



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION DEPARTMENT REPORT

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**TO:** Matthew R. Schmitz, MPA - City Manager

**FROM:** Blake Hayward – Fire Chief

**DATE OF MEETING:** January 2, 2024

**ITEM TITLE:** Department Report – Fire Department

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Independence Fire is currently wrapping up 2023 as our busiest year in over 5 years. I will have more information on numbers with our Annual Report as well as a short break down of all the things we have done over the past year.

We are excited to announce that we have been selected for a \$24,000 grant from Buchanan County Health Trust. This grant will be used towards the purchase of Dual-Purpose fire gear for members. This gear is lighter weight and can be used more for wildland fires, car accidents, CO Calls, Alarm Activations, etc. This is a new push in the fire service to help with heat exhaustion as well as preserve our incredibly expensive bunker gear. This dual-purpose gear is almost half the price of a full set of bunker gear and about half the weight as well. We also received word from the Iowa DNR that we were awarded \$4,200 for dual purpose gear as well. We plan on having gear vendors come in and meet with the department and show us what they have to offer, once we do that, we will select a vendor and order our gear. Currently turnaround times for gear has been 8-12 months depending on the vendor.

We continue to fight with equipment issues. Engine 2 responded to a call and when we returned, we found a large fluid spill where the truck sits. We were able to get Engine 2 to Cedar Rapids ok for repairs but while it was there, they found more issues for a grand total of around \$14,000. Fortunately, \$9,000 - \$10,000 was covered under warranty so our share was significantly less but still a big blow to our budget. Last week we had issues with Engine 1 not starting. Asst. Chief Butler was on the phone with E-One for hours trying to diagnose the issue over the phone. After a lot of back and forth we found that a relay had failed, keeping the truck from starting.

We are starting to see some good progress with the remodeling going on upstairs. Independence Light & Power was able to run some new wiring for us and add some plug ins. Unfortunately, while they were upstairs working, they came across some issues that were left from when they did the HVAC system. IL&P and I worked out some issues and came up with the idea to make everything safe, up to code, and updated while they've been here. We plan on replacing all the lights upstairs above City Hall and eliminating any known hazards that we have found over the past month. This will ensure that it's safe as well as easier to locate and work on in the future.

We are currently working on our training schedule for 2024 and we have been asked to do some joint training with Jesup Fire, Buchanan County Sheriff's Office, Independence Police Department, and MHI so far.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

Blake Hayward – Fire Chief