Open House: Future of Long Lake Fire Department

November 17, 2022

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Agenda

- Overview of Long Lake Fire Department
- Planning for the Future
- Recap of Current Situation
- Options for Consideration

Tonight's Objectives:

Educate, Answer Questions,
Hear Your Feedback

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OVERVIEW

Long Lake Fire Department: 107 Year Legacy

- Formed in 1915
- Serving Long Lake, Orono, Medina, and Minnetonka Beach
- Two Stations:
  - Station 1: 340 Willow Drive N, Orono
  - Station 2: 3770 Shoreline Drive, Orono

About Our Firefighters

- One chief and 43 paid-on-call firefighters, including assistant chief, deputy chiefs, captains, lieutenants, and coordinators
- Years of service range from two months to 33 years
- Receive hourly wage and pension of $7,000 for each year of service. Must work 10 years to become eligible for pension.
- Firefighter City of Residence
    - Orono: 21
    - Long Lake: 10
    - Medina: 0
    - Minnetonka Beach: 0
    - Other: 12

More About Station 1

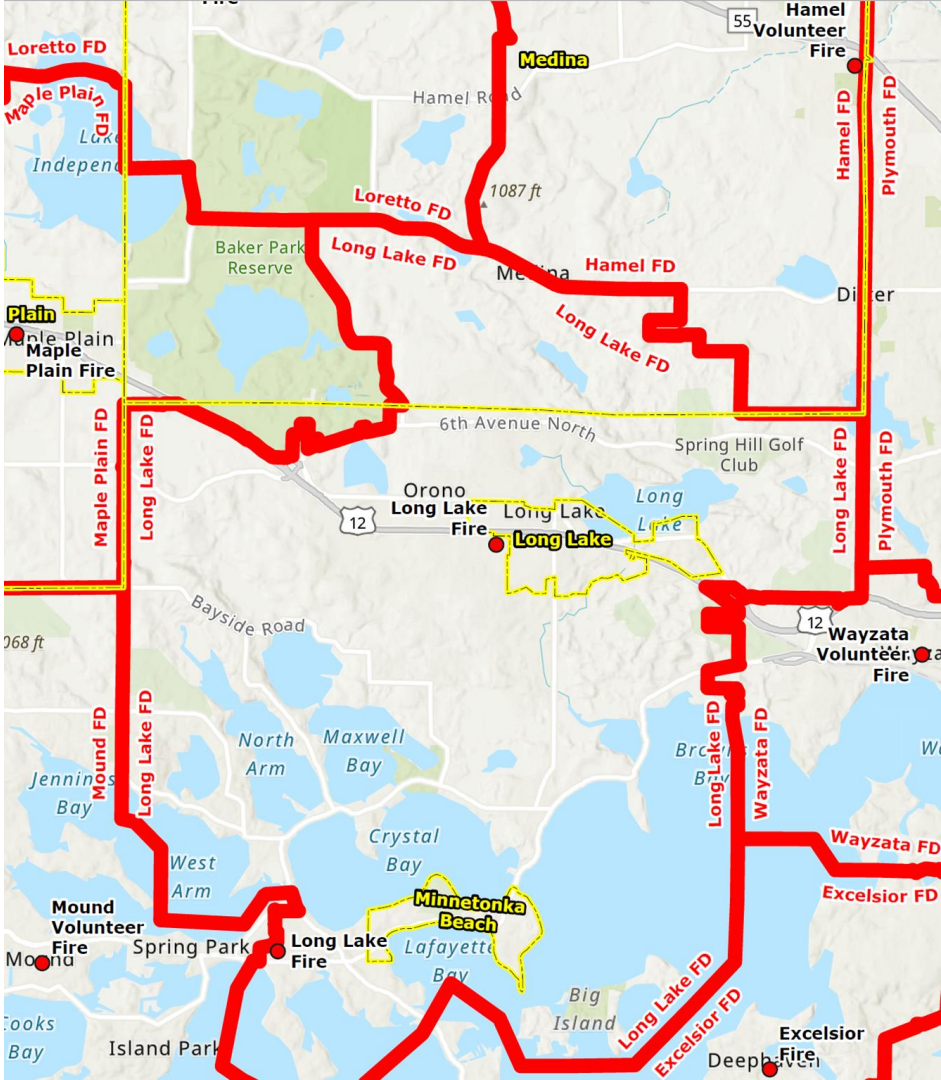
- Previous station was forced to move due to Highway 12 bypass
- Long Lake and Orono purchased land in 2001
- Station 1 was built with Long Lake funding from the city's settlement with MnDOT for replacement of the city's former station, which was $2.4 Million.
- Orono contributed $680,000 to the replacement station
- Contract for joint ownership for Station 1 signed in August 2001

