



AGENDA
Committee of the Whole
Board Room
33 S. Arlington Heights Rd
May 12, 2025
7:00 PM

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- III. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - A. 04/07/2025 Committee of the Whole Minutes
 - B. 04/14/2025 Committee of the Whole Minutes
- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Appointment of President Pro Tem
 - B. Department Reports:
 - Introduction
 - Human Resources
 - Planning & Community Development
 - Fire Department
- VI. OTHER BUSINESS
- VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone wishing to speak on a subject not on the Agenda may speak at this time. Please limit your comments to three minutes.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Persons with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services, such as an American Sign Language interpreter or written materials in accessible formats, should contact the Health & Human Services Department, at 33 S. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, healthmail@vah.com or 847/368-5760.

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE MEETING OF THE
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
April 7, 2025**

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President Hayes; Trustees Baldino, Bertucci, Dunnington, LaBedz, Schwingbeck, Shirley and Tinaglia

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Grasse

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Village Manager Randy Recklaus; Assistant Village Manager Diana Mikula

OTHERS PRESENT: Carla McAleer; Kate Schwarz; Gavin Ma; Iryna Kiyan

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes Committee of the Whole minutes March 17, 2025

Trustee LaBedz moved to approve the Committee of the Whole minutes from the meeting on March 17, 2025. The motion was seconded by Trustee Schwingbeck.

8 Ayes

0 Nays

The motion passed.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Interview of Carla McAleer for appointment to the Arts Commission, term ending April 30, 2028

Carla's term will officially start on April 30, 2025. The Mayor whole-heartedly recommends Carla for the Arts Commission and stated that Carla is very well qualified and has a passion for the Arts. Additionally, she has skills in event planning and has a background in finance.

Carla stated that she worked at the Metropolis in finance but, since leaving, she misses the involvement with the community and working with other agencies. She is looking to get involved in furthering the Arts in Arlington Heights.

Trustee Dunnington mentioned that she spoke with a muralist about a recent community event in a different town where several muralists created 12 murals around the community during the event.

Trustees thanked Carla for her willingness to serve.

Trustee LaBedz moved, seconded by Trustee Bertucci to concur in the Mayor's appointment of Carla McAleer to the Arts Commission, term ending April 30, 2028.

The following voice vote was recorded:

8 Ayes

0 Nays

The motion passed.

B. Interview of Kate Schwarz for appointment to the Arts Commission, term ending April 30, 2028.

Kate's term will officially start on April 30, 2025. The Mayor whole-heartedly recommends Kate for the Arts Commission and stated that Kate is very well qualified.

Kate grew up in Arlington Heights and worked at the Metropolis as the Director of Education. There, she learned that working with children in the Arts is her biggest passion. She also ran the Arts program in a small community in Alaska, where she was their one life-line to the arts. She currently works at the Park District as the Cultural Arts Supervisor and wants to make sure there is access to the Arts for everybody in Arlington Heights.

Trustee Tinaglia challenged the Arts Commission to think outside of the box to come up with some fun projects and mentioned the past project of "Ponies on Parade".

Trustees thanked Kate for her willingness to serve.

Trustee Dunnington moved, seconded by Trustee Baldino to concur in the Mayor's appointment of Kate Schwarz to the Arts Commission, term ending April 30, 2028.

The following voice vote was recorded:

8 Ayes

0 Nays

The motion passed.

C. Recommendation that the Liquor Commissioner issue a Class A Liquor License to Maax Arlington Heights, LLC dba MAAX Asian BBQ & Hot Pots located at 222 E. Algonquin Road

The Mayor swore in Gavin Ma, owner of Maax Arlington Heights, LLC dba MAAX Asian BBQ & Hot Pots.

Assistant Village Manager Diana Mikula gave the staff report. This location was formerly known as the Rack House BBQ. A walk through was conducted on March 24, 2025 and the submitted floor plan matched what was seen at the establishment. In March 2025, the Police Department completed a background check and no issues were noted. Gavin is leasing the space and the establishment hours are within the permitted hours for liquor sales.

Upon a satisfactory interview tonight, Ms. Mikula stated staff feels it would be appropriate to issue a Class A Liquor License to Maax Arlington Heights, LLC dba MAAX Asian BBQ & Hot Pots located at 222 E. Algonquin Road.

Mayor Hayes asked Gavin about his experience in the restaurant and liquor business. Gavin said he has been in the restaurant business since he was 15 years old. He owns a couple

of different restaurants. This is the second restaurant that he operates himself. He also operates Tomahawk BBQ Steakhouse in Lincolnshire. Tomahawk BBQ has had a liquor license since May 2024 with no suspensions, revocations, citations or violations. He also owns a Thai restaurant which opened in 2012, but that restaurant does not have a liquor license.

Mayor Hayes asked about his Basset certification status. Gavin is Basset certified. He will have approximately 20 employees but has only hired three kitchen staff at this point. Gavin confirmed that anyone in the front of the restaurant dealing with alcohol must be Basset certified. The Mayor recommended bringing in an instructor and having them all trained at once with the in person training.

Gavin is planning to open April 25 and will be operate from 11am – midnight. The Mayor reminded him that there must be at least a limited menu offered to the patrons after 11pm. Gavin expects his patrons to mostly consist of families who come in to enjoy a good meal. The concept is all you can eat, but is not a buffet. Most of the food is cooked on the table so the patrons can see the freshness and quality of the food.

The Mayor asked what the policy will be for carding patrons. Gavin said they will check IDs and will monitor patrons to make sure they are not over-served. The Mayor reminded Gavin about the compliance checks conducted by the Village.

Trustees welcomed Gavin and thanked him for bringing his business to Arlington Heights.

Trustee Baldino moved, seconded by Trustee Dunnington to recommend that the Liquor Commissioner issue a Class A Liquor License to Maax Arlington Heights, LLC dba MAAX Asian BBQ & Hot Pots located at 222 E. Algonquin Road.

The following voice vote was recorded:

8 Ayes

0 Nays

The motion passed.

D. Recommendation that the Liquor Commissioner issue a Class B and Class T Liquor License to Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. dba Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. located at 100 E. Rand Road

The Mayor swore in Iryna Kiyan, owner of Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. dba Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC.

Assistant Village Manager Diana Mikula gave the staff report. A walk through was conducted on March 27, 2025 and the submitted floor plan matched what was seen at the establishment. In February 2025, the Police Department completed a background check on Iryna and no issues were noted. She is leasing the space and establishment hours are within the permitted hours for liquor sales.

Upon a satisfactory interview tonight, Ms. Mikula stated staff feels it would be appropriate to issue a Class B and Class T Liquor License to Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. dba Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. located at 100 E. Rand Road upon receipt of DRAM shop insurance.

Mayor Hayes asked Iryna about her experience in this type of business and her experience with the sale of alcohol. Iryna had a previous deli business in Wheeling with a liquor license for six years. Her license was never suspended or revoked and she was never cited for violations of local liquor laws. A grocery store is a new business for her. The Mayor asked about the corporate policies of the Harvest Fresh Corporation that she is required to follow in regards to liquor sales. Iryna stated that she will set her own policies since this is her business. For marketing purposes, she is using the Harvest Fresh name that some people are familiar with along with her deli name that other people are familiar with. Her husband is a chef so she wants to have his restaurant-quality food in the deli for customers to take home. Ms. Mikula stated that if food or liquor was to be served for consumption on premise, Iryna would need to talk with the Health Department again and would need a different liquor license.

Mayor Hayes asked about her Basset certification status. Iryna is Basset certified. She will hire approximately 30 people and already has the team from her previous business. The Mayor recommended that she bring in a Basset instructor to have the in person training for everyone at the same time.

This business will be open 8am – 9pm, seven days a week. The alcohol will be located in a cooler and on the shelves. The liquor will need to be taken to the cash register. The information from the driver's license will then be entered into the system. Iryna is planning to have tastings for the store opening and/or near Christmas time. It will be set up near customer service.

Trustees welcomed Iryna and thanked her for bringing her business to Arlington Heights.

Trustee Dunnington moved, seconded by Trustee Baldino to recommend that the Liquor Commissioner issue a Class B and Class T Liquor License to Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. dba Harvest Fresh Market & XO Deli, INC. located at 100 E. Rand Road upon receipt of the Certificate of DRAM Shop Insurance.

The following voice vote was recorded:

8 Ayes

0 Nays

The motion passed.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS - none

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Trustee Baldino moved, seconded by Trustee Tinaglia to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:26 pm.

**MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
BOARD ROOM
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025 7:00P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President Hayes; Trustees: Baldino, Dunnington, Grasse, LaBedz, Schwingbeck, Shirley and Tinaglia

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Trustee Bertucci

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager; Melissa Gallagher, Director of Finance and Kim Peterson, Recording Secretary

SUBJECTS:

A. Proposed 2024 General Fund Surplus Transfer

Other Business

Adjournment

President Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

New Business

A. Proposed 2024 General Fund Surplus Transfer

Mr. Recklaus advised that at the close of fiscal year 2024, the Village is fortunate again to have a surplus, which is approximately \$4.7 million, and whenever there is a surplus, Staff looks at different ways to reprogram the money in the most appropriate way. Ms. Gallagher will discuss Staff's proposed 2024 General Fund surplus transfer recommendations.

Ms. Gallagher stated that the Village has a long-standing tradition of being reasonable and financially prudent with its finances. This strategy has been equally important in the past as it is now and reserves are very important in times of economic uncertainty. Reserves also help Staff plan for the future. Ms. Gallagher advised that Staff also needs to be mindful of the possibility that there could be some changes when it comes to grant revenues. Ms. Gallagher stated that the Village's credit rating is Aa1, which is an excellent credit rating. Ms. Gallagher explained how surplus funds have been used in the past and how Staff this year is looking at a longer-term capital

perspective and police and fire pension perspective.

Ms. Gallagher discussed the Village's general fund policy which states that the Village is to maintain a year-end balance of at least 25% of General Fund expenditures, up to a maximum of 40% of unrestricted and unassigned reserves. The Village has historically stayed at the high level of 40%. Ms. Gallagher explained how going into the budget process, Staff planned a surplus of approximately \$750,000 for 2024, but ended higher than that at \$4.7 million. The surplus allows Staff to propose a transfer to some of the Village's longer term capital plan needs and pension funds.

Ms. Gallagher discussed some of the preliminary results from fiscal year 2024, which include a moderation of sales tax, a bit of an increase in income tax and favorable interest earnings, which helped the Village on its revenue side. On the expenditures side, the Village experienced about a 3% decrease, which along with the increased revenue, translated into a better surplus.

Ms. Gallagher discussed the proposed general fund transfers, beginning with the Municipal Parking Fund. Ms. Gallagher explained that the primary revenue source for the Municipal Parking Fund is permits and fines and the revenues are not the same as they were pre-Covid. The capital expenses for the Municipal Parking Fund include parking maintenance and keeping the structures safe and operational. Staff is seeing over time that the expenses are outpacing the revenues, which is why they are recommending a \$500,000 transfer from the general fund for maintenance and capital improvements. The Fleet Fund is the next transfer proposal Ms. Gallagher discussed. The Fleet Fund's primary source of revenue are charges from other funds, which over time builds up funds so the Village can pay for fleet costs. Ms. Gallagher explained how expenses are greater than revenues and vehicle replacement costs are increasing. The Village is also experiencing longer manufacturing times. Staff is proposing an \$800,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Fleet Fund to bolster the reserves and to anticipate some of the larger capital purchases. Ms. Gallagher next discussed the transfer proposal to the Capital Projects Fund. The Capital Projects Fund's main source of revenue is from property taxes, with additional funding coming from the home rule sales tax and grant revenue. The fund balance is \$12 million, with about \$12 million in expenses. The Village is keeping about one year's worth of surplus in the fund to cover capital needs. Ms. Gallagher next discussed the transfer proposal to the Police and Fire Pension Funds. Ms. Gallagher stated that the Village meets its legal obligation every single year by making the annual required contribution into its pension funds. In 2024, the pension funds were able to achieve financial gains because of the return on their assets. Both funds also increased their funded status, which is good news. Ms. Gallagher advised that whenever Staff thinks there is an opportunity, based on the review of surplus, to add additional resources to the Police and Fire Pension Funds for their investment purposes, then they're able to potentially increase the funded status, which reduces over time the property tax in future years.

Trustee Tinaglia asked why there is a difference in the funding levels between the Police and Fire Pension Funds, and asked if the Board should be doing anything to even out these funds. Ms. Gallagher advised there is nothing the Board needs to do as each fund has a make-up of different actuarial results. Each fund has different participants and different retirees, and over time there are different benefit structures.

