owner.

New classifications

Through ongoing research and loss experience analysis, we identified additional differentiation in fire loss experience within our PPC program, which resulted in the revised classifications. We based the differing fire loss experience on the fire suppression capabilities of each community. The new PPC classes will improve the predictive value for insurers while benefiting both commercial and residential property owners. Here are the new classifications and what they mean.

Split classifications

When we develop a split classification for a community — for example 5/9 — the first number is the class that applies to properties within 5 road miles of the responding fire station and 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply, such as a fire hydrant, suction point, or dry hydrant. The second number is the class that applies to properties within 5 road miles of a fire station but beyond 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. We have revised the classification to reflect more precisely the risk of loss in a community, replacing Class 9 and 8B in the second part of a split classification with revised designations.

What's changed with the new classifications?

We've published the new classifications as "X" and "Y" — formerly the "9" and "8B" portion of the split classification, respectively. For example:

- A community currently displayed as a split 6/9 classification will now be a split 6/6X classification; with the "6X" denoting what was formerly classified as "9".
- Similarly, a community currently graded as a split 6/8B classification will now be a split 6/6Y classification, the "6Y" denoting what was formerly classified as "8B".
- Communities graded with single "9" or "8B" classifications will remain intact.

Prior Classification	New Classification
1/9	1/1X
2/9	2/2X
3/9	3/3X
4/9	4/4X
5/9	5/5X
6/9	6/6X
7/9	7/7X
8/9	8/8X
9	9

Prior Classification	New Classification
1/8B	1/1Y
2/8B	2/2Y
3/8B	3/3Y
4/8B	4/4Y
5/8B	5/5Y
6/8B	6/6Y
7/8B	7/7Y
8/8B	8/8Y
8B	8B

What's changed?

As you can see, we're still maintaining split classes, but it's how we represent them to insurers that's changed. The new designations reflect a reduction in fire severity and loss and have the potential to reduce property insurance premiums.

Benefits of the revised split class designations

- To the fire service, the revised designations identify enhanced fire suppression capabilities used throughout the fire protection area
- To the community, the new classes reward a community's fire suppression efforts by showing a more reflective designation
- To the individual property owner, the revisions offer the potential for decreased property insurance premiums

New water class

Our data also shows that risks located more than 5 but less than 7 road miles from a responding fire station with a creditable water source within 1,000 feet had better loss experience than those farther than 5 road miles from a responding fire station with no creditable water source. We've introduced a new classification —10W— to recognize the reduced loss potential of such properties.

What's changed with Class 10W?

Class 10W is property-specific. Not all properties in the 5-to-7-mile area around the responding fire station will qualify. The difference between Class 10 and 10W is that the 10W-graded risk or property is within 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. Creditable water supplies include fire protection systems using hauled water in any of the split classification areas.

What's the benefit of Class 10W?

10W gives credit to risks within 5 to 7 road miles of the responding fire station and within 1,000 feet of a creditable water supply. That's reflective of the potential for reduced property insurance premiums.

What does the fire chief have to do?

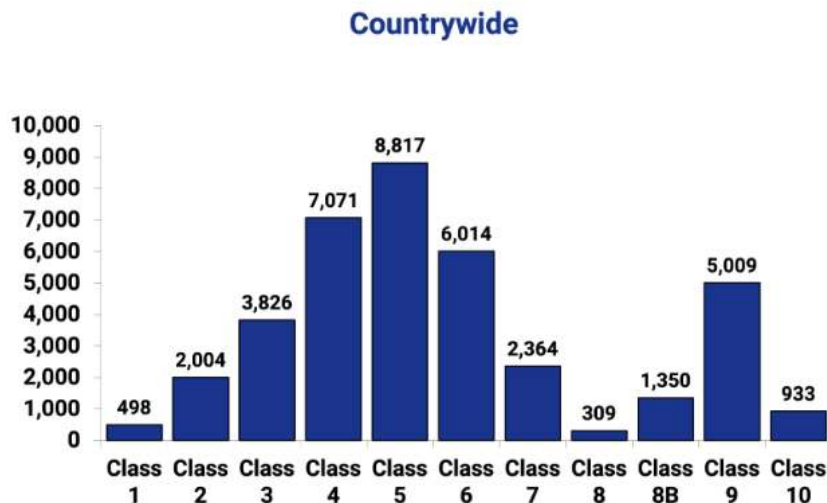
Fire chiefs don't have to do anything at all. The revised classifications went in place automatically effective July 1, 2014 (July 1, 2015 for Texas).

