

# MT. HOPE-FUNKS GROVE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

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## DECENNIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT REPORT

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### **I. Information About the Fire Protection District.**

The Mt. Hope-Funks Grove Fire Protection District (hereinafter the "District") has a long history of protecting the citizens and visitors of two Townships. located in rural central Illinois. The District was first organized in 1937. The District is responsible for providing services that include fire suppression, emergency medical services at the Basic Life Support (BLS) Level. rescue services, fire safety education, and training.

The District is led by a board of three trustees that are appointed by the McLean County Board. The Fire Chief, who serves at the pleasure of the board of trustees. oversees the day-to-day operations of the District. The organizational structure of the District is made up of the Fire Chief, an Assistant Chief, a Captain, a Fire Lieutenant , an EMS Coordinator, firefighters and EMT's. The District is comprised of paid-on-call firefighter and EMS personnel and with the ambulance staffed Monday – Friday 6am-6pm and all other shifts being paid-on-call.

### **II. Summary of Services Performed.**

The District is comprised of thirteen (13) men and women who voluntarily devote their time to serve the District as firefighters and emergency medical service providers. They provide these services out of one station that is located in the Village of McLean. Fire suppression, BLS emergency medical services, rescue services, and fire safety education is provided by the members of the District to 1,450 residents of the 96 square miles of Mt. Hope and Funks Grove Townships. The members of the District also provide automatic mutual aid support to the surrounding districts within McLean, Tazewell, Logan and DeWitt Counties.

The members of the District also provide other mutual aid support through the District's proud membership in Division 41 of the Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). MABAS Division 41 is made up of the other fire protection Districts located within McLean County. As a member of the state's Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, the members of the District are subject to be dispatched to incidents that not only occur within Division 41, but they can also

be dispatched to incidents throughout the 102 counties within the state of Illinois and nationally, if additional services are needed.

The District responded to the calls for service as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Calls</b>
2020	210
2021	220
2022	251
2023	241

**III. Committee Information.**

**A. Committee Members.**

The Decennial Committee for the District are as follows:

- Eric Fulk, Fire Chief
- Brad Wade, Trustee
- Mike Strubhar, Trustee
- Andrea Tanner, Trustee
- James Mann, Resident
- David Gaither, Resident

**B. Committee Meeting Dates.**

The Decennial Committee for the District held the following public meetings:

- Organizational Meeting: June 28, 2023
- First Meeting: April 17, 2024
- Second Meeting: May 28, 2024
- Third Meeting: June 25, 2024

#### **IV. Review.**

The District Decennial Committee reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, ordinances, training materials, intergovernmental agreements, and other agreements documents applicable to the District to evaluate the District's compliance and efficiency, and determine if any amendments or updates need made to the District's ordinances, procedures, and bylaws:

- Illinois Decennial Committees of Local Government Efficiency Act (50 ILCS 10.1 *et. seq.* )
- Illinois Fire Protection District Act (70 ILCS 705.11 *et. seq.* )
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 12 0.1 *et. seq.* )
- Illinois Freedom of information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et. seq.*)
- Illinois Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105.4.1 )
- Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS, s 2.10 9(c)J
- Mt. Hope-Funks Grove Fire Protection District Ordinances, Resolutions and Minutes
- Mt. Hope-Funks Grove Fire Protection District By-Laws
- The Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Agreement

#### **V. Compliance Items.**

As a fire protection District, the District is bound to be compliant and accountable with a variety of items pertaining to the fire District and its personnel. The different organizations to which the District reports to, to help keep it compliant and accountable are: the State of Illinois, the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) , the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL), and the Insurance Services Offices (ISO). A thorough discussion of the different measures the District goes through regarding training, inspection of equipment, and safety to determine the District's compliance with all of the aforementioned was conducted by the District Decennial Committee.

### Station Facilities.

The District has 1 facility located at 209 S. Hamilton St. in the Village of McLean. Fire facilities must be designed and constructed to accommodate both current and forecast trends in fire service vehicle type and manufactured dimensions. A facility must have sufficiently sized bay doors; circulation space between garaged vehicles; departure and return aprons of adequate length and turn geometry to ensure safe responses; and floor drains. For fire personnel, fire facilities must have provisions for vehicle maintenance and repair; storage areas for essential equipment and supplies; space and amenities for administrative work, laundering area, and an area for personal hygiene. As a fire department facility may also likely serve as a command center for large-scale, protracted, campaign emergency incidents, the design details and construction materials and methods should embrace a goal of having a facility that can perform in an uninterrupted manner despite prevailing climatic conditions and/or disruption of utilities.

National standards, such as NFPA 1500, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health and Wellness Programs*, outlines standards that transfer to facilities such as infection control, personnel and equipment decontamination, cancer prevention, storage of protective clothing, and employee fitness. NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, further delineates laundering standards for protective clothing and station ware.