Mr. Recklaus advised that there are other factors that impact these funds over time, although both of these funds have very respectable funding levels.

Trustee Shirley asked if the Village incurs any expenses because the Police and Fire Pension Funds are not 100% funded, which Ms. Gallagher advised that it is an unfunded liability and the Village is not being penalized. Mr. Recklaus advised that it is better to pay the money up front and collect interest than it is to play catch up.

Trustee LaBedz stated that these are different funding boards who make different decisions in terms of their investments, so that can also have an impact on the end results, which could also explain why there is a disparity between the two funds.

Trustee Tinaglia asked when each fund receives the \$600,000, how much of an impact will it make. Ms. Gallagher stated that she didn't ask the actuary to run it this way, although by the Village putting a lit bit more money in the pension funds, hopefully the actuary will give data that tells the Village that the annual required contribution won't take as much away from the current year property tax. Mr. Recklaus advised this is something Staff can talk to the actuary about. Trustee Tinaglia advised that he asked this question because he wants to know if the Village should be doing more in terms of a larger transfer into these funds.

Trustee Schwingbeck asked Ms. Gallagher if the 10.29% and 12.59% are the gains the pension funds experienced at the end of 2024, which Ms. Gallagher advised they are the return on the investments. Trustee Schwingbeck asked Ms. Gallagher if he is correct in assuming these funds have taken a hit in the last three months, which Ms. Gallagher indicated they have. Trustee Schwingbeck stated that perhaps the Board should give more to these funds than what is being proposed and asked where the funds are right now given the state of the market. Ms. Gallagher advised that when the actuary runs the data, it's as of December 31st, and at this point in the year, it would be really difficult to predict where they will be in December of this year. Mr. Recklaus stated that the market is very volatile and it's difficult to make a future decision based on where they are at now.

Trustee Dunnington asked if more money will be needed in the pension funds if all of the Tier 2 participants move to Tier 1, which Mr. Recklaus advised that if the State does take action and move all of the Tier 2 participants to Tier 1, it would have a pretty significant impact and the funding percentages would drop considerably.

Trustee Baldino asked if these areas were the only areas looked at when Staff was working on determining where to allocate the surplus funds, which Ms. Gallagher advised that these were the only areas they looked at based on the long-term capital needs of the Village.

Trustee Shirley asked if they give more money to the pension funds, can this money be taken back if the Village gets into a position where money is needed, which Ms. Gallagher they cannot. Mr. Recklaus advised that if the Village was ever in a financial pinch they could more comfortably slow the funding of the pensions by giving them this extra money now. President Hayes asked if the pension funds are one of the factors that the rating agencies look at when they assign the Village's bond rating,

which Mr. Recklaus stated they are. President Hayes advised that the pension funds are funded well and competitive compared to other communities, and also contribute to the Village's good bond rating.

Trustee Grasse asked if other communities are experiencing the same problems when it comes to decreasing revenues for the Municipal Parking Fund and if there are any discussions taking place to help find solutions. Mr. Recklaus advised that other municipalities are experiencing the same issue and there a couple of things that can be considered in terms of revenues, including raising fees, although commuter parking right now is competitive and if you raise fees, commuters may just look elsewhere for parking. Also, the Village benefits financially through the sales tax revenue that is generated when non-commuters utilize the Village's parking spaces to enjoy the entertainment district. Mr. Recklaus advised that the Village may never see parking fee revenue like they did before the pandemic, therefore the Board will eventually need to have a longer-term conversation about additional revenue sources.

Trustee LaBedz referred to the Municipal Parking Fund and stated that the projected revenue outlook looks like a pretty dramatic drop and that she would be interested in seeing a monthly data report, as she is seeing more and more commuters using the parking lots and garages. Ms. Gallagher advised that this is a projection over time that also takes into account the expenses, in addition to revenues. Mr. Recklaus stated that maintaining public parking decks is very expensive and it's tricky to fund them.

Trustee Shirley asked if the parking fees have been increased recently, which Mr. Recklaus advised that the Village raised the parking fees several years ago and there will be a time when they will need to be raised again, but the Village does need to be careful to not out-price our immediate neighbors and force some commuters to look for cheaper parking in other nearby towns.

Trustee LaBedz advised the Village also needs to be careful and not raise the price of parking too much and have people parking on residential streets.

Ms. Gallagher advised that Staff has presented the Board with a suggested motion of their recommendations.

President Hayes stated that he really relies on the subject matter experts when it comes to these types of discussions and believes that these are good numbers and is in favor of these recommendations.

Trustee Dunnington asked if there are any grants Staff is concerned about not receiving this fiscal year, which Mr. Recklaus advised that the only grant they know of definitively is BRIC funding, which goes to public safety, and has been frozen. There is also a \$2 million grant from Congressmen Quigley that is supposed to go to the Village's Lead Service Replacement Line project that is on hold for now.

Keith Moens, Arlington Heights resident, referred to the Village's minimum general fund balance policy and stated that the Village has historically always committed to maintaining the year-end balance of 40% of general fund expenditures. Mr. Moens advised that by allowing a range of general fund year-end balances to determine tax

levies would much better serve the residents under different economic conditions. Mr. Moens stated that he thinks the Village's general fund balance policy should be amended to use a range of ending balances to determine tax levies, such as 35 – 40%, which would not harm the bond rating.

Trustee Schwingbeck moved, seconded by Trustee Grasse, that the Committee-of-the-Whole recommend to the Village Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Proposed 2024 General Fund Transfer of \$500,000 to the Municipal Parking Fund, \$800,000 to the Fleet Fund, \$500,000 to the Capital Projects Fund, \$600,000 to the Firefighters' Pension Fund and \$600,000 to the Police Pension Fund totaling \$3,000,000.

Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Trustee Baldino moved, seconded by Trustee LaBedz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.



VILLAGE OF
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
— INC. 1887 —

Committee of the Whole
5/12/2025

Item: Appointment of President Pro Tem

Department: Integrated Services

Item Description:

Appointment of President Pro Tem

ATTACHMENTS:

None



VILLAGE OF
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
— INC. 1887 —

Committee of the Whole
5/12/2025

Item: Department Reports:

Introduction
Human Resources
Planning & Community Development
Fire Department

Department: Integrated Services

Item Description:

Department Reports

Every two years, after Village elections, staff from every department puts together reports that provide an overview of accomplishments and workload over the past two years and anticipated challenges and initiatives for the next two years. These reports are presented to the Village Board in May in preparation for a special Board meeting in the summer where the Village Board will develop Strategic Priorities for the Village for the next two-year cycle.

This cycle begins again with Committee of the Whole meetings on May 12, 27, and June 9. Each department will present their report on one of those evenings.

May 12: Human Resources, Planning & Community Development, Fire Department

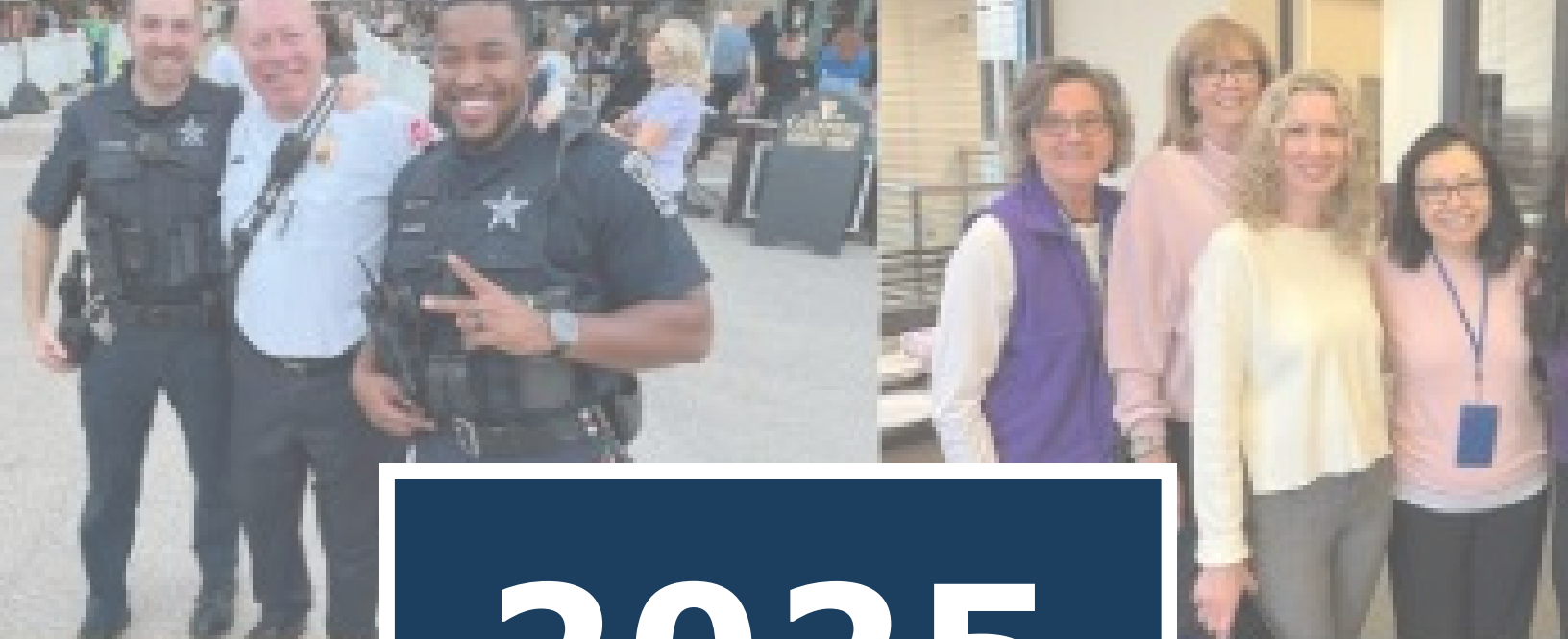
May 27: Police Department, Health and Human Services, Finance

June 9: Integrated Services Department, Building and Life Safety, Public Works & Engineering

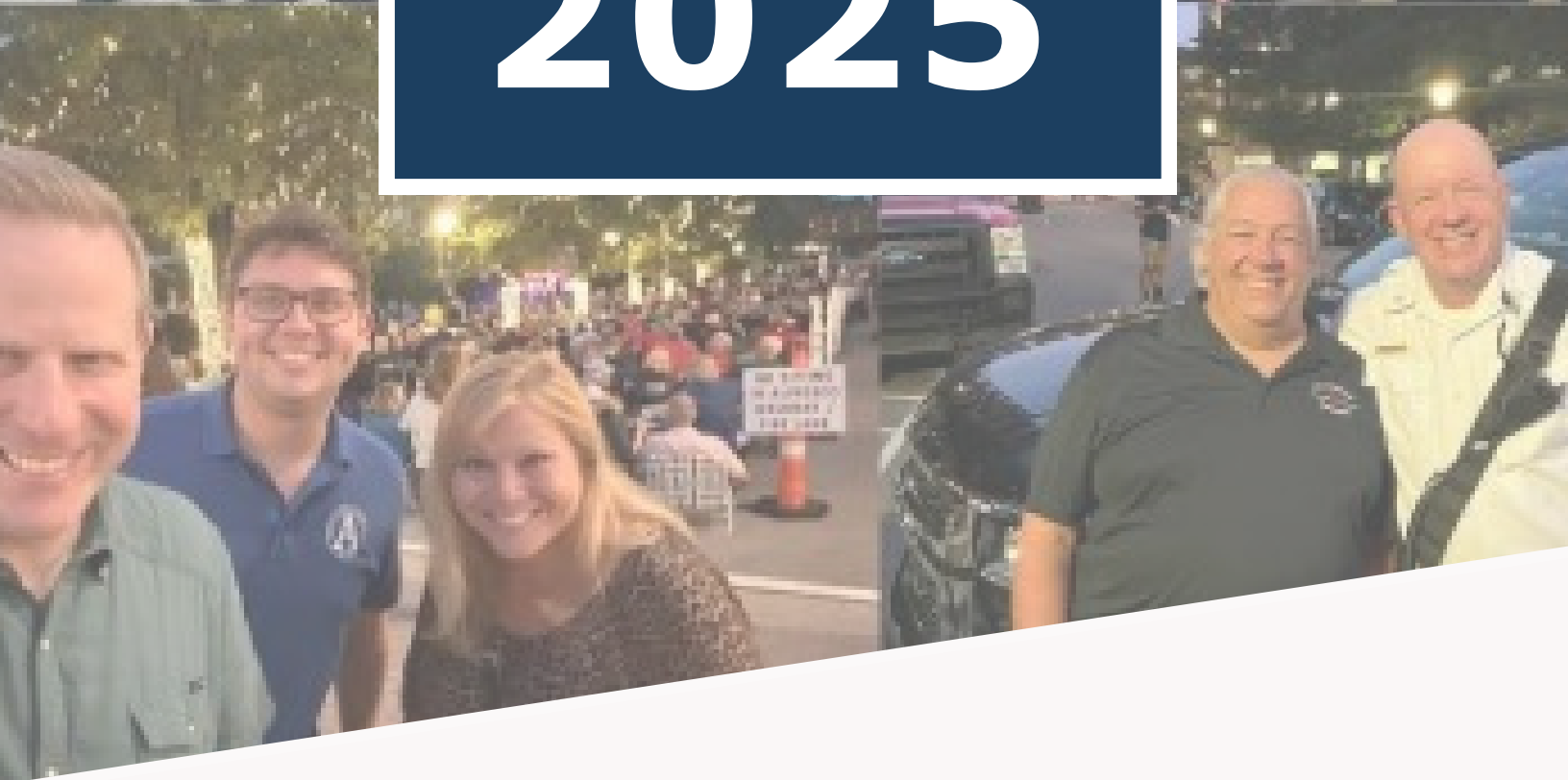
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ATTACHMENTS:

1. HR Biennial Department Report
2. P&CD Biennial Department Report
3. Fire Biennial Department Report



2025



BIENNIAL DEPARTMENT REPORT

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

KELLY LIVINGSTON, DIRECTOR





HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Scope of Department Services

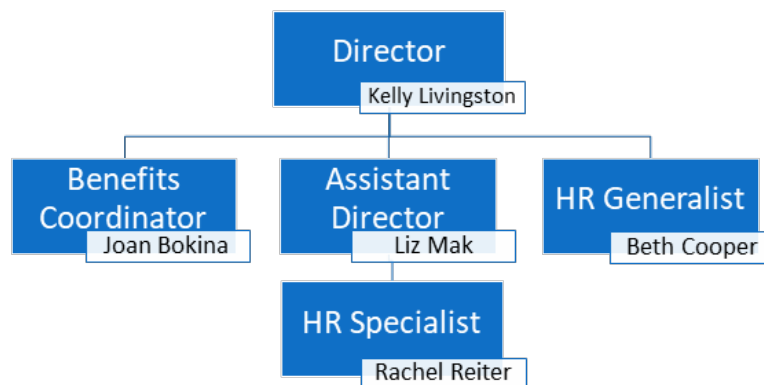
The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for talent acquisition; employee relations; classification and compensation; employee benefits and wellness; administration of workers' compensation claims; risk mitigation and risk management; contract administration for collective bargaining agreements; new hire onboarding; policy formulation and maintenance; compliance of rules, regulations, and laws; employee training and development; succession planning; and leadership development initiatives. Additional responsibilities include administrative and management research and projects assigned to the Department by the Village Manager. The Department provides fair, ethical, and responsive customer service to all employees of the organization.

The Human Resources Department also serves as the liaison to the Village's Board of Fire and Police Commissioners. This Board is involved in the appointment, promotion, discipline, and discharge of sworn ranking members of the Fire and Police Departments.

Key Services and Functions & Organizational Overview

The HR Department is dedicated to supporting the Village's workforce and promoting a positive organizational culture. HR takes pride in providing exceptional services to support a high-quality workforce while maintaining the Village's operational and fiscal stability.

The Department consists of five employees, including the Director of Human Resources, who leads and manages the daily operations of the Department. As the head of the Department, the Director provides guidance and direction, ensuring the effective implementation of personnel policies and programs throughout the Village's operations.



Director of Human Resources

- Oversees the Human Resources Department.
- Leads and directs the HR team to effectively execute HR programs and initiatives.
- Develops and implements HR strategies that support the Village's strategic priorities.
- Collaborates with senior leadership on various topics; identifies personnel needs and employee performance and discipline concerns.
- Ensures a positive working environment by addressing employee concerns, resolving conflicts, and promoting a healthy organizational culture.
- Manages risk by advising on legal matters related to employee relations and Village policies.

- Participates in the collective bargaining process and is a member of Management's negotiation team.
- Serves as staff liaison for the Village's Board of Police and Fire Commissioners.

Benefits Administration

- Overseeing employee benefits, such as health insurance, retirement plans and leave entitlements. Assist employees with benefits-related questions, changes, and managing the Open Enrollment process.
- Ensuring compliance with mandated reporting such as Affordable Care Act (ACA) reporting, Public Act 97-0609 total compensation reporting, Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), the EEO-4 report, Public Safety Employee Benefits Act (PSEBA) reporting, and Prescription Drug Data Collection (RxDC) reporting.

Risk Management, Workers' Compensation, Safety, Loss Prevention

- Promoting a healthy, safe, and inclusive work environment and address issues related to harassment and discrimination, including an anonymous, confidential online form to submit concerns and ideas.
- Collaborating with other departments to identify and evaluate potential risks and establish and manage risk management initiatives.
- Managing worker's compensation claims and ensuring compliance with regulations.
- Monitoring and revising Village policies and procedures, ensuring all employees adhere to the same standards of operation.
- Ensuring that the Village complies with OSHA regulations.
- Offering programs that focus on the physical and mental well-being of employees.

Labor and Employee Relations

- Ensuring the Village follows all local, state, and federal laws including regulations on wages, work hours, and employee rights.
- Fostering a productive relationship with Police and Fire bargaining unit members, including contract negotiations and the resolution of labor-management matters.
- Conducting Village-wide surveys and analyzing the results to inform policies and practices.
- Planning and hosting employee recognition and appreciation events, such as the Service Award luncheon and Employee Appreciation luncheon.

Classification / Compensation

- Developing and managing salary structures, wage rates, and compensation policies. Regularly conduct surveys and large-scale classification studies to analyze internal and external data and trends in the public sector to inform changes.
- Reviewing, updating, and maintaining accurate job descriptions to reflect current roles, responsibilities, qualifications, and expectations.

Staff Development & Employee Training

- Organizing training programs to help employees develop necessary skills, enhance job performance, and meet the Village's goals.
- Offering programs for management and leadership skill development.

Recruitment & Personnel Management

- Recruiting and hiring top talent to meet the Village's operational needs.
- Managing the hiring process.
- Coordinating onboarding of new employees in collaboration with hiring departments. Ensure employees receive the necessary tools and resources for their jobs.
- Conducting exit interviews and support departments during employee transitions.
- Designing and manage performance evaluation systems.
- Supporting supervisors and offering guidance in issuing Performance Improvement Plans

Workload & Performance Data

The HR Department uses data to identify trends and make informed decisions. The data below demonstrates some of the metrics the Department is using to evaluate performance, workload, and risk year-over-year.

Recruitment and Staffing

Recruitment is an essential function of the Human Resources Department, involving steps to attract, evaluate, and hire the best candidate for each position. The chart below details a number of key metrics for Village positions filled in 2023 and 2024.

	2023	2024
Positions Filled – including new hires, position changes, job transfers, promotions	67	72
Internal Employee Growth – including promotions and reclassifications *also counted in Positions Filled	11	26
Paid Learning Opportunities – including internships, apprenticeships	20	20
Interviews Conducted with HR Staff	159	170
Employment Applications Submitted (*does not include the selection process for sworn Police and Fire candidates)	2,463	2,172
Average Time to Fill Vacancies	62 days	48 days

Fire & Police Commission

As the Village staff liaison to the Board of Fire and Police Commission, the HR Department coordinates the recruitment process for entry-level and promotional positions in both the Fire and Police Departments. The candidate process varies but has similar components for both Fire and Police Department positions. HR, in partnership with the Fire and Police Departments and the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, are dedicated to filling vacant positions with qualified candidates. The recruitment cycle for entry level police officers is conducted annually or as needed. Firefighter recruitment and promotional cycles of fire lieutenant and police sergeant take place on a biennial basis.

	2023	2024
Fire & Police Commission Meetings Conducted	16	16
Interviews Conducted	37	33
Candidate Eligibility Lists Established	3	6

Workforce Planning - Full-Time Employees

The chart below shows the percentage and number of non-union and union employees eligible for retirement over the next three years. The HR department uses this data to proactively address upcoming staffing needs.

	% Eligible Non-Union	# Eligible Non-Union	% Eligible Union	# Eligible Union
2025	24%	56	27%	48
2026	31%	72	29%	53
2027	33%	78	30%	55

Note: For analysis, this data assumes employees are eligible for retirement under the Tier 1 Regular Plan Pension for IMRF, IAFF, and MAP. The IAFF and MAP eligible employees counted in this data are at least age 50 with 20 years of service and the IMRF eligible employees are at least age 55 with 8 years of service or more.

Workforce Pension Eligibility

The Village is monitoring the percentage of full-time employees who will retire under “Tier 1” or “Tier 2” due to growing concerns of a higher risk for injury as “Tier 2” participating employees are required to have more years of service and remain in the workforce longer.

Pension	Tier 1- # of employees	Tier 2 - # of employees*
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IAFF	68	40
IMRF	104	109
MAP	43	62

**Participating "Tier 2" employees in the IMRF pension are eligible for early retirement at age 62, full retirement at age 67, and are 100% vested after 10 years. "Tier 2" employees who participate in IAFF & MAP pensions are eligible for retirement if they are at least 60 years old and have at least 10 years of Qualifying Service immediately prior to reaching eligibility; or have 30 years of Qualifying Service, regardless of age' or, receive Permanent Total Disability Benefits from the Plan, regardless of age.*

Risk Management, Workers' Compensation & Employee Safety

The HR Department monitors various different risk management data to identify trends and patterns and to develop specific initiatives to assist with reduction of similar incidents in the future. The Department partners with the Police, Fire, and Public Works to identify and address the unique risks inherent in each of the department's work environments.

	2023	2024
Workplace injury claims forwarded to IRMA	32	43
Workdays lost to Workers' Compensation Injury	257	263
Workdays spent on modified work assignments	222	243
Accidents Reviewed*	35	89
Safety training programs sponsored by the HR Department	4	5

**Due to staffing, many accidents reviewed in 2024 occurred in the year prior.*

Professional Development & Wellness Programs

The Village is committed to professional development and wellness initiatives. Based on feedback from an all-employee survey, employees expressed interest in expanded programming to support their growth and well-being. The HR Department increased the number of professional development classes and employee wellness and engagement events in 2024.

	2023	2024
Professional development classes offered	3	9
Financial wellness programs offered	46	46
Employee wellness and engagement events	26	36

Key Accomplishments During 2023 – 2024 Period

Leveraging Technology to Improve Services

The Human Resources Department enhanced efficiency and employee support by refining policies, leveraging technology, and streamlining processes. HR successfully completed the conversion of employee data from legacy systems to the new Tyler Munis ERP. With the implementation of the Tyler Munis Human Capital Management Module (HCM), Human Resources has offered improved service delivery for employees by effectively managing employee data, benefits, recruitment, performance, risk management, and payroll processes in a single system.

Employee Outreach

In January 2024, the Village successfully piloted its inaugural all-employee survey and listening sessions as part of an overall outreach program with employees.

After analyzing the feedback received, the HR Department implemented the following initiatives to address identified areas of growth:

- Expanded the Village's tuition reimbursement program, reinforcing the Village's commitment to providing ongoing learning and development to help employees excel in their current roles and prepare for future positions within the Village.
- Restructured the Wellbeing Committee to short-term "task groups" open to all employees with the goal of increasing engagement.
- Launched a Village-wide employee recognition program for employees to commend the achievements of others. Submissions are featured on the intranet and shared by email with all staff on a monthly basis.
- Created on-demand career development training focused on assisting employees with resume building and interviews skills to prepare for promotional opportunities.
- Offered trainings focused on skill development, including a supervisory refresher course for Village supervisors and a leadership/professional development course for Fire Department personnel.
- Enhanced communication and engagement through the use of SharePoint pages, a centralized and user-friendly platform to access important information such as benefits guides, wellness programs, and an events calendar.