What if I have additional questions?

Feel free to contact ISO at 800.444.4554 or email us at PPC-Cust-Serv@iso.com.

Distribution of PPC Grades

The 2023 published countrywide distribution of communities by the PPC grade is as follows:



Assistance

The PPC program offers help to communities, fire departments, and other public officials as they plan for, budget, and justify improvements. ISO is also available to assist in the understanding of the details of this evaluation.

The PPC program representatives can be reached by telephone at (800) 444-4554. The technical specialists at this telephone number have access to the details of this evaluation and can effectively speak with you about your questions regarding the PPC program. What's more, we can be reached via the internet at www.isomitigation.com/talk/.

We also have a website dedicated to our Community Hazard Mitigation Classification programs at www.isomitigation.com. Here, fire chiefs, building code officials, community leaders and other interested citizens can access a wealth of data describing the criteria used in evaluating how cities and towns are protecting residents from fire and other natural hazards. This website will allow you to learn more about the PPC program. The website provides important background information, insights about the PPC grading processes and technical documents. ISO is also pleased to offer Fire Chiefs Online — a special, secured website with information and features that can help improve your PPC grade, including a list of the Needed Fire Flows for all the commercial occupancies ISO has on file for your community. Visitors to the site can download information, see statistical results and also contact ISO for assistance.

In addition, on-line access to the FSRs and its commentaries is available to registered customers for a fee. However, fire chiefs and community chief administrative officials are given access privileges to this information without charge.

To become a registered fire chief or community chief administrative official, register at www.isomitigation.com.

PPC Review

ISO concluded its review of the fire suppression features being provided for Neenah Menasha FPSA. The resulting community classification is **Class 01/1X**.

If the classification is a single class, the classification applies to properties with a Needed Fire Flow of 3,500 gpm or less in the community. If the classification is a split class (e.g., 6/XX):

- The first class (e.g., “6” in a 6/XX) applies to properties within 5 road miles of a recognized fire station and within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant or alternate water supply.
- The second class (XX or XY) applies to properties beyond 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant but within 5 road miles of a recognized fire station.
- Alternative Water Supply: The first class (e.g., “6” in a 6/10) applies to properties within 5 road miles of a recognized fire station with no hydrant distance requirement.
- Class 10 applies to properties over 5 road miles of a recognized fire station.
- Class 10W applies to properties within 5 to 7 road miles of a recognized fire station with a recognized water supply within 1,000 feet.
- Specific properties with a Needed Fire Flow in excess of 3,500 gpm are evaluated separately and assigned an individual classification.

FSTRS Feature	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Emergency Communications		
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	3.00	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	4.00	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.85	3
440. Credit for Emergency Communications	9.85	10
Fire Department		
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6.00	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.50	0.50
532. Credit for Pump Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4.00	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.00	0.50
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	9.28	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	9.43	15
581. Credit for Training	8.67	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
590. Credit for Fire Department	42.88	50
Water Supply		
616. Credit for Supply System	29.85	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	3.00	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	6.26	7
640. Credit for Water Supply	39.11	40
Divergence	-2.40	--
1050. Community Risk Reduction	5.04	5.50
Total Credit	94.48	105.50

Emergency Communications

Ten percent of a community's overall score is based on how well the communications center receives and dispatches fire alarms. Our field representative evaluated:

- Communications facilities provided for the general public to report structure fires
- Enhanced 9-1-1 Telephone Service including wireless
- Computer-aided dispatch (CAD) facilities
- Alarm receipt and processing at the communication center
- Training and certification of telecommunicators
- Facilities used to dispatch fire department companies to reported structure fires

