



# MEMO

## Department

To: Finance and Personnel Committee  
From: Fire Chief Carrel and HR Director Hodge  
Date: 8/18/2025  
Re: Kaukauna Fire Department Restructure

### Background information:

The decision to restructure the Kaukauna Fire Department was made after careful consideration of our legal responsibilities, industry's best practices, and the needs of our personnel and community.

Since the Shift Assistant Chiefs positions were created in 2006, the demands on our department have changed significantly. With our emergency call volume increasing from 980 to 1,903 during that time, the duties of the role have necessarily evolved to become increasingly focused on frontline emergency response and other company officer duties, rather than chief officer duties.

The new structure clarifies the chain of command, defines responsibilities at each level, and establishes a more traditional and progressive career ladder.

The supplement, "Restructuring with Purpose," outlines the why, how, and what is proposed in the overall proposal.

In summary:

1. Eliminate the Shift Assistant Chief (salary exempt) positions and replace with a Fire Captain (salary non-exempt) position. This affects three employees.
  - a. The Fire Captain position will be a position within the Fire Union.
  - b. Details of a pay structure will be an item of negotiation with the Fire Union.
2. Retitle Assistant Chief-Day and Assistant Chief-Training to Division Chief. This affects two employees.
  - a. The Division Chief position will be placed in the 2025 pay grade 24.

- b. The Division Chiefs will primarily focus on one of two areas, either Training or Operations.
  - c. The reporting for Paid on Call and the updated Fire Captains will be realigned with the updated areas of responsibility.
- 3. Create a civilian Fire Inspector position to alleviate the workload redistribution.
  - a. This position is proposed to be part-time, 20 hours per week, hourly in the 2025 pay grade 10 (\$28.50 – \$34.33).
  - b. This work was previously assigned to one of the Shift Assistant Chief positions.

**Strategic Plan:**

The restructuring of the Kaukauna Fire Department through the creation of a new Fire Inspector (civilian) position, realignment of work responsibilities, and reporting structure furthers our goals in the People Management and the Community of Choice areas of the Strategic Plan. We are investing in thoughtful planning and benchmarking for our structure, as well as ensuring responsibilities are appropriately distributed to allow for planning and safety.

**Budget:**

The estimated budget impact on the change to Fire Captains (3 employees) is anticipated to be minimal in that the affected employees will become eligible for overtime; however, working overtime would have been a cost incurred by another eligible member. Exact figures cannot be determined until negotiations and contract implications are worked through.

The estimated annual cost for the part-time Fire Inspector position (non-benefit eligible) is approximately \$36,500 (approximately \$15,200 for 5 months remaining in 2025). This cost would be covered through unused budget in 2025 and will be allocated in the 2026 budget.

**Staff Recommended Action:**

Staff are looking for approval on the following items:

- 1. Eliminate the Shift Assistant Chief position and replace it with a Fire Captain position, which will be salary non-exempt, and within the Kaukauna Local 1594 collective bargaining group.
- 2. Retitle the Assistant Chief-Day and Assistant Chief-Training to Division Chief in pay grade 24.
- 3. Create the position of Fire Inspector and approval to post and hire as part-time, 20 hours per week, in pay grade 10.
- 4. Approval to initiate discussion and negotiation with the Fire Union Kaukauna Local 1594 on wages and necessary contract items that will be affected by the above changes.