Firefighter Station Assignments	
Station 1	27
Station 2	16

Coverage Area

Over time, Orono has become the largest portion of LLFD service area coverage, followed by S. Medina, Long Lake, and Minnetonka Beach

- 2000: Northwestern Orono added (formerly served by Maple Plain FD)
- 2017: Northeastern Orono added (formerly served by Wayzata FD)
- Present: As a result, the LLFD now covers 100% of Orono and their percentage contribution for fire service costs are have increased over time



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Future Fire Service Planning Committee

Cities Include:

- Long Lake
- Medina
- Minnetonka Beach
- Wayzata
- Maple Plain
- Independence
- Loretto
- Corcoran
- Greenfield
- Orono (recent addition)

Fire Departments Include:

- Long Lake
- Loretto
- Hamel
- Maple Plain
- Wayzata

Important Considerations:

- Station Locations
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Partnerships
- Costs

Times Are Changing!

KARE 11

Minnesota fire departments transition to full-time staff to address worker shortage

The Bloomington Fire Department once had 155 firefighters on staff. Now they have less than 100.

Author: **Gordon Severson**
Published: **6:17 PM CDT October 10, 2022**
Updated: **6:52 PM CDT October 10, 2022**

StarTribune

Full-time firefighters in demand as suburbs struggle to find on-call recruits

Many suburban fire departments are hiring full-time firefighters for the first time or adding more to their roster as demand for their services increases.

By Erin Adler Star Tribune | OCTOBER 9, 2022 — 3:30PM | Listen

GLEN STUBBE, STAR TRIBUNE

Paid on-call firefighter Valen Watson checked safety equipment Saturday, Oct. 8, at Bloomington's Fire Station 1. The department just received a $6.2M SAFER grant that will allow it to hire 18 full-time firefighters.

Fire departments in the Twin Cities suburbs are looking to hire full-time firefighters as interest in on-call service wanes.

Many departments say they must hire full-time firefighters for the first time or add more to their roster as call volumes increase and recruiting and retaining part-time firefighters grows harder, as it has over the last decade.

Best Practices & Trends

- At last report, MN ranks 48th in the nation when it comes to how much we spend towards fire protection services[1]
- Minnesota ranks # 2 in the nation when it comes to states that use volunteer/paid-on call firefighters[2]
- In Minnesota in recent years 13 fire departments have been formed as a result of mergers. ***Only one new standalone department has been created (Orono would be 2nd)*** *David Jensen, State Fire Marshal's Office*
- "There are too many fire departments in the State of Minnesota." *John Ehret, State Fire Marshal's Office - February 11, 2021*

[1] https://ccxmedia.org/news/report-shows-minnesota-poorly-ranked-for-firefighter-funding/#:~:text=A%20new%20report%20shows%2047,ranked%2048th%20in%20statewide%20funding.

[2] https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/registry/summary

Local Success Story: Excelsior Fire District

- Includes cities of Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, and Tonka Bay
- In 2002, the Excelsior Fire Department changed to the Excelsior Fire District, reflecting the signing of a joint powers agreement (JPA) vesting ownership of the district in each of the five cities it serves
- Over the course of the next 5 years, the district constructed two new stations, hired its first full-time chief, and added new equipment and technology.