	Earned Credit	Credit Available
414. Credit Emergency Reporting	3.00	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	4.00	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.85	3
Item 440. Credit for Emergency Communications:	9.85	10

Item 414 - Credit for Emergency Reporting (3 points)

The first item reviewed is Item 414 "Credit for Emergency Reporting (CER)". This item reviews the emergency communication center facilities provided for the public to report fires including 911 systems (Basic or Enhanced), Wireless Phase I and Phase II, Voice over Internet Protocol, Computer Aided Dispatch and Geographic Information Systems for automatic vehicle location. ISO uses National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1221, *Standard for the Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems* as the reference for this section.

Item 410. Emergency Reporting (CER)	Earned Credit	Credit Available
A./B. Basic 9-1-1, Enhanced 9-1-1 or No 9-1-1 For maximum credit, there should be an Enhanced 9-1-1 system, Basic 9-1-1 and No 9-1-1 will receive partial credit.	20.00	20
1. E9-1-1 Wireless Wireless Phase I using Static ALI (automatic location identification) Functionality (10 points); Wireless Phase II using Dynamic ALI Functionality (15 points); Both available will be 25 points	25.00	25
2. E9-1-1 Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Static VoIP using Static ALI Functionality (10 points); Nomadic VoIP using Dynamic ALI Functionality (15 points); Both available will be 25 points	25.00	25
3. Computer Aided Dispatch Basic CAD (5 points); CAD with Management Information System (5 points); CAD with Interoperability (5 points)	15.00	15
4. Geographic Information System (GIS/AVL) <u>The PSAP uses</u> a fully integrated CAD/GIS management system with automatic vehicle location (AVL) integrated with a CAD system providing dispatch assignments. The individual fire departments being dispatched <u>do not</u> need GIS/AVL capability to obtain this credit.	15.00	15
Review of Emergency Reporting total:	100.00	100

Item 422- Credit for Telecommunicators (4 points)

The second item reviewed is Item 422 "Credit for Telecommunicators (TC)". This item reviews the number of Telecommunicators on duty at the center to handle fire calls and other emergencies. All emergency calls including those calls that do not require fire department action are reviewed to determine the proper staffing to answer emergency calls and dispatch the appropriate emergency response. The 2013 Edition of NFPA 1221, *Standard for the Installation, Maintenance and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems*, recommends that ninety-five percent of emergency calls shall be answered within 15 seconds and ninety-nine percent of emergency calls shall be answered within 40 seconds. In addition, NFPA recommends that eighty percent of emergency alarm processing shall be completed within 60 seconds and ninety-five percent of alarm processing shall be completed within 106 seconds of answering the call.

To receive full credit for operators on duty, ISO must review documentation to show that the communication center meets NFPA 1221 call answering and dispatch time performance measurement standards. This documentation may be in the form of performance statistics or other performance measurements compiled by the 9-1-1 software or other software programs that are currently in use such as Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or Management Information System (MIS).

Item 420. Telecommunicators (CTC)	Earned Credit	Credit Available
A1. Alarm Receipt (AR) Receipt of alarms shall meet the requirements in accordance with the criteria of NFPA 1221	20.00	20
A2. Alarm Processing (AP) Processing of alarms shall meet the requirements in accordance with the criteria of NFPA 1221	20.00	20
B. Emergency Dispatch Protocols (EDP) Telecommunicators have emergency dispatch protocols (EDP) containing questions and a decision-support process to facilitate correct call categorization and prioritization.	20.00	20
C. Telecommunicator Training and Certification (TTC) Telecommunicators meet the qualification requirements referenced in NFPA 1061, <i>Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Safety Telecommunicator</i> , and/or the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials - International (APCO) <i>Project 33</i> . Telecommunicators are certified in the knowledge, skills, and abilities corresponding to their job functions.	20.00	20
D. Telecommunicator Continuing Education and Quality Assurance (TQA) Telecommunicators participate in continuing education and/or in-service training and quality-assurance programs as appropriate for their positions	20.00	20
Review of Telecommunicators total:	100.00	100

