



# MEMO

## Fire Department

To: Finance and Personnel Committee  
From: Fire Chief Jacob Carrel  
Date: March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Re: Purchase of Fire Engine utilizing Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing

### **Background information:**

The Fire Department requests approval to purchase a new fire engine through the Sourcewell cooperative purchasing program. The apparatus will be manufactured by Pierce Manufacturing of Appleton, Wisconsin, and will replace our 2003 Pierce fire engine. Upon delivery of the new engine, our current 2014 Seagrave fire engine would then be moved to our backup engine for the next 10-15 years.

### **Authority Under Wisconsin Law**

Several Wisconsin statutes address cooperative purchasing by municipalities. Wis. Stat. §16.73 authorizes cooperative purchasing for equipment and permanent personal property, and specifically directs the state to facilitate large equipment purchases for municipalities. Wis. Stat. §66.0301 provides authority for intergovernmental cooperation, and Wis. Stat. §66.0303(2) extends that authority to contracts with governmental entities in other states.

Sourcewell is a service cooperative created by the Minnesota legislature as a local unit of government under the Minnesota Constitution. It is a public corporation governed by elected officials. Sourcewell's documentation identifies the organization as a governmental entity, and its cooperative purchasing contracts are made available through intergovernmental cooperation under Minnesota law.

### **City Purchasing Policy Compliance**

Section 4-106 of the City's Purchasing Policy recognizes cooperative purchasing as a valid procurement method, stating that cooperative contracts "have already gone through the competitive bidding process" and no additional bidding is required. For cooperative purchases exceeding \$25,000, the section requires the department to submit documentation demonstrating "best value" to the approving committee. That documentation follows below. Because the purchase exceeds \$25,000, Common Council approval is also required under Section 2-101.

### **Best-Value Documentation**

Pursuant to Section 4-106, the following demonstrates that the Sourcewell contract provides the best value to the City for this purchase.

- **Competitively Awarded Contract.** Sourcewell awards contracts through a publicly advertised, nationally competitive solicitation process evaluated on pricing, product quality, vendor capability, and service capacity. This process leverages the purchasing volume of thousands of member agencies, producing pricing a single municipality would be unlikely to achieve on its own.
- **Administrative and Fiscal Efficiency.** The alternative, an independent sealed bid process under Section 3-101(3), would require weeks of specification development, public advertising, and formal evaluation for a specialized product with a limited pool of manufacturers. Given the limited manufacturer pool, this process is unlikely to produce better pricing and would likely extend past a manufacturer price increase expected to take effect May 1, 2026. The cooperative purchasing framework exists under both state law and City policy to avoid this duplicative burden when a competitive process has already been completed.
- **Delivery Timeline.** Fire engine delivery timelines currently extend to 48 months or more through standard procurement. The specifications for this purchase are compatible with Pierce's "Build My Pierce" program, reducing delivery to approximately 28–32 months—potentially saving over a year of reliance on aging front-line apparatus.
- **Local Manufacturer.** Pierce is headquartered approximately nine miles from Kaukauna, providing advantages in service response, warranty support, and reduced transportation costs over the life of the apparatus. The Department recently took delivery of a Pierce ladder truck and has an established working relationship with the manufacturer. Pierce's local presence, technical resources, and performance record are consistent with the responsible-bidder criteria in Section 1-107 of the Purchasing Policy.
- **Fleet Commonality.** Maintaining Pierce as our primary front-line apparatus with our new ladder truck creates operational efficiencies in parts inventory, mechanic training, and maintenance procedures, reducing the total cost of ownership over the engine's service life.

### **Strategic Plan:**

#### Create a Community of Choice

This purchase directly advances the Strategic Plan objective to Create a Community of Choice, and specifically the tactic to maintain a safe and healthy community. The Strategic Plan recognizes that to be a community of choice, the City must maintain current response times and service levels amid a growing community. Replacing a 23-year-old fire engine with a modern apparatus ensures the Fire Department can continue to deliver reliable emergency response as Kaukauna grows. A proactive replacement schedule helps control long-term

maintenance costs and avoids reliance on aging equipment that becomes increasingly vulnerable to unexpected and untimely downtime.

#### People Management Plan

Investing in modern apparatus also advances the Strategic Plan's objective of creating a People Management Plan by providing tools and resources to attract and retain qualified firefighters. Reliable equipment improves firefighter safety and department morale, strengthens the City's ability to compete for personnel in today's labor market, and ultimately enhances our level of service to our community.

#### **Budget:**

The budgeted cost for this fire engine is \$1,250,000, included in the City's approved Capital Budget and funded through borrowing. The fire department anticipates the final price will fall within the budgeted amount.

Upon delivery, our existing 2003 Pierce fire engine will be sold at public auction, pursuant to Section 3-103 of the Purchasing Policy, with proceeds applied to offset the acquisition cost.

#### **Staff Recommended Action:**

Staff recommends forwarding this request to the Common Council with a recommendation to approve the purchase of a fire engine from Pierce Manufacturing through the Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing Program at a cost not to exceed \$1,250,000, and to authorize the Fire Chief to execute the purchase agreement and related documents.