Recruitment & Personnel Management

HR focuses on a strong recruitment process to attract and hire the most qualified talent, enhance employee productivity, and reduce turnover cost. Recently, the Department:

- Streamlined the hiring process using Tyler Munis, decreasing the length of time positions are vacant, reducing internal administrative workload, and increasing the number of high-quality applicants.
- Optimized job postings by using posting locations with high search engine visibility to attract a broader and qualified candidate pool.
- Expanded in-person recruiting efforts, including attending job fairs organized by local government representatives and employment agencies, NIU, and the D214 Skilled Trades Fair.
- Strengthened the partnership with D214 to offer internships for students that offer exposure to public sector careers and increased the long-term talent pipeline.
- Increased efforts to educate the public on types of career pathways on social media to promote Village employment, including partnering with the Communications team to feature stories highlighting individual and team accomplishments.
- Amplified our employer brand by welcoming new team members to the Village on social media.
- Improved integration of new employees by addressing and implementing gaps in onboarding, including training on newly implemented Village systems, updated resources for Supervisors to use, and improving the experience of new employees during their first weeks at the Village.
- Developed recruitment materials for Director-level positions and successfully managed the recruitment process in-house without the use of a consulting firm, resulting in a cost savings to the Village.
- Implemented a new exit interview process to analyze trends affecting retention and satisfaction.
- Launched a new employee survey to assess experiences with recruitment, hiring, and onboarding.
- Increased the frequency of employee engagement and employee appreciation initiatives.
- Offered multiple professional development sessions, which were available to all employees.
- Launched a supplemental employee self-assessment to the Village's annual performance evaluation system, designed to gather employee input and assist supervisors with fostering more productive evaluations.

Risk Management

Human Resources risks are present at every step of the employment life cycle: hiring, retention, employee relations, daily work expectations, safety, and employment separation. In 2023-2024, the HR Department made significant strides to develop risk management practices which are both proactive and responsive to the unique needs of our workforce, staff:

- Established the *Your Voice Matters* initiative, a confidential tool for employees to share workplace safety issues, ethical concerns, or provide other suggestions to the HR Department to improve practices.

- Introduced a workplace safety program to promote a safety-focused workplace through training, newsletters, and monthly communications.
- Created a new safety newsletter to promote safety awareness Village-wide and keep employees updated on current trends, best practices, and tips to mitigate potential risks at work.
- Developed an annual training calendar to communicate opportunities for employee professional development.
- Created a safety training site to provide training to employees based on injury trends, offer department-specific programs, and provide Village-wide courses.
- Conducted a safety survey to gather and address employee's concerns in the workplace environment. Summaries were shared with department directors to review the feedback and identify areas of improvement. The HR department is collaborating with leadership to develop targeted safety initiatives, address specific concerns, and implement action plans to enhance workplace safety.
- Analyzed IRMA's risk policy review to identify injury trends and implement recommendations. In response to this, training modules were offered to Fire Department personnel to teach personnel safe lifting and patient-moving techniques to avoid injury.
- Launched the *Wellness Warriors* group comprised of employees dedicated to providing recommendations on how to improve wellness initiatives in the Village.

Compensation and Benefits

In the last 2 years, the HR Department made several improvements to the benefits and services offered to employees:

- Launched the Village's first electronic open enrollment through Tyler Munis, allowing employees to enroll and change benefits on a single platform. HR facilitated a successful process by creating a step-by-step user guide for employees, visiting all Village locations in-person to address questions and challenges. Employees are now able to take a more active role in their own benefits management.
- Hosted an in-person Benefit Fair at multiple locations to assist employees with selecting an appropriate benefits package and provided personal assistance with using the online Open Enrollment portal.
- Provided employees with more flexibility to choose the health insurance options that best meets their needs by transitioning from a 2-tier (Single or Family) medical and dental enrollment structure to a 4-tier structure allowing employees the ability to choose from single, single + spouse, single + child(ren), or family coverage, which resulted in cost savings for many employees.
- Addressed the increasing costs of medical claims and premiums for public safety employees who suffer a catastrophic injury after closely reviewed the Public Safety Employee Acts (PSEBA) requirements along with the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) and surveyed more than 30 other communities. In accordance with PSEBA requirements, the Village decided to exclude paying for Medicare Supplement coverage effective January 1, 2025.
- Eliminated the HMO Illinois medical plan resulting in financial savings for both employees and Village with no benefit disruptions to the employee.
- Expanded voluntary employee-paid benefits offerings with Wishbone Pet Insurance and Met Life Legal services.

Compliance and Labor Relations

Village of Arlington Heights Police and Fire bargaining unit members are represented by two unions. As a result, the Human Resources Department is involved in negotiating contracts and addressing occasional labor-management matters. The Director of Human Resources and the Assistant Village Manager make up the Village Administration's negotiation team and work to maintain positive relationships with both unions. The HR Department:

- Began preparation for upcoming contract negotiations. Both contracts will expire on December 31, 2025, and negotiations are expected to begin in the Fall of 2025.
- Facilitated a revision of the Board of Fire and Police Commission rules to ensure continued compliance with applicable laws and consistency with current best practices. These changes will improve hiring and promotional processes.

- Completed a revision of examination elements for entry-level and promotional opportunities to allow the Village and Board of Fire and Police Commission to navigate through the hiring process in an expedited manner.

Review of Current and Anticipated Challenges

The Human Resources Department anticipates the following challenges in coming years and is taking proactive steps to address these challenges, ensuring that the Village is able to effectively navigate:

- The upcoming loss of significant institutional knowledge with pending retirements, as 26% of current employees are eligible to retire in 2025 and 30% of current employees are eligible to retire in 2026.
- Retention of top talent and remaining an employer of choice among local municipalities given the competitive nature and the changing landscape of workforce. This includes creating an inclusive workplace culture and continuing to offer competitive salaries, benefits, and workplace practices. The HR Department assessed employee satisfaction in the all-employee survey and frequently surveys comparable municipalities to ensure the Village's offerings remain competitive.
- Shifting workforce expectations, driven by younger generations' desire for better work-life balance, flexibility, and career growth are leading to higher rates of turnover and prompting changes in HR strategies. This new environment requires HR to adapt its approach to effectively attract and retain these workers through fostering a strong workplace culture, opportunities for career growth, and competitive benefits.
- Addressing the potential workplace impacts of policy changes and executive orders under the new presidential administration. The Department is monitoring the evolving legal landscape, ensuring policies and practices remain compliant with state and federal mandates.
- Implementing new collective bargaining agreements with Police and Fire unions. Negotiations will begin in Fall 2025. The Human Resources Department is committed to facilitating clear and open communication and effectively balancing employees' needs with the Village's resources and objectives.
- In the last two years, the Department transitioned from using a paper-heavy filing and record keeping system and an outdated HRIS system to a primarily digital record keeping system and the Tyler Munis System. The Department continues to evaluate ways to reduce manual tasks and improve record keeping and data analytic capabilities in light of the system's limitations.
- The increase in both minimum retirement age and required years of service for Tier 2 pension-qualifying employees has extended time in the workforce, resulting in an increased risk of work-related injuries. The HR department will continue to work with departments to schedule annual trainings to teach preventative body movement mechanics and injury specific trainings to protect our employees and minimize risk to the Village.
- Balancing the ability to continue to deliver high quality insurance options to our employees with the fiscal impact of rising medical costs to the Village.
- Across the nation, law enforcement departments find police officer recruitment to be increasingly challenging. While the Village remains in a strong position compared to many communities, it is continuing to monitor and adapt to the changing landscape, while maintaining its commitment to upholding high standards for officers.
- Remaining responsive and proactive while planning for short-term and long-term staffing implications should the services provided in the community change.
- The Village's workforce is diverse; its staff is comprised of several generations, with varying needs and expectations of their employer. Continuing to understand, adapt, and meet the needs of all employees continues to be a challenge.
- Communicating new and existing processes across multiple platforms to be effective for all employees.
- Continuing to develop and improve the use of metrics to help identify trends and use data-based decision making for services provided to employees.
- Analyzing data from exit interviews to enact positive change across the Village.
- The HR Department continues to monitor the increasing use of AI and its impact on the workforce. The Department does not currently use AI for talent management. However, AI tools are being

increasingly used by applicants as well as employees. The Department anticipates future impacts on workforce practices, policies, training, and use of tools in the future.

Potential and New Initiatives to Explore

The HR Department will continue to focus on supporting and empowering employees to do their best work and continue to grow and develop their career. Some upcoming initiatives the Department is exploring are:

- Exploring options for cross-departmental knowledge sharing.
- Expanding and increasing the types and amounts of professional development, trainings, and leadership development programs to support employees' growth and skill development.
- Providing learning opportunities for employees focused on physical and mental health, wellness, financial planning, and skill development to help employees succeed at work.
- Increasing informational sessions on HR-related topics throughout the year.
- Assessing employee needs and financial ability to enhance employee benefits packages.
- Continuing to improve employee onboarding in order to assist new employees with integrating with the Village and cultivating a stronger sense of belonging within the organization.
- Creating additional ways to recognize employees and show appreciation.
- Continuing to focus on empowering employees by providing access to resources and improving communication platforms such as the Village Intranet.
- Articulating a Village identity and culture to aid in recruitment, retention, engagement, and employee buy-in.
- Increasing the number of working groups to continue to engage employees and foster cross-departmental collaboration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, over the last two years, the Human Resources Department made significant progress in enhancing operations and modernizing practices, beginning with a successful transition to the Tyler Munis Human Capital Management Module (HCM) which improved the Department's ability to maintain accurate employee data and deliver more responsive services for employees.

In addition, the Department prioritized updating communication methods, digitizing forms, and updating policies and procedures to make work processes more efficient across the Village. This commitment to continual improvement will be a focus in coming years, as the needs of our employees change. As workplace expectations shift, the Department will remain proactive in fostering a supportive and responsive environment for the dedicated employees who serve our Village.



2025

BIENNIAL DEPARTMENT REPORT

PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

EMILY RODMAN, DIRECTOR





PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

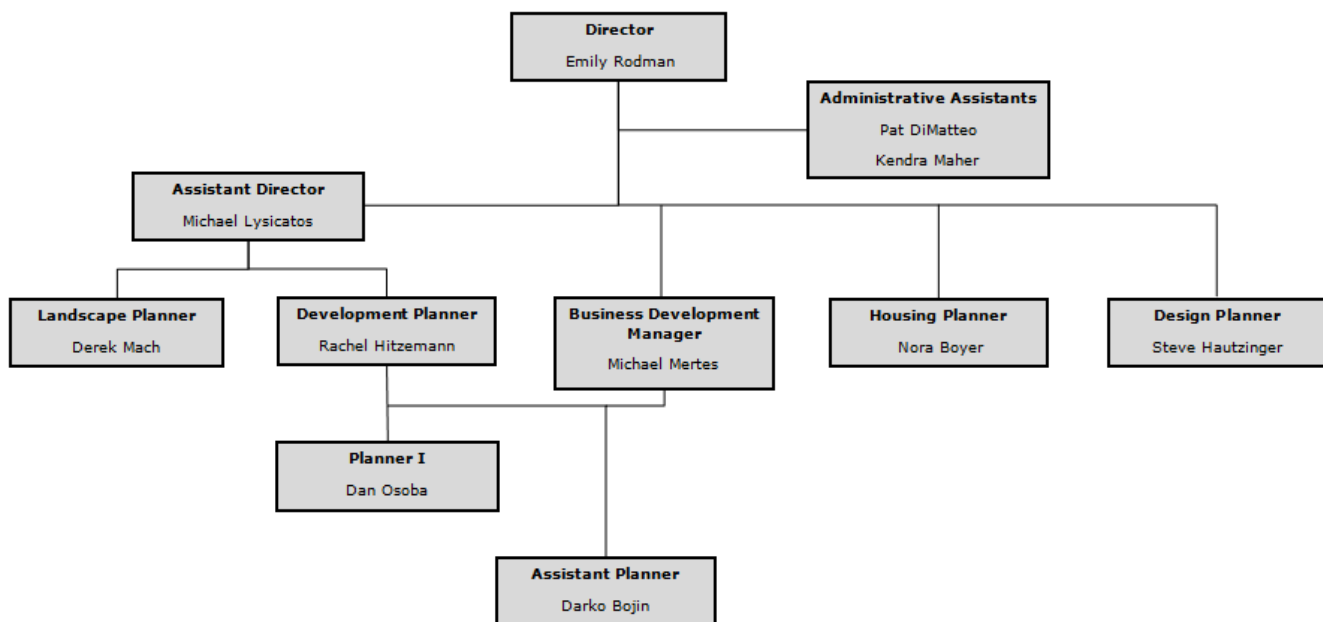
Scope of Department Services

The Planning & Community Development Department is comprised of 11 full-time employees. Staff provide professional and technical assistance regarding short and long-term planning initiatives, zoning, subdivision, economic development, architectural design, urban design, and beautification. The Department also administers State and Federal grant programs and housing initiatives, including the inclusive housing program and the community art program.

Responsibilities of the Department are established within the Illinois State Statutes and the Arlington Heights Municipal Code. The Illinois State Statutes set forth statutory obligations for planning, zoning, tax increment financing, and other land use regulatory provisions.

Key Services and Functions & Organizational Overview

Planning & Community Development Department Organizational Chart



Department Vision Statement

A Planning & Community Development Department that is recognized as an award-winning professional Department providing a pro-business environment while maintaining a superior quality of life and ensuring quality development that is balanced and meets the needs of the citizens of Arlington Heights.