Item 432 - Credit for Dispatch Circuits (3 points)

The third item reviewed is Item 432 “Credit for Dispatch Circuits (CDC)”. This item reviews the dispatch circuit facilities used to transmit alarms to fire department members. A “Dispatch Circuit” is defined in NFPA 1221 as “A circuit over which an alarm is transmitted from the communications center to an emergency response facility (ERF) or emergency response units (ERUs) to notify ERUs to respond to an emergency”. All fire departments (except single fire station departments with full-time firefighter personnel receiving alarms directly at the fire station) need adequate means of notifying all firefighter personnel of the location of reported structure fires. The dispatch circuit facilities should be in accordance with the general criteria of NFPA 1221. “Alarms” are defined in this Standard as “A signal or message from a person or device indicating the existence of an emergency or other situation that requires action by an emergency response agency”.

There are two different levels of dispatch circuit facilities provided for in the Standard – a primary dispatch circuit and a secondary dispatch circuit. In jurisdictions that receive 730 alarms or more per year (average of two alarms per 24-hour period), two separate and dedicated dispatch circuits, a primary and a secondary, are needed. In jurisdictions receiving fewer than 730 alarms per year, a second dedicated dispatch circuit is not needed. Dispatch circuit facilities installed but not used or tested (in accordance with the NFPA Standard) receive no credit.

The score for Credit for Dispatch Circuits (CDC) is influenced by monitoring for integrity of the primary dispatch circuit. There are up to 0.90 points available for this Item. Monitoring for integrity involves installing automatic systems that will detect faults and failures and send visual and audible indications to appropriate communications center (or dispatch center) personnel. ISO uses NFPA 1221 to guide the evaluation of this item. ISO's evaluation also includes a review of the communication system's emergency power supplies.

Item 432 “Credit for Dispatch Circuits (CDC)” = 2.85 points

Fire Department

Fifty percent of a community's overall score is based upon the fire department's structure fire suppression system. ISO's field representative evaluated:

- Engine and ladder/service vehicles including reserve apparatus
- Equipment carried
- Response to reported structure fires
- Deployment analysis of companies
- Available and/or responding firefighters
- Training

	Earned Credit	Credit Available
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6.00	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.50	0.5
532. Credit for Pumper Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4.00	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.00	0.5
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	9.28	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	9.43	15
581. Credit for Training	8.67	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
Item 590. Credit for Fire Department:	42.88	50

Basic Fire Flow

The Basic Fire Flow for the community is determined by the review of the Needed Fire Flows for selected buildings in the community. The fifth largest Needed Fire Flow is determined to be the Basic Fire Flow. The Basic Fire Flow has been determined to be 3500 gpm.

Item 513 - Credit for Engine Companies (6 points)

The first item reviewed is Item 513 "Credit for Engine Companies (CEC)". This item reviews the number of engine companies, their pump capacity, hose testing, pump testing and the equipment carried on the in-service pumpers. To be recognized, pumper apparatus must meet the general criteria of NFPA 1901, *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* which include a minimum 250 gpm pump, an emergency warning system, a 300 gallon water tank, and hose. At least 1 apparatus must have a permanently mounted pump rated at 750 gpm or more at 150 psi.

The review of the number of needed pumpers considers the response distance to built-upon areas; the Basic Fire Flow; and the method of operation. Multiple alarms, simultaneous incidents, and life safety are not considered.

The greatest value of A, B, or C below is needed in the fire district to suppress fires in structures with a Needed Fire Flow of 3,500 gpm or less: **4 engine companies**

- a) **4 engine companies** to provide fire suppression services to areas to meet NFPA 1710 criteria or within 1½ miles.
- b) **3 engine companies** to support a Basic Fire Flow of 3500 gpm.
- c) **4 engine companies** based upon the fire department's method of operation to provide a minimum two engine response to all first alarm structure fires.

The FSRS recognizes that there are **4 engine companies** in service.

