



## Executive Summary

### City Council Workshop

<b>AGENDA ITEM: Fire Merger</b>	
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Jacob Kolander, City Administrator Rick Denneson, Fire Chief Mark Kaltsas, City Planner
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discussion</b>	

#### Purpose of Workshop

This session is intended to:

- Answer any remaining questions from council members.
- Review and discuss the proposed 2026 budget for the merged department.
- Discuss the leasing terms and responsibilities for the current Maple Plain fire station.

#### Merger Progress Overview

The merger between the **West Suburban Fire District (WSFD)** and **Maple Plain Fire Department (MPFD)** is on track for an operational start date of **January 1, 2026**. The process has been collaborative, with strong support from both departments and transition teams meeting regularly since Spring 2025.

#### Key Developments

- **Transition Team Work:** Focused on operational alignment—equipment compatibility, records integration, branding, and communications.
- **Fire Commission Meeting (July 8, 2025):**
  - Confirmed December 31, 2025 as the operational merger deadline.
  - Reviewed a draft 2026 budget and outlined legal steps for council approvals.
  - Identified one-time merger costs (~\$37,000–\$39,000), to be covered by public safety aid funds.

#### Budget Overview

- **2025 Combined Budget:** \$464,000
- **2026 Draft Budget:** \$552,000

- Increase driven by pension catch-up contributions, expanded staffing (full-time chief, assistant chief, admin support), and firefighter wage increases.
- A 5% annual budget escalator is proposed for the first five years, after which a new funding formula will be adopted.

#### **Fire Station Lease Discussion**

- **Ownership:** Maple Plain retains ownership of the current fire station.
- **Lease Terms:** Proposed lease to the merged department for **\$1/year**.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - **City:** Roof, mechanical systems, exterior maintenance.
  - **Department:** Interior modifications and operational use.
  - Additional items (e.g., hazardous waste systems, fuel systems) to be clarified in the lease agreement.

#### **Next Steps**

- **Council Workshops:** Each city to hold individual sessions in August to address questions and authorize legal work.
- **Resolutions:** Council resolutions to pursue the merger expected by late August.
- **Joint Council Meeting:** Tentatively scheduled for **August 21, 2025 at 6:30 PM** in Independence for final public discussion and symbolic approval.
- **Fire Relief:** Should Fire relief continue their direction of working with their attorney on new bylaws, or should we have them hold off until this gets approved by both councils.