Department Objectives

- Provide professional expertise and assistance
- Promote the highest quality development reflective of the community
- Balance the needs and concerns of Arlington Heights residents
- Provide timely and professional advice to the Village Board and other Boards and Commissions
- Provide dedicated and courteous assistance to the public
- Implement the Department's budget in a fiscally responsible manner
- Ensure planning related data is up-to-date and maintained

Department Focus Areas

The responsibilities of the Planning & Community Development Department fall into six general categories.

1) Zoning & Development Review

This includes the coordination of the Village's development review process for new development or redevelopment including PUD's, rezoning, special uses, preliminary and final plats of subdivision, land use variations, and zoning variations. Staff analyzes issues and formulates recommendations to the Plan Commission and Village Board regarding the Zoning and Subdivision Control Regulations to better implement the Comprehensive Plan. Staff also reviews building permits for compliance with zoning & subdivision, and sign codes.

2) Long Range / Comprehensive Planning

Staff formulates policies affecting overall and long-term Village development; collects, analyzes and presents data to determine community goals, assists in their attainment, interprets the Comprehensive Plan, and implements the Comprehensive Planning Program. Staff facilitates development of the Downtown Master Plan, South Arlington Heights Road Corridor Plan, Hickory Kensington Redevelopment Plan, Tax Increment Financing Districts, and coordinates their implementation.

3) Redevelopment & Tax Increment Financing

Staff analyzes, defines, selects, and prepares specific area redevelopment studies including Downtown revitalization efforts. Staff administers the Village's four Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, including the annual Joint Review Board meetings and reporting.

4) Business & Economic Development

Staff coordinates the Village's Business Retention and Attraction Programs, recruiting new businesses to the community and working to retain existing businesses. Staff monitors community and economic development activities, and promotes and markets the Village to maintain and enhance its economic base. Staff also develops and coordinates the "Take it to the Heights" marketing campaign and the Village's Economic Development Strategy.

5) Design Review & Beautification

Staff oversees the Design Commission Review and Administrative Review process for single family homes, commercial development, and signage. Staff develops and implements the Village's Design Guidelines. Staff also identifies and designs various capital improvement projects including: Downtown streetscape, beautification, pedestrian spaces, banners, signage, and Green corridors.

6) Housing

Staff administers various grant programs available from Federal agencies and provides assistance to qualified residents and public/private agencies in obtaining funds for eligible services. Staff prepares the Village's Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, Fair Housing Plan, and monitors legislation. Staff implements the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance and Housing Trust Fund and monitors developments for compliance.

Planning & Management Assistance

Staff maintains and updates planning-related data; responds to inquiries on planning, zoning, signage, and subdivision matters; and conducts studies which assist the decision-making process of Village development. Staff analyzes and interprets zoning for all properties in the Village, Planned Unit Developments (PUD's), and special uses.

Board & Commission Support

Staff provides technical and administrative support, professional assistance, and liaison to the following Boards and Commissions, which typically meet 1-2 times monthly:

1. Village Board
2. Plan Commission
3. Conceptual Plan Review Committee (subset of Plan Commission)

4. Zoning Board of Appeals
5. Housing Commission
6. Design Commission
7. Arts Commission
8. Economic Alliance
9. Annual Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Joint Review Boards (4 total)

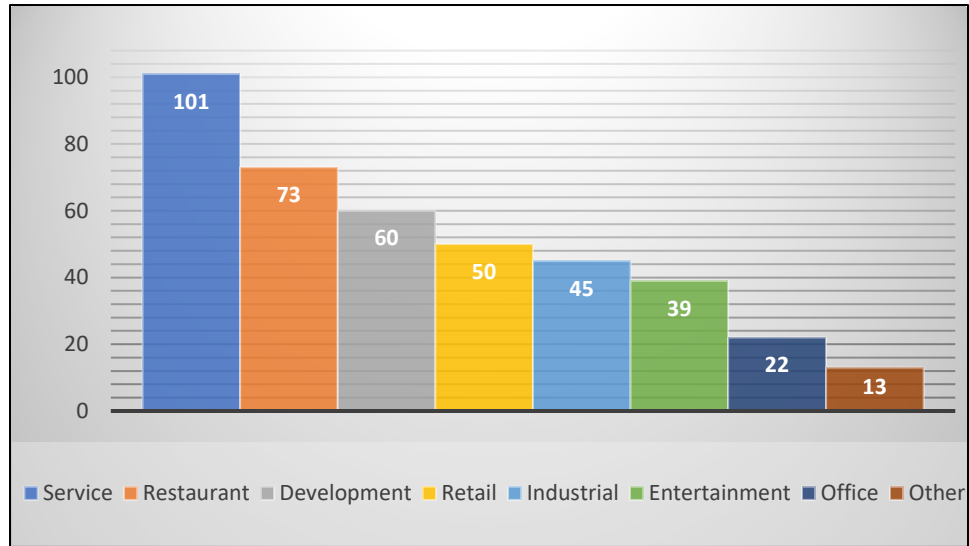
Workload & Performance Data

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	2022	2023	2024
Development – Plan Commission			
# of Temporary Files	46	30	37
# of Conceptual Plan Review Committee Cases	28	23	23
# of Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee Cases	0	0	0
# of Ordinance Review Committee Cases	2	0	1
# of PC Applications	22	19	24
Development – Other			
# of all Zoning Reviews	2,243	1,588	2,101
# of ZBA Applications/Reviewed	33	44	40
# of Building Permit Reviews	1,978	1,366	1,810
# of Business License Reviews	166	129	163
# of Home Occupation Reviews	9	7	11
# of Sign Permits	296	242	198
# FOIA's	98	93	76
# Special Use Waiver Restaurant	7	7	10
# Special Use Waiver Antenna	12	1	3
# Admin. Parking Waiver	1	2	1
# Code Enforcement	23	38	31
Community Development			
# Single-Family Rehab Projects	2	1	3
# Rental Rehab Units	0	0	0
# CDBG Public Services Beneficiaries	562	454	503
# Public Facility Improvement Projects	1	1	6
Design Review			
# of Reviews by Design Commission	41	53	37
# of Administrative Single-Family Homes	43	33	38
# of Administrative Signage Reviews	8	1	2
# of Administrative Commercial	0	0	2
# of Temporary Files	30	15	25
# of Miscellaneous Administrative Reviews	0	0	1
# of Small Rear Yard Addition Reviews	43	39	32

Business Retention & Attraction

In 2024, the Department engaged with 403 unique businesses and developers representing potential commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments for the community. This represents an increase of 89 efforts compared to 2023, and an increase of 107 compared to 2022.

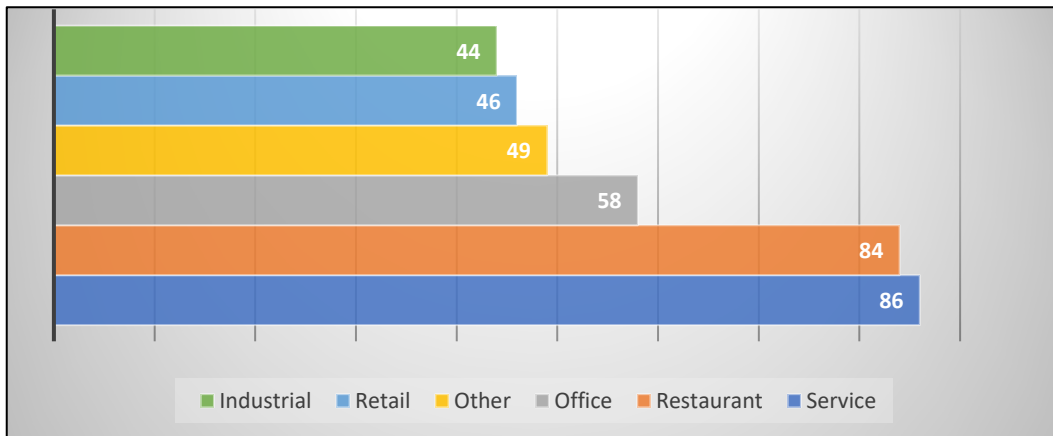
Recruitment Efforts by Business Type



Note: "Other" includes auto, hotel, & institutional uses

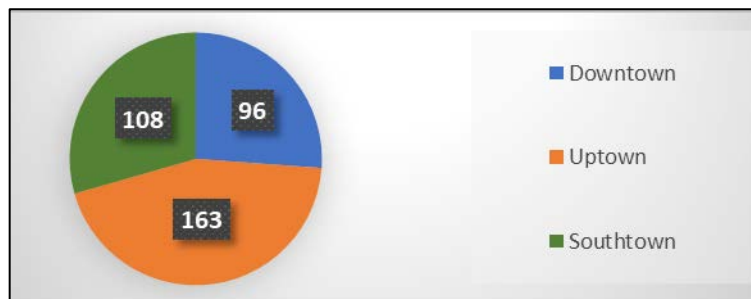
Communication and coordination with existing businesses is a critical aspect of the Department's economic development efforts. In 2024, the Department directly assisted 367 different Arlington Heights businesses. This represents an increase of 10 efforts compared to 2023, and an increase of 59 compared to 2022.

Retention Efforts by Business Type



Note: "Other" includes auto, development, entertainment, hotel & institutional uses

Retention Efforts by Business Location



Key Accomplishments During 2023 – 2024 Period

Arlington Alfresco

The success of Arlington Alfresco has continued. The Village uses Placer.ai data to track visitors to downtown Arlington Heights during the peak Alfresco months of May-September:

- In 2019 (pre-COVID), 131,500 people visited Downtown 247,000 times.
- In 2024, 169,000 people visited Downtown 309,500 times.

The benefits to the restaurants are also shown in a substantial increase in sales. From June-September 2019, restaurants within the Alfresco zone conducted \$6.8 million in sales. Those same restaurants generated \$9.4 million in sales in 2024 over the same four-month period. The Village continues to enhance the Arlington Alfresco experience each year and in 2025 will purchase new signage and entry barrier covers.

Zero Interest Loan Programs

The Village's Zero Interest Loan Fund for small businesses is funded by a 10% repayment on the savings businesses receive from issuance of a tax abatement. From 2023-2024, the Village issued five loans totaling \$120,000 in assistance. Since the program's inception, 34 loans totaling \$523,000 have been issued.

The program was modified in October 2024 to offer three unique versions of the program:

- Mega Loan: Max \$100,000 loan for substantial projects; collateral (lien on real estate) required to secure loan
- Standard Loan: Max \$25,000 loan for various tangible expenses; collateral (lien on real estate) required to secure loan
- Microloan: Max \$5,000 loan for smaller projects; personal guarantee required instead of collateral

Housing Initiatives

The Department administers State and Federal grant programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. In 2023 (federal 2022/2023), Village CDBG funds were used to complete one homeowner single-family rehab project, assist 54 homeless or unstably housed residents, replace HVAC equipment at one group home, and provide social services to 454 Arlington Heights residents. In 2024 (federal 2023/2024), Village CDBG funds were used to complete 3 homeowner single-family rehab projects, assist 109 homeless or unstably housed residents, renovate 6 group homes, and provide social services to 388 residents.

In 2023 and 2024, staff reviewed and the Housing Commission made recommendations to the Village Board concerning affordable housing plans under the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance for five projects:

- 5 N Douglas with 6 affordable rental units
- 116-120 W Eastman with 7 affordable rental units and a fee in lieu of 3.125 units
- Grace Terrace with 25 permanently supportive affordable rental units
- Arlington Gateway with 30 affordable rental units
- Old County Lane Townhomes with 1 affordable rental unit.

Key Development Projects

The Department is currently working with private developers on the redevelopment of key properties within the Village. Some of these projects are still in the planning and zoning entitlement process and others have received Village approvals but not yet begun construction. Staff works with developers from project concept through construction and occupancy to ensure successful project completion. Below is the status of several of these key development projects.

- **Hickory Kensington Redevelopment**

This project is well underway and portions of the development are complete. Staff is currently working with a private developer on the 5 N. Douglas mixed-use project. Completion of the remaining portions of the redevelopment plan hinge on both private development financing and ComEd and Union Pacific Railroad.

- **TIV IV International Plaza Redevelopment**

The developer is continuing to work on financing for this significant redevelopment project. Staff is currently in negotiations with them on the Redevelopment Agreement. They anticipate submitting for zoning entitlements in early summer 2025.

- **Arlington Downs**

The developer previously submitted a concept for review for a portion of the remaining development. The Village was not supportive of the concept and is awaiting resubmittal.