The FSRS also reviews Automatic Aid. Automatic Aid is considered in the review as assistance dispatched automatically by contractual agreement between two communities or fire districts. That differs from mutual aid or assistance arranged case by case. ISO will recognize an Automatic Aid plan under the following conditions:

- It must be prearranged for first alarm response according to a definite plan. It is preferable to have a written agreement, but ISO may recognize demonstrated performance.
- The aid must be dispatched to all reported structure fires on the initial alarm.
- The aid must be provided 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

FSRS Item 512.D "Automatic Aid Engine Companies" responding on first alarm and meeting the needs of the city for basic fire flow and/or distribution of companies are factored based upon the value of the Automatic Aid plan (up to 1.00 can be used as the factor). The Automatic Aid factor is determined by a review of the Automatic Aid provider's communication facilities, how they receive alarms from the graded area, inter-department training between fire departments, and the fire ground communications capability between departments.

For each engine company, the credited Pump Capacity (PC), the Hose Carried (HC), the Equipment Carried (EC) all contribute to the calculation for the percent of credit the FSRS provides to that engine company.

Item 513 "Credit for Engine Companies (CEC)" = 6.00 points

Item 523 - Credit for Reserve Pumpers (0.50 points)

The item is Item 523 “Credit for Reserve Pumpers (CRP)”. This item reviews the number and adequacy of the pumpers and their equipment. The number of needed reserve pumpers is 1 for each 8 needed engine companies determined in Item 513, or any fraction thereof.

Item 523 “Credit for Reserve Pumpers (CRP)” = 0.50 points

Item 532 – Credit for Pumper Capacity (3 points)

The next item reviewed is Item 532 “Credit for Pumper Capacity (CPC)”. The total pump capacity available should be sufficient for the Basic Fire Flow of 3500 gpm. The maximum needed pump capacity credited is the Basic Fire Flow of the community.

Item 532 “Credit for Pumper Capacity (CPC)” = 3.00 points

Item 549 – Credit for Ladder Service (4 points)

The next item reviewed is Item 549 “Credit for Ladder Service (CLS)”. This item reviews the number of response areas within the city with 5 buildings that are 3 or more stories or 35 feet or more in height, or with 5 buildings that have a Needed Fire Flow greater than 3,500 gpm, or any combination of these criteria. The height of all buildings in the city, including those protected by automatic sprinklers, is considered when determining the number of needed ladder companies. Response areas not needing a ladder company should have a service company. Ladders, tools and equipment normally carried on ladder trucks are needed not only for ladder operations but also for forcible entry, ventilation, salvage, overhaul, lighting and utility control.

The number of ladder or service companies, the height of the aerial ladder, aerial ladder testing and the equipment carried on the in-service ladder trucks and service trucks is compared with the number of needed ladder trucks and service trucks and an FSRS equipment list. Ladder trucks must meet the general criteria of NFPA 1901, *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus* to be recognized.

The number of needed ladder-service trucks is dependent upon the number of buildings 3 stories or 35 feet or more in height, buildings with a Needed Fire Flow greater than 3,500 gpm, and the method of operation.

The FSRS recognizes that there are **1 ladder companies** in service. These companies are needed to provide fire suppression services to areas to meet NFPA 1710 criteria or within 2½ miles and the number of buildings with a Needed Fire Flow over 3,500 gpm or 3 stories or more in height, or the method of operation.

The FSRS recognizes that there are **0 service companies** in service.

Item 549 “Credit for Ladder Service (CLS)” = 4.00 points

Item 553 – Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks (0.50 points)

The next item reviewed is Item 553 “Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks (CRLS)”. This item considers the adequacy of ladder and service apparatus when one (or more in larger communities) of these apparatus are out of service. The number of needed reserve ladder and service trucks is 1 for each 8 needed ladder and service companies that were determined to be needed in Item 540, or any fraction thereof.

Item 553 “Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks (CRLS)” = 0.00 points

Item 561 – Deployment Analysis (10 points)

Next, Item 561 “Deployment Analysis (DA)” is reviewed. This Item examines the number and adequacy of existing engine and ladder-service companies to cover built-upon areas of the city.