The Latest Fire District Being Formed - Our Neighbors!

West Suburban Fire District

CURRENT SITUATION

Current Fire Advisory Board

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- Two members from each contracting city
- Meet quarterly
- Arrive at a consensus on the operating and capital improvement budgets
- The Fire Advisory Board review is the final step before budgets go to the cities for approval

Comparing Orono's Cost and Level of Control

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- Orono pays 85% of the budget (2022)
- They have stated they have no control
- Long Lake has offered to consider other funding formulas, including a League of Minnesota Cities recommended formula that would drop Orono's share to 75% when Minnetonka Beach is factored in and 49% if another city like Wayzata was added.

Agreement and Contract for Fire Protection (2002)

Capital Expenditures

Capital expenditures include major equipment and major maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation to the fire station.

Capital expenditures must be approved by a minimum of two cities and the combined funding shares of the two cities must be greater than 60%.

Summary: Since 2002, Orono has the most control of any city when it comes to LLFD budget and capital expenditures.

Attempts to Renew Contract with Orono

- Current Contract: Signed on October 15, 2002 → expires December 31, 2025 (***three years remaining)***
- 2017: Draft extension agreement was submitted to Orono - ***rejected***
- 2020: Draft Joint Powers Agreement proposed with Orono - ***rejected***
- April 2021: Orono notified Long Lake that they would be terminating their portion of the contract upon its expiration date of December 31, 2025

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Recent Negotiations with Orono

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1) Two Long Lake Councilmembers and two Orono Councilmembers met on nearly a weekly basis from July through early September 2022 to try and come up with a resolution.
2) The group created a list of “tenets” that were agreed upon among the representatives from each city.
3) The Orono Councilmembers/representatives shared the tenets with the rest of their Council and they were not in support of the primary tenet of interest to Long Lake:
    - Fire chief reporting to a Fire Board comprised of members from all participating cities, instead of reporting solely to either Long Lake or Orono.

Proposed Fire Board

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Throughout Summer 2022, the negotiation team of Long Lake and Orono Council Members came up with a mutually agreed upon solution, an independent **Fire Board**.

1) The Fire Board would be a body separate from the individual cities that employs the fire chief and firefighters, and has operational and strategic authority.
2) The Fire Board would be made up of Council members from each of the four cities (Orono having more members than each of the other cities). Orono would have more voting rights on the proposed Board than Long Lake, similar to the greater voting power they have now.
3) Long Lake would be willing to allow Orono provide administrative support to the Fire Board; but ultimately, this administrative support should come from within the fire department with a dedicated administrative staff member for the chief.
4) Under this solution, Long Lake would give up authority over the fire chief and fire operations, which it has had for the past 20 years of current contract (and over the 80 years prior to that).