- **Arlington 425**

The developer has indicated difficulties with financing this project and recently submitted a letter to the Village stating he does not intend to move forward. Staff will be regrouping with the developer in the coming weeks on his intentions.

- **Gateway Project (South Arlington Heights Road)**

This project is currently under construction.

- **116-120 Eastman**

This six-story mixed use project has received zoning entitlements but the developer has indicated difficulties with financing the project. The developer is currently evaluating alternative designs which may be easier for them to finance.

In addition to the day-to-day development review projects and ongoing project management, the Department is working on several other initiatives.

- **Sustainability Plan**

Staff is working with an interdepartmental team to develop and update a Sustainability Plan for the Village. The Plan will offer a framework of goals and strategies across departments with measurable outcomes and a range of short and long-term priorities.

- **Implementation and Enhancement of the South Arlington Heights Road Key Gateway**

Staff is evaluating streetscape and beautification opportunities as part of individual redevelopment projects as they proceed.

- **Pursue Implementation and Enhancement of the Vail Streetscape Initiative**

Staff is currently working with the Village's consultant to refine the design. The Village submitted for an ITEP grant in Fall 2024 and IIC Grant in Spring 2025. The Village has budgeted to complete Phase II engineering this year.

- **Assessment and Analysis of Arlington Heights Road Corridor Entrance to the Downtown**

Staff is currently preparing a study and evaluation of the Downtown Entry to establish redevelopment and beautification enhancement goals. The corridor analysis focuses on Sigwalt to Park and Northwest Highway to St. James.

- **Review and Evaluation of Affordable Housing Trust Fund Prioritization and Pursue Implementation**

Staff is currently working with the Housing Commission to develop a strategy and prioritization for use of funds to maintain and expand attainable housing options in Arlington Heights.

Review of Current and Anticipated Challenges

Managing Staffing Levels

Much of the workload of the Planning and Community Development Department is driven by external factors. The number of development projects under review and redevelopment agreements in negotiation at any given time is based on the applications received by the Village. These projects are largely driven by current and anticipated market economics. It can be difficult to anticipate the project

workload at any given time. Given this, and some significant anticipated projects such as the Arlington Racetrack redevelopment, the Department must constantly evaluate and balance staff's development workload demands (external) with the long-term Village-identified strategic priority projects (internal). If demands on the Department increase due to a number of significant projects being submitted simultaneously, the Department will need to seek outside consultant assistance in order to retain a high level of customer service and be responsive to on-ongoing applications.

New Staff/Training

The Department experienced significant turnover in the past couple of years, including turnover of the three primary supervisors within the Department. The long-time Director, Assistant Director, Development Planner, and Planner I either retired or accepted other opportunities. While the Department is currently fully-staffed, it takes time for new staff to learn processes and procedures and to operate at the same level of efficiency as seasoned staff. Both supervisor and technical training will be integral over the next couple of years to grow staff and maximize their potential over time.

Arlington Racetrack Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the 326-acre property will be a key focus of the Department over the next few years. Planning for both short and long-term impacts of evaluating this development already began. In 2021, the Village approved an overlay district over the property to ensure it will be redeveloped as part of a comprehensive master plan process. In 2022, the Village approved a Pre-Development Agreement with the property owner outlining a framework for how the property will be developed. These documents, along with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved in 2024, lay the foundation for a thorough, thoughtful, and evaluative redevelopment process. One of the Village's goals with the redevelopment of the property is to ensure the uses developed on the site complement the existing business within the community.

As the project continues to move forward, it will require a significant outlay of time from Department staff and will likely require hiring of outside consultants. Managing a project of this scale, along with other major redevelopment initiatives, while maintaining the day-to-day operations of the Department will be taxing and is anticipated to be one of the most significant challenges going forward.

Monitoring In-Progress Developments

The Village approved several significant multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use developments over the past few years. Many of these are in various stages of planning, financing, or construction. Most of them have some level of TIF financing associated with the project, which requires ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and true-up of costs incurred. Staff remains continuously engaged with each of these developments to assist in facilitating the project to completion and ensuring all required regulations and obligations are met. This is often a time intensive process, especially as the projects morph and evolve with changing market conditions, sometimes necessitating amendments to existing approvals. Examples of current significant projects in various stages of completion are:

- Arlington Gateway, Phase I – Mixed-Use
- Grace Terrace/Full Circle Communities – Affordable Multi-Family Residential
- International Plaza – Mixed-Use
- 5 N. Douglas – Multi-Family Residential
- 116-120 Eastman – Mixed-Use

Vail Street Promenade

As noted under the "Key Accomplishments" sections, the Village made significant progress in the design of the Vail Street Promenade, which includes enhancements to Harmony Park. The Village will complete Phase I of the design by early-summer and will begin working on Phase I engineering. The Village budgeted to complete Phase II engineering in 2025, and staff also sought grants to support this work. Once Phase II engineering is underway, the Village will need to identify funding sources for implementation.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Department staff is working with the Housing Commission to identify an appropriate use of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, established by the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. The Housing Commission reviewed responses to the Request for Letters of Interest (issued in late 2022), researched potential uses for Trust Fund monies for senior aging-in-place programs, looked at models for using Trust Fund monies for rehabilitation of existing naturally occurring rental units (i.e., lower rent units in existing, privately-owned apartment buildings), and discussed recent Federal actions that may affect the availability of State and Federal affordable housing financing (ex. Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, CDBG & HOME Program). The Commission will review affordable housing data obtained through the Village's Multi-Family Licensing process. This provides the Commission with data on the amount and locations of affordable housing units in the Village for the purpose of developing recommendations to the Village Board for uses of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and other policy discussions.

Potential and New Initiatives to Explore

Reimbursement of Out-of-Pocket Costs

The Village does not currently receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket costs associated with development review. These include costs associated with legal notice publication, court reporter transcripts, and legal review. For projects which are located in one of the Village's four TIF Districts, we are able to recoup some of our costs associated with negotiation of redevelopment agreements. Over the course of the year, this amounts to thousands of dollars in lost revenue. It is common practice for municipalities to pass these costs on to the petitioner/developer requesting the zoning relief, rather than have them be borne by the Arlington Heights taxpayer at-large. In the future, staff will ask the Village Board to consider amending the Village Code to allow for reimbursement of these costs.

Fee Structure Evaluation

The Village's zoning review/application fees have not been updated since 2006. These fees are generally intended to cover the costs associated with staff review of the zoning applications. At their current levels, they are inadequate and do not reflect the true cost to the Village of such applications. Additionally, the Village does not currently require developers constructing public improvements to make developer donations (unless newly annexed), something which is common in other municipalities. These fees assist the municipality in maintaining the infrastructure supporting the development and in expanding infrastructure when appropriate. Staff believes it would be beneficial to complete a fee analysis for future review by the Village Board in order to ensure we are following best practices as it relates to our fee structure and amounts.

Process Evaluation & Enhancement

Staff has already begun the process of evaluating our current Development Review Process and interdepartmental procedures to identify opportunities for improvement. We have identified several opportunities to streamline the review process, create efficiencies, reduce workload for staff, and improve communication with both petitioners and internal Village departments. Over the coming months, Planning and Community Development staff will continue to work with staff in Building and Life Safety and Engineering to evaluate our workflows, processes and Village Code requirements in order to optimize the Development Review Process. Some process improvements can be implemented administratively, while others may require action by the Village Board (e.g. Village Code amendments).

Housing Inventory – Review and Analysis of Existing Housing Stock

As the Village continues to experience a significant demand for multi-family housing, staff identified a need to conduct a review and analysis of the existing housing in the community. An inventory would identify the type, amount, age, and cost of housing throughout the Village. This data could aid staff and the Village Board in determining the needs of the Village, as serve as a basis for developing strategies on how to best match housing needs and market trends.

Streamline Processes & Efficiencies

The Department anticipates streamlining the process for petitioners applying to various Boards and Commissions by creating new avenues for administrative reviews and/or amendments to the Zoning Code to eliminate the need for certain types of applications altogether. The goal is to simplify and expediate the application process for petitioners, while also reallocating staff time resources towards more complex project reviews and strategic priorities.

Update Downtown Master Plan

In 2007, the Village adopted its Downtown Master Plan, which has been used to guide past and ongoing development of the Downtown. Since that time there have been a number of Village-led initiatives aiding in the growth and management of the Downtown, which continues to flourish. The Plan was amended in 2024 to include additional redevelopment guidelines for new areas of the Downtown. The Vail Avenue Promenade design, currently underway, will refine the design of Harmony Park and the surrounding streetscape. The “Take it to the Heights” marketing campaign looks to build on the momentum from the various redevelopment projects and the success of Arlington Alfresco and the Sounds of Summer concert series. Updating the Downtown Master Plan to take into account these efforts and others will ensure they are coordinated and fully inform the long-term marketing, programming, and funding strategies while identifying immediate needs to keep Downtown Arlington Heights thriving.

Conclusion

In closing, the Department’s focus over the next two years will include continued and enhanced training for new staff; planning for the redevelopment of Arlington Park; continuing expansion, enhancement, and management of the Downtown; facilitating other major redevelopments to meet existing and emerging needs; exploring avenues for sustainable funding pathways; actively managing improvements along major gateway corridors identified in previous plans; and streamlining the zoning application and approval process.



2025

BIENNIAL DEPARTMENT REPORT

FIRE DEPARTMENT

LANCE HARRIS, CHIEF





FIRE DEPARTMENT

Scope of Department Services

The Fire Department provides fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), specialty rescue, and educational services for the Village's residents and businesses. In 2024, the Department responded to 11,484 calls. Calls for EMS services continues to be the highest portion of responses.

The Department has an ISO Class 1 public protection rating from the Insurance Services Office. Currently, out of approximately 37,500 rated fire departments nationwide, there are just over 500 departments to hold an ISO CLASS 1 rating, with only 31 in Illinois.

All Arlington Heights firefighters achieve Basic Firefighter Operations certification; all Lieutenants are Fire Officer I certified; and Chief Officers are Fire Officer II certified. Fire Chief Lance Harris, Deputy Chief Andrew Benkert, Division Chief Dave Roberts, and Battalion Chief Rick Manthy completed the Chief Fire Officer program. By successfully completing the Chief Fire Officer program, they achieve the highest certification conferred by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Division Chiefs Dave Strojny and Les East are currently enrolled in the Chief Fire Office program to earn their certifications.

Key Services and Functions & Organizational Overview

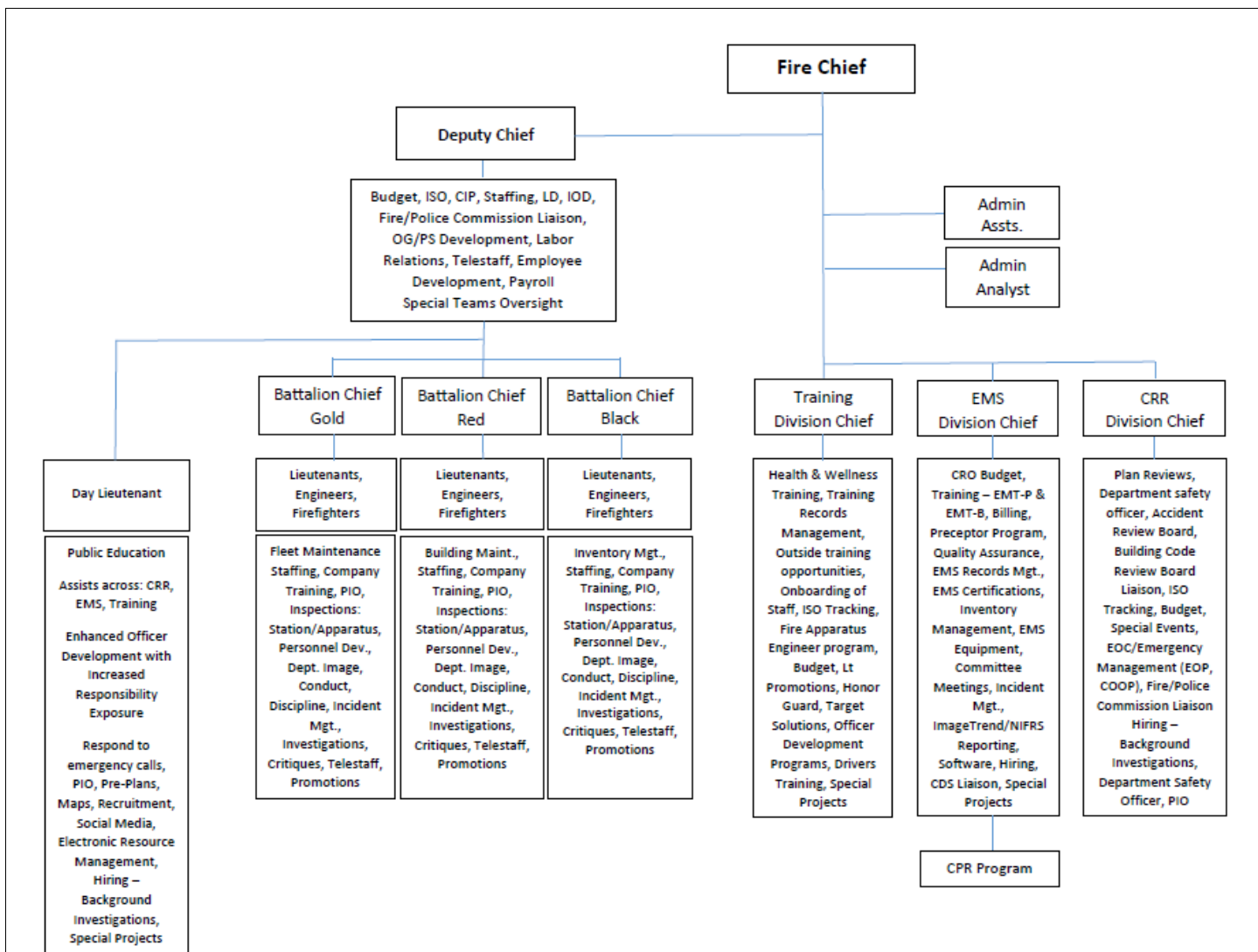
General

The Fire Department has a staff of 102 sworn shift personnel, 5 command staff positions, one public education lieutenant, and three administrative support personnel (two part-time). The command staff is made up of the Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, and three Division Chiefs (Emergency Medical Services, Community Risk Reduction, and Training). There are three Battalion Chiefs (one for each of the three 24-hour shifts).