To determine the Credit for Distribution, first the Existing Engine Company (EC) points and the Existing Engine Companies (EE) determined in Item 513 are considered along with Ladder Company Equipment (LCE) points, Service Company Equipment (SCE) points, Engine-Ladder Company Equipment (ELCE) points, and Engine-Service Company Equipment (ESCE) points determined in Item 549.

Secondly, as an alternative to determining the number of needed engine and ladder/service companies through the road-mile analysis, a fire protection area may use the results of a systematic performance evaluation. This type of evaluation analyzes computer-aided dispatch (CAD) history to demonstrate that, with its current deployment of companies, the fire department meets the time constraints for initial arriving engine and initial full alarm assignment in accordance with the general criteria of in NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*.

A determination is made of the percentage of built upon area within 1½ miles of a first-due engine company and within 2½ miles of a first-due ladder-service company.

Item 561 “Credit Deployment Analysis (DA)” = 9.28 points

Item 571 – Credit for Company Personnel (15 points)

Item 571 “Credit for Company Personnel (CCP)” reviews the average number of existing firefighters and company officers available to respond to reported first alarm structure fires in the city.

The on-duty strength is determined by the yearly average of total firefighters and company officers on-duty considering vacations, sick leave, holidays, “Kelley” days and other absences. When a fire department operates under a minimum staffing policy, this may be used in lieu of determining the yearly average of on-duty company personnel.

Firefighters on apparatus not credited under Items 513 and 549 that regularly respond to reported first alarms to aid engine, ladder, and service companies are included in this item as increasing the total company strength.

Firefighters staffing ambulances or other units serving the general public are credited if they participate in fire-fighting operations, the number depending upon the extent to which they are available and are used for response to first alarms of fire.

On-Call members are credited on the basis of the average number staffing apparatus on first alarms. Off-shift career firefighters and company officers responding on first alarms are considered on the same basis as on-call personnel. For personnel not normally at the fire station, the number of responding firefighters and company officers is divided by 3 to reflect the time needed to assemble at the fire scene and the reduced ability to act as a team due to the various arrival times at the fire location when compared to the personnel on-duty at the fire station during the receipt of an alarm.

The number of Public Safety Officers who are positioned in emergency vehicles within the jurisdiction boundaries may be credited based on availability to respond to first alarm structure fires. In recognition of this increased response capability the number of responding Public Safety Officers is divided by 2.

The average number of firefighters and company officers responding with those companies credited as Automatic Aid under Items 513 and 549 are considered for either on-duty or on-call company personnel as is appropriate. The actual number is calculated as the average number of company personnel responding multiplied by the value of AA Plan determined in Item 512.D.

The maximum creditable response of on-duty and on-call firefighters is 12, including company officers, for each existing engine and ladder company and 6 for each existing service company.

Chief Officers are not creditable except when more than one chief officer responds to alarms; then extra chief officers may be credited as firefighters if they perform company duties.

The FSRs recognizes **18.85 on-duty personnel** and an average of **0.00 on-call personnel** responding on first alarm structure fires.

Item 571 “Credit for Company Personnel (CCP)” = 9.43 points

Item 581 – Credit for Training (9 points)

Training	Earned Credit	Credit Available
A. Facilities, and Use For maximum credit, each firefighter should receive 18 hours per year in structure fire related subjects as outlined in NFPA 1001.	35.00	35
B. Company Training For maximum credit, each firefighter should receive 16 hours per month in structure fire related subjects as outlined in NFPA 1001.	23.75	25
C. Classes for Officers For maximum credit, each officer should be certified in accordance with the general criteria of NFPA 1021. Additionally, each officer should receive 12 hours of continuing education on or off site.	12.00	12
D. New Driver and Operator Training For maximum credit, each new driver and operator should receive 60 hours of driver/operator training per year in accordance with NFPA 1002 and NFPA 1451.	5.00	5
E. Existing Driver and Operator Training For maximum credit, each existing driver and operator should receive 12 hours of driver/operator training per year in accordance with NFPA 1002 and NFPA 1451.	5.00	5
F. Training on Hazardous Materials For maximum credit, each firefighter should receive 6 hours of training for incidents involving hazardous materials in accordance with NFPA 472.	1.00	1
G. Recruit Training For maximum credit, each firefighter should receive 240 hours of structure fire related training in accordance with NFPA 1001 within the first year of employment or tenure.	5.00	5
H. Pre-Fire Planning Inspections For maximum credit, pre-fire planning inspections of each commercial, industrial, institutional, and other similar type building (all buildings except 1-4 family dwellings) should be made annually by company members. Records of inspections should include up-to date notes and sketches.	9.60	12