Summary of Recent Actions by the Orono City Council

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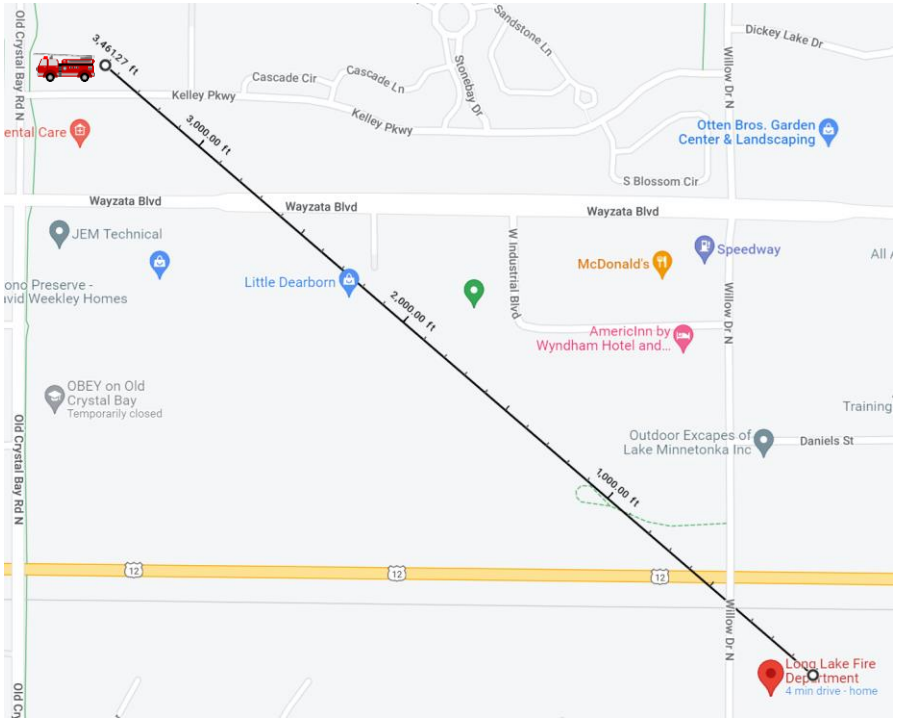
Orono has been moving ahead with urgency in planning for their fire department in spite of Long Lake's offer to extend the contract.

- Nov. 8 and Dec. 13, 2021 - Orono approved selling $3 million in bonds for the acquisition or construction of a fire station.
- Sept. 12, 2022 - Orono voted to register a new fire department with State Fire Marshal.
- Sept. 27, 2022 - Despite months of positive progress with fire district negotiations, Orono submits offer to Long Lake to purchase Station 1 and all equipment for $1,588,440 and offer fire service to Long Lake for 10 years for $70,000 per year.
- Oct. 24, 2022 - Orono voted to purchase their own ladder truck for $349,000 (total cost est. $644,492 after refurbishment)
- Nov. 14, 2022 - Orono approved the hiring of Long Lake Fire Chief James Van Eyll with a start date of Dec.30, 2022

New Orono Fire Station Location?

- There is the *possibility* of there being a newly constructed Orono Fire Station at their current Public Works facility.
- The two fire stations would be about two-thirds of a mile from each other.



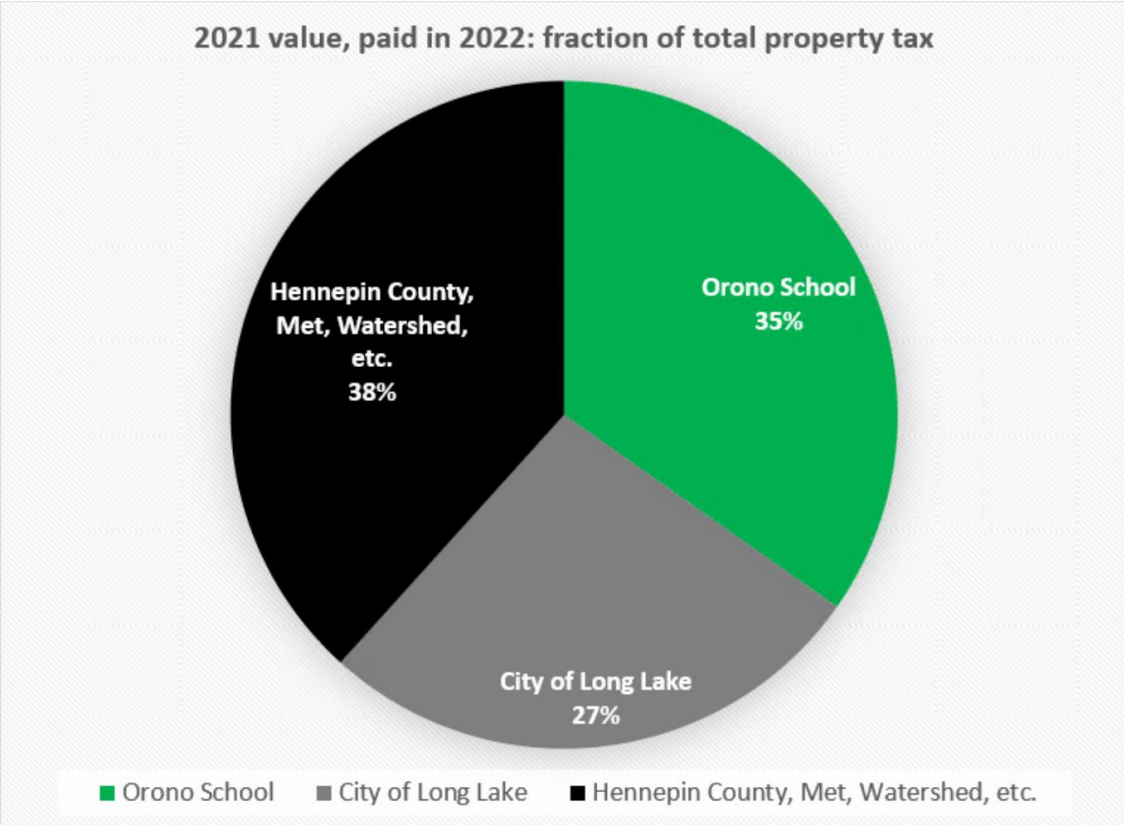
OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Considering All Options