The Department operates out of four state-of-the-art fire stations with two ladder towers (one reserve), five fire engines (two reserve), seven ambulances (two reserve), and three rescue squads (one reserve). There are also miscellaneous response/service vehicles within the Fire Department's fleet.

45 members of the Department belong to one of the Department's five specialty teams and have received additional training and certification in those disciplines:

1. Hazardous Materials
2. Water Rescue
3. Technical Rescue
4. Fire Investigations
5. Community Risk Reduction



Five Primary Divisions of the Firefighting and Support Functions

Administrative Division:

The Administrative Division is responsible for providing administrative support to the Fire Department, as well as overseeing the other support functions: Emergency Management Agency (EMA), Community Risk Reduction, Public Education, Hazardous Materials Monitoring, and Fire Investigations.

Fire Suppression Division:

The Fire Suppression Division is responsible for firefighting with three staffed engine companies and one truck company. During large-scale incidents, front-line equipment may be augmented by reserve apparatus staffed by off-duty personnel and the Mutual Aid Box Alarm Systems (MABAS).

Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)

MABAS is a multi-state cooperative providing fire, EMS, and specialized incident responses in an efficient, coordinated manner. The Department is one of 13 northwest suburban departments in MABAS Division 1. The MABAS system requires coordination, standardization, reliability, and partnering to achieve faster and better response to emergencies. Members of our specialty teams respond to incidents in Arlington Heights, as well as other areas and states, as members of MABAS Division 1 specialized incident operational teams.

Emergency Medical Division:

Within the Emergency Medical Division, four frontline and one part-time advanced life support (ALS) ambulances operate along with two ALS rescue squads and three engines with ALS capability. The

Division also maintains reserve fleet apparatus: two ALS ambulances, one ALS rescue squad, and two ALS engines. All firefighters are trained and certified as Emergency Medical Technicians and more than 90% of firefighters are trained and state-certified as paramedics. Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are kept current through an extensive continuing education program facilitated by our hospital system provider, Northwest Community Hospital.

Training Division:

The Training Division is responsible for the initial and ongoing training of all Fire personnel. The Fire Department participates in a State Certification Program, whereby all personnel receive the basic, advanced, and officer training necessary to achieve the required certification levels. Nearly all Village firefighting personnel have achieved advanced certification or higher.

Community Risk Reduction Division:

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division is responsible for developing and implementing the department's risk reduction and life safety strategies. A team of firefighters work off duty hours to install smoke alarms, present programming to citizen groups, and coordinate safety messaging. Public Information Officer and emergency management activities are also handled by this Division, which also oversees the Fire Department portion of the construction development plan review process. CRR Team Members also conduct background investigations on prospective firefighters and work on recruitment outreach efforts. In addition, this Division serves as the Village's Emergency Management Liaison through the JEMS program at Northwest Central Dispatch.

Workload & Performance Data

Call Volume

Our call volume in 2023 was 11,311 calls: 2,509 fire and 8,802 emergency medical service calls, broken down as follows:

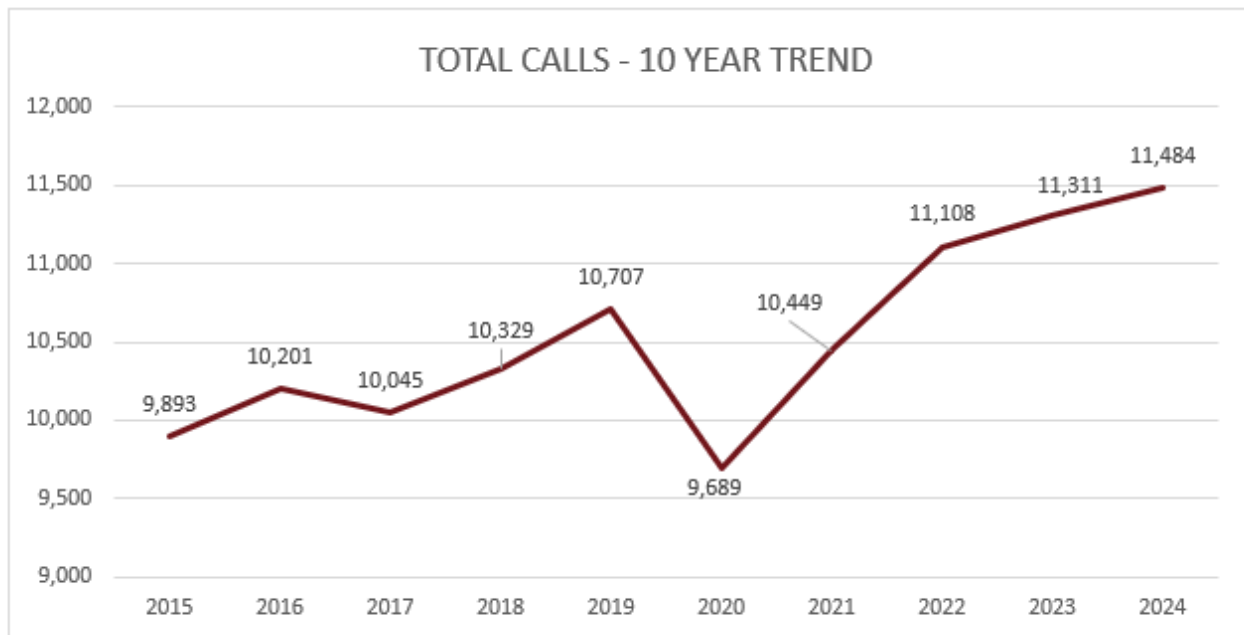
2023 Incidents by Dispatched Nature				
	AH Incidents	Outside AH	Total	Percentage
FIRE/RESCUE RESPONSES				
Structure Fires	37	30	67	.59%
Vehicle Fires	15	1	16	.14%
Outside Fires (Vegetation/Trash)	57	2	59	.52%
Other Fires	49	14	63	.56%
Gas or Chemical Leak/Spill	81	22	103	.91%
Carbon Monoxide Incident	26	2	28	.25%
Electrical Problem	93	3	96	.85%
Other Hazardous Condition	46	15	61	.54%
Rescue Person from Elevator	57	0	57	.50%
Extrication Rescue	10	4	14	.12%
Other Rescue	7	3	10	.09%
Water Problem	36	0	36	.32%
Assist Police/Public Service	140	3	143	1.26%
Cancelled Dispatch	169	277	446	3.94%
Other Service Calls	264	31	295	2.61%
Smoke/CO/Fire Alarm Malfunction	224	15	239	2.11%
Fire/Smoke Alarm - No Fire Found	493	53	546	4.83%
Other Alarms	226	4	230	2.03%
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) RESPONSES				
EMS Call	7,647	336	7,983	70.58%
Invalid Assist*	184	8	192	1.70%
Vehicle Accident	271	51	322	2.85%
Other Medical	275	30	305	2.70%
TOTAL RESPONSES				

Total EMS Responses	8,377	425	8,802	77.82%
Total Fire/Rescue Responses	2,030	479	2,509	22.18%
GRAND TOTAL RESPONSES	10,407	904	11,311	100.00 %

Our call volume in 2024 was 11,484 calls: 2,714 fire and 8,770 emergency medical service calls, broken down as follows:

2024 Incidents by Dispatched Nature				
	AH Incidents	Outside AH	Total	Percentage
FIRE RESPONSES				
Structure Fires	17	46	63	.55%
Vehicle Fires	17	2	19	.17%
Outside Fires (Vegetation/Trash)	48	0	48	.42%
Other Fires	44	10	54	.47%
Gas or Chemical Leak/Spill	98	17	115	.99%
Carbon Monoxide Incident	34	0	34	.30%
Electrical Problem	93	3	96	.84%
Other Hazardous Condition	62	15	77	.67%
Rescue Person from Elevator	62	0	62	.54%
Extrication Rescue	4	5	9	.08%
Other Rescue	13	2	15	.13%
Water Problem	44	0	44	.38%
Assist Police/Public Service	185	8	193	1.68%
Cancelled Dispatch	172	327	499	4.35%
Other Service Calls	237	36	273	2.38%
Smoke/CO/Fire Alarm Malfunction	232	11	243	2.12%
Fire/Smoke Alarm - No Fire Found	526	65	591	5.15%
Other Alarms	275	4	279	2.43%
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE (EMS) RESPONSES				
EMS Call	7,333	209	7,542	65.67%
Invalid Assist*	482	7	489	4.26%
Vehicle Accident	322	44	366	3.19%
Other Medical	343	30	373	3.25%
TOTAL RESPONSES				
Total EMS Responses	8,480	290	8,770	76.37%
Total Fire Responses	2,163	551	2,714	23.63%
GRAND TOTAL RESPONSES	10,643	841	11,484	100.00 %

*Note: In July 2023, the Fire Department revised the manner in which we coded invalid assist responses to more accurately reflect the nature of the service provided. This specific type of incident is now tracked separately. These calls were previously documented as regular EMS calls and account for a majority of the decrease noted in EMS calls.



Comparison to Neighboring Communities

2023:

Town	Population	# of Shift Personnel	Total 2023 Calls	Firefighter : Calls Ratio
Arlington Heights	77,676	102	11,311	1:110
Des Plaines	60,675	85	10,606	1:124
Schaumburg	78,723	120	10,736	1:89
Palatine	69,350	87	9,069	1:104
Mount Prospect	56,852	75	7,288	1:97
Hoffman Estates	51,186	90	6,654	1:73
Elk Grove Village	32,812	84	6,235	1:74
Buffalo Grove	43,212	54	5,215	1:94
Streamwood	39,577	49	4,327	1:90
Rolling Meadows	24,200	42	4,183	1:99

2024:

Town	Population	# of Shift Personnel	Total 2024 Calls	Firefighter : Calls Ratio
Arlington Heights	77,676	102	11,484	1:112
Des Plaines	60,675	85	11,214	1:131
Schaumburg	78,723	120	11,121	1:92
Palatine	69,350	87	9,383	1:107
Mount Prospect	56,852	75	7,887	1:105
Hoffman Estates	51,186	90	6,705	1:74
Elk Grove Village	32,812	84	6,187	1:73
Buffalo Grove	43,212	54	5,280	1:97
Streamwood	39,577	49	4,455	1:90
Rolling Meadows	24,200	42	4,062	1:96

Percent Response Time of Six Minutes or Less

	2021	2022	2023	2024
EMS	83.9%	84.5%	86.5%	86.1%
Structure Fires	87.5%	86.0%	90.6%	90.8%