Item 580 “Credit for Training (CT)” = 8.67 points

Item 730 – Operational Considerations (2 points)

Item 730 “Credit for Operational Considerations (COC)” evaluates fire department standard operating procedures and incident management systems for emergency operations involving structure fires.

Operational Considerations	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Standard Operating Procedures The department should have established SOPs for fire department general emergency operations	50	50
Incident Management Systems The department should use an established incident management system (IMS)	50	50
Operational Considerations total:	100	100

Item 730 “Credit for Operational Considerations (COC)” = 2.00 points

Water Supply

Forty percent of a community's overall score is based on the adequacy of the water supply system. The ISO field representative evaluated:

- the capability of the water distribution system to meet the Needed Fire Flows at selected locations up to 3,500 gpm.
- size, type and installation of fire hydrants.
- inspection and flow testing of fire hydrants.

	Earned Credit	Credit Available
616. Credit for Supply System	29.85	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	3.00	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	6.26	7
Item 640. Credit for Water Supply:	39.11	40

Item 616 – Credit for Supply System (30 points)

The first item reviewed is Item 616 “Credit for Supply System (CSS)”. This item reviews the rate of flow that can be credited at each of the Needed Fire Flow test locations considering the supply works capacity, the main capacity and the hydrant distribution. The lowest flow rate of these items is credited for each representative location. A water system capable of delivering 250 gpm or more for a period of two hours plus consumption at the maximum daily rate at the fire location is considered minimum in the ISO review.

Where there are 2 or more systems or services distributing water at the same location, credit is given on the basis of the joint protection provided by all systems and services available.

The supply works capacity is calculated for each representative Needed Fire Flow test location, considering a variety of water supply sources. These include public water supplies, emergency supplies (usually accessed from neighboring water systems), suction supplies (usually evidenced by dry hydrant installations near a river, lake or other body of water), and supplies developed by a fire department using large diameter hose or vehicles to shuttle water from a source of supply to a fire site. The result is expressed in gallons per minute (gpm).

The normal ability of the distribution system to deliver Needed Fire Flows at the selected building locations is reviewed. The results of a flow test at a representative test location will indicate the ability of the water mains (or fire department in the case of fire department supplies) to carry water to that location.

The hydrant distribution is reviewed within 1,000 feet of representative test locations measured as hose can be laid by apparatus.

For maximum credit, the Needed Fire Flows should be available at each location in the district. Needed Fire Flows of 2,500 gpm or less should be available for 2 hours; and Needed Fire Flows of 3,000 and 3,500 gpm should be obtainable for 3 hours.

Item 616 “Credit for Supply System (CSS)” = 29.85 points

Item 621 – Credit for Hydrants (3 points)

The second item reviewed is Item 621 “Credit for Hydrants (CH)”. This item reviews the number of fire hydrants of each type compared with the total number of hydrants.

There are a total of 1633 hydrants in the graded area.

620. Hydrants, - Size, Type and Installation	Number of Hydrants
A. With a 6 -inch or larger branch and a pumper outlet with or without 2½ -inch outlets	1633
B. With a 6 -inch or larger branch and no pumper outlet but two or more 2½ -inch outlets, or with a small foot valve, or with a small barrel	0
C./D. With only a 2½ -inch outlet or with less than a 6 -inch branch	0
E./F. Flush Type, Cistern, or Suction Point	0

Item 621 “Credit for Hydrants (CH)” = 3.00 points

Item 630 – Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing (7 points)

The third item reviewed is Item 630 “Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing (CIT)”. This item reviews the fire hydrant inspection frequency, and the completeness of the inspections. Inspection of hydrants should be in accordance with AWWA M-17, *Installation, Field Testing and Maintenance of Fire Hydrants*.

