



City of Cedarburg
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Town of Cedarburg
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Cedarburg, WI 53012

PRESS RELEASE

TO: Local Media

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From: City and Town of Cedarburg

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Cedarburg Fire/EMS 10-Year Agreement Focuses on Full-Time Paramedic Level Service

Communities across the nation are working to address strained EMS staffing in order to provide a paramedic level response to growing and aging service areas. An additional challenge in the State of Wisconsin are levy limits that make funding additional paramedics extremely challenging short of approval by voters through a referendum.

For the past three years, the City and Town of Cedarburg have been involved in discussions with other Ozaukee County communities to evaluate various consolidation options including Mequon/Thiensville (now Southern Ozaukee Fire Department), Grafton, Port Washington, and Saukville, as well as directly with each other to determine the best approach for Cedarburg to provide paramedic level services while decreasing response times. This included creating a joint City/Town Ad-Hoc Fire/EMS committee that evaluated a “Cedarburg Only” option. In late 2022, the Committee made a recommendation to the City Council and the Town Board to have the Cedarburg Fire Department remain an independent department, with paramedic oversight provided by the new Southern Ozaukee Fire Department (SOFD) until the Cedarburg Fire Department has sufficient firefighter/paramedics to allow full 24/7 coverage under an independent Cedarburg paramedic license.

One component of the approved 10-year shared services agreement was the development of a plan that would expand the Cedarburg Fire Department by adding full-time positions between 2023 – 2028, in addition to moving from all volunteers to a Paid-On-Call (POC) model in 2024. The proposed staffing level is accompanied by the transition from an Advanced EMT (AEMT) level agency to a paramedic level EMS agency. This increase in the level of service can be measured by the availability of more medications, additional skills and greater knowledge. This transition will allow the Cedarburg Fire Department to better treat a variety of injuries and illnesses, resulting in improved outcomes of those requiring EMS services, all with reduced response times due to personnel ready to respond 24/7.

The approved 10-year shared services agreement between the City and Town sets in motion steps required by law to hold an April 2024 referendum needed to fund the expanded Cedarburg Fire Department. The next steps will include the formation of a new Fire & EMS Committee with City and Town representation that will select a consultant to advise on a referendum. We hope to have the support of the entire community, as an expanded Cedarburg Fire Department would provide a higher level of EMS care, decreased response times, and robust staffing through a combination of dedicated Paid-On-Call (POC) volunteers and full-time staffing.

Details on the referendum process will be made available into the fall of 2023.

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