	Long Lake Fire Department	Orono Fire Department	Long Lake Area Partnership
Scenario	Current scenario	Sell LLFD to Orono & contract for fire services	Form a partnership with neighboring Fire Department(s)
Partners	Orono and Medina with Minnetonka Beach on contract	None, Long Lake would receive service as a contract city	Any neighboring Fire Department(s) interested in collaboration
Firefighters	Currently together as one team	Opportunity to stay together	Would need to choose Orono FD or Long Lake partnership department
Cost	~$65k/year	$70k/year for 10 years Year 11 + = uncertainty	Modeled reasonable CIP ~$160k/year ($105k/year ops)
Oversight	Shared input	Advisory role only	-Partnership -Shared input
Long term	Contract ends in 3 years	-No assets -Difficult to enter future partnerships -Likely a contract city long term	Long-term efficiencies in shared service & costs

*Note: **As of 2026** → Any path we pursue is only as good as our firefighters and partners!*

Where do Our Property Taxes Go?



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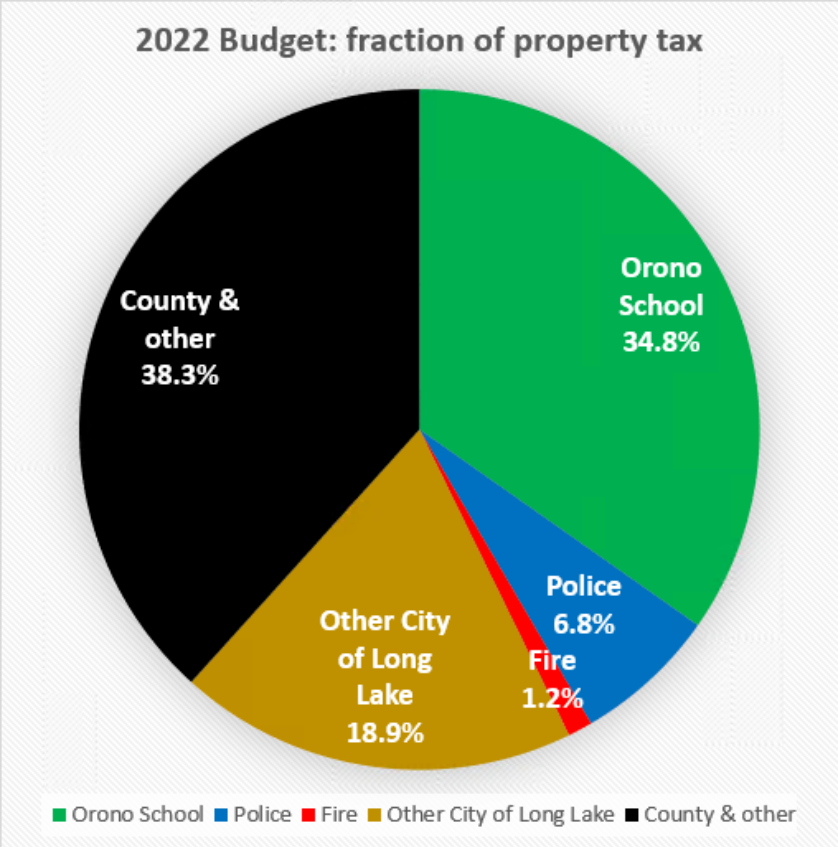
City of Long Lake Expenses