Frequency of Inspection (FI): Average interval between the 3 most recent inspections.

Frequency	Points
1 year	30
2 years	20
3 years	10
4 years	5
5 years or more	No Credit

Note: The points for inspection frequency are reduced by 10 points if the inspections are incomplete or do not include a flushing program. An additional reduction of 10 points are made if hydrants are not subjected to full system pressure during inspections. If the inspection of cisterns or suction points does not include actual drafting with a pumper, or back-flushing for dry hydrants, 20 points are deducted.

Total points for Inspections = 3.42 points

Frequency of Fire Flow Testing (FF): Average interval between the 3 most recent inspections.

Frequency	Points
5 years	40
6 years	30
7 years	20
8 years	10
9 years	5
10 years or more	No Credit

Total points for Fire Flow Testing = 2.84 points

Item 631 “Credit for Inspection and Fire Flow Testing (CIT)” = 6.26 points

Divergence = -2.40

The Divergence factor mathematically reduces the score based upon the relative difference between the fire department and water supply scores. The factor is introduced in the final equation.

Community Risk Reduction

	Earned Credit	Credit Available
1025. Credit for Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement (CPCE)	2.12	2.2
1033. Credit for Public Fire Safety Education (CFSE)	1.82	2.2
1044. Credit for Fire Investigation Programs (CIP)	1.10	1.1
Item 1050. Credit for Community Risk Reduction	5.04	5.50

Item 1025 – Credit for Fire Prevention Code Adoption and Enforcement (2.2 points)	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Fire Prevention Code Regulations (PCR) Evaluation of fire prevention code regulations in effect.	10.00	10
Fire Prevention Staffing (PS) Evaluation of staffing for fire prevention activities.	8.00	8
Fire Prevention Certification and Training (PCT) Evaluation of the certification and training of fire prevention code enforcement personnel.	4.50	6
Fire Prevention Programs (PCP) Evaluation of fire prevention programs.	16.00	16
Review of Fire Prevention Code and Enforcement (CPCE) subtotal:	38.50	40

Item 1033 – Credit for Public Fire Safety Education (2.2 points)	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Public Fire Safety Educators Qualifications and Training (FSQT) Evaluation of public fire safety education personnel training and qualification as specified by the authority having jurisdiction.	9.00	10
Public Fire Safety Education Programs (FSP) Evaluation of programs for public fire safety education.	24.00	30
Review of Public Safety Education Programs (CFSE) subtotal:	33.00	40

Item 1044 – Credit for Fire Investigation Programs (1.1 points)	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Fire Investigation Organization and Staffing (IOS) Evaluation of organization and staffing for fire investigations.	8.00	8
Fire Investigator Certification and Training (IQT) Evaluation of fire investigator certification and training.	6.00	6
Use of National Fire Incident Reporting System (IRS) Evaluation of the use of the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for the 3 years before the evaluation.	6.00	6
Review of Fire Investigation Programs (CIP) subtotal:	20.00	20

Summary of PPC Review
for
Neenah Menasha FPSA

FSRS Item	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Emergency Communications		
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	3.00	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	4.00	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	2.85	3
440. Credit for Emergency Communications	9.85	10
Fire Department		
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6.00	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.50	0.5
532. Credit for Pumper Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4.00	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.00	0.5
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	9.28	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	9.43	15
581. Credit for Training	8.67	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
590. Credit for Fire Department	42.88	50
Water Supply		
616. Credit for Supply System	29.85	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	3.00	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	6.26	7
640. Credit for Water Supply	39.11	40
Divergence	-2.40	--
1050. Community Risk Reduction	5.04	5.50
Total Credit	94.48	105.5

Final Community Classification = 01/1X