

# VILLAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT



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*Protecting and Serving the Cities  
of:*

**BUNKER HILL VILLAGE  
HEDWIG VILLAGE  
HILSHIRE VILLAGE  
HUNTERS CREEK VILLAGE  
PINEY POINT VILLAGE  
SPRING VALLEY VILLAGE**

**From:** Amy Buckert, Administrator/Finance Director

**CC:** Howard Miller, Fire Chief

**Date:** April 7, 2025

**Re:** Village Fire Department Draft 2026 Budget

I am pleased to present you with the most recent draft budget for 2026 to fund the Village Fire Department, highlighting key allocations across **Personnel, Operating, and Capital** expenditures. The budget aims to balance financial sustainability with operational efficiency while ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.

## 1. Operating Capital Expenses

The operating budget covers day-to-day expenses essential for maintaining efficient operations. Notable allocations include:

- **Infrastructure & Equipment Upgrades** – Replacement of the 20+ year old generator and fuel system upgrades, replacement of the 18-year old Pro Cot and purchase of a Lucas Device for EMS.
- **Gear & Safety** – Replacement of protective gear, replacement of end-of-life mobile units/radios for E1, M1, and M2.

## 1. Personnel Expenses

Personnel costs continue to be a significant portion of the budget, reflecting our commitment to attracting and retaining top talent. Key highlights include:

- **Salaries & Wages** – The base budget for the department proposes only step increases for all personnel at this time, and in the spirit of that request, ask that consideration be given to improving TMRS benefits for all employees, restoring benefits back to the level they were in 2009. Village fire adopted the USC and COLA on an ad hoc basis effective January 1, 2009. Those ad hoc adoptions discontinued the repeating USC and COLA.
- **Benefits & Retirement Contributions** – A number of scenarios were run for TMRS. As you are likely aware, the non-retroactive COLA option that passed in the last legislative session (HB 2464) will expire at the end of this year. TMRS has potential legislation (HB 4609 and SB 2436) that will make the non-retroactive COLA a permanent benefit option. **If the bills do not pass, 2025 will be the last year that a non-retroactive COLA can be adopted.**

- Included in this packet are the above-mentioned scenarios, how they will directly impact your City's assessments, and what your City's portion of the unfunded liability would be if selected. For reference, I'm attaching the plans being considered as well as relevant agency plans.
- **New Positions & Reallocations** – No new positions are included in the 2026 budget.

## 2. Operating Expenses

The operating budget covers day-to-day expenses essential for maintaining efficient operations. Notable allocations include:

- **Technology & Software** – Investments in Financial and AP Software to enhance proficiency, functionality and internal controls. These investments will help reduce unforeseen costs the Department has recently had with regard to forensic audits and weak internal processes.
- **Vehicle Maintenance** – Raised to reflect recent spending trends

## 3. Capital Replacement Fund Budget

Capital investments focus on long-term improvements that will enhance operational capacity and service delivery. Key projects include:

- **Equipment Upgrades** – Replacement of the ladder truck, possible lease of temporary truck to be paid from interest earnings on insurance payout
- **EMS Revenues** – The Village Fire Department recommends the Fire Department retain all EMS system revenues in 2026 in order to eliminate the Capital Contribution in assessments from the Cities.

We remain committed to prudent financial management, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to sustain operations and keep costs of service reasonable for all our villages. Please review the attached details for further insights and let me know if you have any questions.