Automatic Mutual Aid

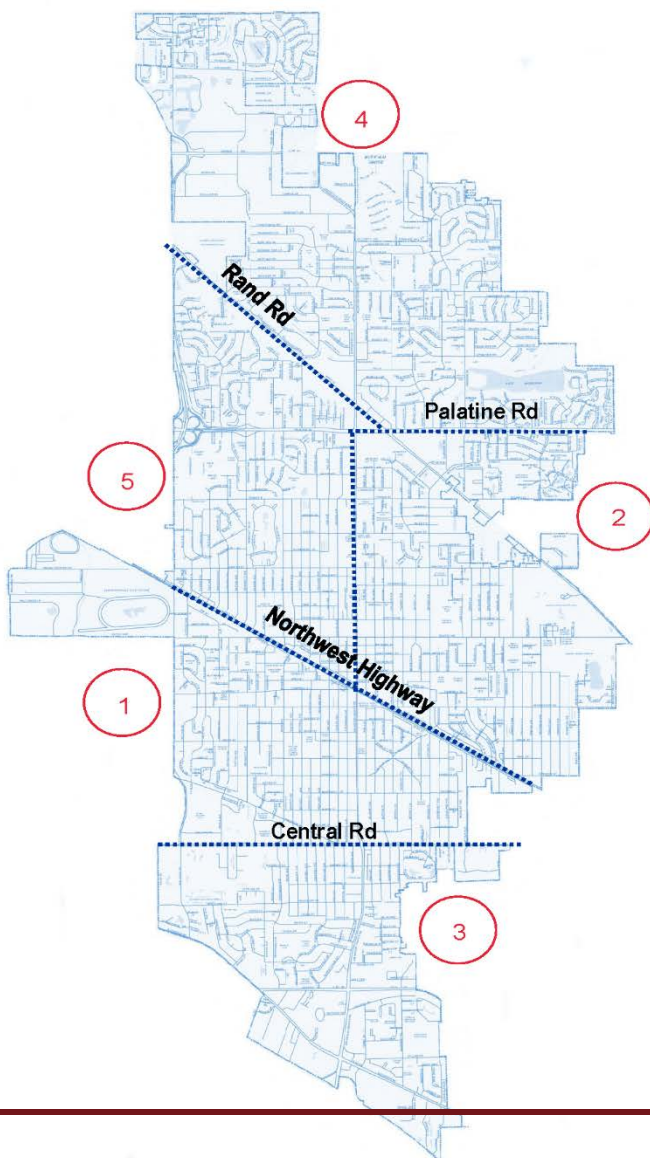
The Fire Department is successful in reducing our reliance on automatic and mutual aid from neighboring municipal fire departments through implementation of the Ambulance 5 Program.

2023	AUTO/MUTUAL AID GIVEN	AUTO/MUTUAL AID RECEIVED
EMS	343	365
FIRE/RESCUE	288	258
TOTAL	631	623

2024	AUTO/MUTUAL AID GIVEN	AUTO/MUTUAL AID RECEIVED
EMS	206	285
FIRE/RESCUE	273	228
TOTAL	479	513

Response by Districts

Village of Arlington Heights - Fire Department Response Districts



2023 Incidents By District		
District	# Incidents	% Incidents
District 1	2,052	18.14%
District 2	1,375	12.16%
District 3	2,511	22.20%
District 4	1,838	16.25%
District 5	2,631	23.26%
Out of Town	904	7.99%

2024 Incidents By District		
District	# Incidents	% Incidents
District 1	2,244	19.54%
District 2	1,376	11.98%
District 3	2,378	20.71%
District 4	2,060	17.94%
District 5	2,585	22.51%
Out of Town	841	7.32%

Key Accomplishments During 2023 – 2024 Period

Expand Outreach Efforts to Recruit Diverse Candidates

In partnership with the Human Resources Department, the Fire Department utilized a variety of communication methods to advertise our candidate testing. We expanded our outreach through additional college visits and increasing social media advertising. We also held a virtual Q&A session for potential applicants. We continue to accept applications from candidates without firefighter and/or paramedic certifications, ensuring opportunities for high achievers, though we did offer preference points for both certifications to assist us in onboarding staff more quickly.

Fire Department Underserved Population Program

Community Risk Reduction (CRR) is the identification and prioritization of risk followed by the coordinated application of resources to minimize the occurrence of unwanted events. The CRR Division continues to work with our internal and community stakeholders to identify and expand outreach regarding safety information in underserved areas of the Village. The original channel for this initiative was Pop-Up Block parties at area-apartment complexes. The block party concept was the template for our new Code 3 Neighborhood Fire Safety Program, which brings out an engine and Chief Officers to the scene of a fire and explains to residents what happened and how such an event can be prevented again. All ages are welcome, and it provides an opportunity for residents to become familiar with the Fire Department, our tactics, and allows for positive community engagement after a structure fire.

5th Ambulance Program

Over the last few years, the Fire Department experienced a greater reliance on mutual aid responses for ambulance calls, particularly during the hours of 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. and identified the need for a 5th ambulance to accommodate the growing demand for ambulance responses. The Department reviewed a significant amount of data to determine the ability to create a phased-in approach, cognizant of the high cost of adding personnel. In 2024, the Fire Department staffed Ambulance 5 on scheduled days of mandatory training using hire-back personnel to maintain four staffed ambulances at all times. This is in addition to a previous change in our daily staffing model to place a 5th ambulance in service when staffing permits, in lieu of adding manpower to a suppression vehicle. In 2025, we are staffing Ambulance 5 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on weekdays, with the full-time program with six additional personnel commencing in January 2026. Our current efforts have reduced reliance on ambulance mutual aid by 25% in the first year. Program data is reviewed regularly.

Updates to Operating Guidelines (OG) / Policy Statements (PS)

Beginning in Q3 2023 and through Q1 2024, an internal committee went through all of the Fire Department's operating guidelines and policy statements. Each one was reviewed for accuracy and necessity. Some were eliminated or combined; all were reviewed and updated. Drafts were sent to all personnel for input. All OG & PS will now be reviewed on either a 1-, 3-, or 5-year schedule, based on the content and impact.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Training

Over the last two years, the Fire Department identified the need to conduct advanced training on the likelihood of an electric vehicle fire occurrence within the Village. Electric vehicles run off lithium-ion batteries, which are not easily extinguished once on fire. In addition, they generate intense heat and toxic flammable gases. With the increase in the number of EVs on the road, the Fire Department purchased specialized blankets that are used to smother electric vehicle fires and reduce exposure to negative elements. We also purchased a "Turtle" device, capable of delivering more than 500 gallons of water underneath a vehicle, directly at the battery case. A formal operating guideline was developed, and then hands-on training in June 2024 at a Village-owned parking structure with electric vehicle

charging capabilities. Crews practiced EV fire tactics and used the new equipment that would be deployed should an electric vehicle fire occur within an enclosed parking garage.

Review of Current and Anticipated Challenges

Hiring Process Challenges

The Fire Department held candidate testing in 2024 due to an expiring eligibility list. Though we continue to accept applications from candidates without firefighter and/or paramedic certifications, due to our immediate need for paramedics, we offered preference points to applicants who already completed Basic Operations Firefighter and additional points to certified paramedics. As we are allowed to work within the top 5% of our candidate list to best accommodate the needs of the Department, our goal was to use this flexibility to hire as many paramedics as possible to avoid the high cost of sending our personnel to paramedic school and decrease the amount of time before a new hire could count as staffing. Our list resulted in seven paramedics in the top 12. However, one was offered a position by another fire department and two more were disqualified. Both are situations faced by other departments in our area. The overall candidate pool is smaller than in the past and our robust background investigation process is working well, but against our best laid plans

Vehicle Replacement Challenges

Due to supply chain disruptions and exceedingly long lead times for vehicle acquisitions, the Fire Department fell behind in the vehicle replacement program. It is our goal for ambulances to serve six years frontline and then four years as a reserve. Two ambulances ordered in October 2022 were not delivered until December 2024 when they replaced vehicles that were operating frontline despite their excessive hours. Another four ambulances were ordered in February 2023 will now not be delivered until Q1 2026 as per a recent update provided to the Department. A new engine for Station 4 ordered in 2022 was not delivered until June 2024. Our anticipated delivery of a new tower ordered in 2022 was recently pushed back until September 2025, and a new Engine 3 purchased in September 2023 is not expected until May 2027 – a lead time of 44 months. The Department received some positive news: the new squad ordered at the end of 2023 is now expected to be delivered 4 months early!

Redevelopment of Arlington Park

Potentially developing the entire site in to a sports and entertainment district will place additional demands on the Fire Department at a time when our call volume continues to increase. The type and size of the development around the stadium will impact the needs of the Department in terms of apparatus, facilities, and personnel. As final development plans have not been negotiated or approved, it is difficult to say precisely what future operational needs the Fire Department will have. The Fire Department continues to work with all Village departments as part of the interdepartmental work group for this project and previously sent a small team of staff members to work a game at Sofi Stadium to identify potential operational impacts to the Department. The Department is prepared to review our needs as more information on redevelopment becomes available.

5th Ambulance Program

Beginning January 2026, the Fire Department plans to fully implement the 5th ambulance program. This will staff Ambulance 5 full-time out of Station 2. In order to provide adequate staffing, the Fire Department is actively working on a plan to hire a total of 6 new full-time employees in a manner that optimizes the professional certification status of each candidate with respect to the financial impact of training and continuing education requirements. The current Ambulance 5 program operates Monday through Friday during peak hours, through the use of overtime whenever necessary. The pilot program was successful in reducing reliance on mutual aid ambulances while the data supported the need for this ambulance to be permanent. The Fire Department looks forward to being able to provide this enhanced level of service to our residents in 2026 and beyond.

Succession Planning

A current challenge for the Fire Department and the fire service industry in general is recruiting capable people to fill job openings created by retirements. The potential exists for more than 50% of our personnel to retire within the next five years; 56 of the department's current 108 sworn personnel will have met the necessary minimum time and age requirements for retirement. Of those 56, 34% are officers.

- Average age of current Fire personnel – 44.8 years
- Average years of service of current Fire personnel – 16.4 years
- 43 personnel meet age/service requirements to retire now (40% of department); 17 are officers
- 10 additional personnel will meet age/service requirements to retire in the next 1-3 years (9%)
- 3 additional personnel will meet age/service requirements to retire in the next 4-5 years (3%)
- In total, 56 personnel will meet age/service requirements to retire within the next 5 years (52%); 19 of these are officers (34%).

In August 2024, the Department welcomed Dr. Denis Onieal, Former Deputy United States Fire Administrator, for three days of training on teamwork and leadership on the front lines of the fire service. Dr. Onieal highlighted his experience in directing firefighter responses during major national disasters while helping guide our personnel in dealing with departmental struggles. Dr. Onieal is a recognized expert in fire service leadership and provided our team with insights as to the importance of leadership skills in those members seeking promotional opportunities within the organization.

Health and Wellness

The Department offers various kinds of departmental training in the area of mental and physical health.

Mental Health:

The nature of what firefighters do every day puts us at risk for stress-related mental health issues, as witnessing illness, injury, and death takes its toll. The Department has four personnel trained in peer support to deliver mental health training to our members and their families. The mission of the Peer Support Program is to provide emotional wellness resources for Firefighters in a non-judgmental, confidential setting. The Department also engaged outside mental health practitioners to discuss mental health issues, including PTSD and suicide prevention.

Fitness Program:

The Fire Department is currently enrolled in a pilot program that brings a fitness trainer from Illinois Bone and Joint to the stations monthly to address the fitness needs of our firefighters and improve potential injury outcomes.

Cancer Committee:

The Department formed a Cancer Committee to stay informed of industry developments related to cancer awareness and prevention for firefighters. Due to regular exposure to fire-related carcinogens, firefighters have a greatly elevated cancer risk and more than 60% of firefighters are diagnosed with cancer at some point.

Potential and New Initiatives to Explore

Succession Planning

In order to properly address the anticipated retirements, the Fire Department is working on formalizing internal programs that develop depth in our leadership team to ensure a qualified pool of candidates to fill future promotional opportunities within the organization. Chief Officers are beginning work on a formal Officer Development Program, a Battalion Chief Development Program, and a standardized orientation process for new officers to ensure all are offered the same information and opportunities in manner that is measurable.

Integration of New ERP System and Technology

The Fire Department will continue to seek out opportunities to use advances in technology to enhance our operations. We strive to keep up with the latest fire service products on the market and evaluate available equipment. We will also explore additional opportunities to incorporate the use of the Village's new ERP system into our operations.

Data-Driven Decision Making

The Fire Department has made great progress in the use of data for fact-based decision making. We will work to develop ways to expand our use of data, including financial and budgetary information to

enhanced analysis of our incident data and inventories to support our administrative and operational activities.

Conclusion

As a core service of the Village, the Arlington Heights, the Fire Department recognizes the community is the reason for our presence. The Fire Department will continue to provide the highest level of customer service by protecting life, property, and the environment through the delivery of innovative, fiscally responsible firefighting, emergency medical services, public education, and fire prevention.