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Option	House Value	Annual Tax to Fire Dept	New Total Property Tax	Tax Increase as % of Property Tax
Long Lake Fire Department	$ 300,000	$ 54	$ 3,745	0%
Orono Fire Department	$ 300,000	$ 59	$ 3,750	0%
Long Lake Area Partnership	$ 300,000	$ 136	$ 3,827	2%
Long Lake Fire Department	$ 410,000	$ 74	$ 5,119	0%
Orono Fire Department	$ 410,000	$ 81	$ 5,126	0%
Long Lake Area Partnership	$ 410,000	$ 185	$ 5,230	2%
Long Lake Fire Department	$ 500,000	$ 90	$ 6,242	0%
Orono Fire Department	$ 500,000	$ 98	$ 6,251	0%
Long Lake Area Partnership	$ 500,000	$ 226	$ 6,378	2%
Long Lake Fire Department	$ 700,000	$ 135	$ 9,364	0%
Orono Fire Department	$ 700,000	$ 148	$ 9,376	0%
Long Lake Area Partnership	$ 700,000	$ 339	$ 9,568	2%

Oversight

- Current Contract Ending 12/31/2025 with Orono and Medina
  - Fire Advisory Board
  - Contract cities approve operating budget
  - Contract cities approve capital improvements
- Service Contract with Orono Scenario
  - Potential for contract cities to provide advisory input, but emphasized no authority
  - Orono alone controls budget and operations management
- Fire District Model
  - Fire Board
  - Partner cities have operation and budget input through representation on Fire Board
  - Removes municipal boundaries

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Long Term: Fire District with Long Lake Fire Station

Cost Now

- Station 1 (340 Willow Drive) half ownership
- Right to purchase rolling stock equipment
- Firefighters recruitment - unknown

Cost 10 Years from Now

- Building $4-$10M?
  - Station 1 building replacement
    - Find land (limited in Long Lake)
    - Building cost
  - Retrofit of Long Lake Public Works?
    - Bring up to code
    - Very expensive
- Replacement Cost for new equipment/ rolling stock?
- Recruitment - unknown

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Summary

- Long Lake Fire Department is an invaluable part of our community & the communities served

- We are proud of our firefighters and the tremendous fire & medical response they provide

- It is of the utmost importance that we approach our future with due diligence and focus on:
  - ★ Public Safety - Locations, Response Times, Resources
  - ★ Partnerships - Collaboration, Efficiencies
  - ★ Costs - Service, Assets, Maintenance

- National trend moving to shared services/fire district model

- Short-term solutions could lead to long-term difficulties

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Public Comment

<u>Please Remember…</u>

- State your:
  - Name
  - Address
  - City
- 3 minutes or less per speaker
- One turn per speaker
- Only speak at podium
- Be courteous
- Being recorded
- ***No decisions are being made tonight***

**Additional feedback can be sent to Long Lake City Council via email to sweske@longlakemn.gov by Tuesday, November 22nd at 5:00 PM*

ASSIGNMENTS FOR SLIDE PRESENTATIONS	
Name	**Slides**
Charlie	1-13
Jahn	14-21
Mike	22-26
Deirdre	27-28
Gina	29-30 +Moderator