The District Station has an emergency generator connected to an automatic transfer switch that provides an effective safeguard that permits its fire department to function fully during local emergencies when response activity predictably peaks and also contains a commercial grade extractor for the laundering of protective clothing. The District has implemented SOG's that are followed by its members regarding the cleaning and decontamination of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), storage of PPE, and inspection of PPE .

### Fleet.

The provision of an operationally ready fleet of mission -essential fire-rescue vehicles is fundamental to the ability of a fire-rescue department to deliver reliable and efficient public safety within a community. The District currently operates a fleet of front-line fire apparatus as outlined in the following table:

Vehicle Number	Vehicle Description	Year	Age
2001 Engine	HME/Smeal	2001	23
2013 Brush/Utility Truck	EJ Metals/Ford	2013	11
2017 Ambulance	Horton/Ford	2017	7
2017 Rehab Trailer	Haulmark	2017	7
2023 Pumper/Tanker	Pierce/Kenworth	2023	1
2024 UTV	CAN-AM	2024	1

The procurement, maintenance, and eventual replacement of response vehicles is one of the largest expenses incurred in sustaining a fire protection District's fire-rescue department. While it is the members of the District who provide emergency services within the District, the District's fleet of response vehicles is essential to operational success. Reliable vehicles are needed to deliver responders and the equipment /materials they employ to the scene of dispatched emergencies within the District. Replacement of fire -rescue response vehicles is a necessary, although expensive, element of fire District's budgeting that should reflect careful planning. A well-planned and documented emergency vehicle replacement plan ensures ongoing preservation of a safe, reliable, and operationally capable response fleet. A fire protection District's plan must also include a schedule for future capital outlay in a manner that is affordable to the community.

NFPA 1901, *Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus*, serves as a guide to the manufacturers that build fire apparatus and the fire departments that purchase them. This standard is updated every five years using input from the public and stakeholders through a formal review process. The review committee membership is made of up representatives from the fire service, manufacturers, consultants, and special interest groups. The review committee monitors various issues and problems that occur with fire apparatus and attempts to develop standards that address those issues. The Annex Material in NFPA 190I contains recommendations and work sheets to

assist in decision-making in vehicle purchasing. With respect to recommended vehicle service life, the following excerpt is noteworthy:

It is recommended that apparatus greater than 15 years old that have been properly maintained and that are still in serviceable condition be placed in reserve status and upgraded in accordance with NFPA 1915, *Standard of Fire Apparatus Refurbishing*, to incorporate as many features as possible of the current fire apparatus standard. This will ensure that, while the apparatus might not totally comply with the current edition of the automotive fire apparatus standards, many improvements and upgrades required by the recent versions of the standards are available to the firefighters who use the apparatus.

A primary impetus for the recommended service life thresholds is continual advances in occupant safety. Despite good stewardship and maintenance of emergency vehicles in sound operating condition, there are many advances in occupational safety, such as fully enclosed cabs, enhanced rollover protection and airbags, three-point restraints, antilock brakes, higher visibility, cab noise abatement /hearing protection, and a host of other improvements that are reflected in each revision of NFPA 1901. These improvements provide safer response vehicles for those members who are providing emergency services within the District, as well as to those who are "sharing the road" with these responders.

Maintenance to the District fleet is performed by authorized mechanics approved by the District's Chief and/or its Trustees, and the corresponding maintenance records are maintained by the District for the duration of time that the apparatus is in service with the District. Annual pump tests are performed on all District apparatuses in accordance with manufacturer and industry specifications and standards.

The District does not have a structured replacement plan for its first-line fire apparatus as outlined and required by NFPA 1901. It is the recommendation of this Decennial Committee that due to the District currently having first-line fire engine apparatus in service that are approaching 20 years of service, that due consideration be given by the District Trustees now to implement a plan for the replacement of these vehicles. Furthermore, since the District has first-line engine apparatus that are approaching or have been in service for more than 15 years of service, that the District Trustees develop an action plan to begin upgrading such first-line engine apparatus to comply with the current NFPA 1915 standard.

### Training Programs.

Training is, without question, one of the most important functions that a fire protection District should be performing on a regular basis. There is a credible argument that training is, in some ways, more important than emergency responses because a District that is not well-trained, prepared, and operationally ready will be unable to fulfill its emergency response obligations and mission. Education and training are vital at all levels of fire service operations to ensure that necessary functions can be completed correctly, safely, and effectively. A comprehensive, diverse, and ongoing training program is critical to a fire department's level of success.

An effective fire department training program must cover all essential elements of that fire protection District's core missions and responsibilities. The level of training or education required, given a set of tasks, varies with the jobs to be performed. The program must include an appropriate combination of technical/classroom training, manipulative, or hands-on /practical evolutions, and as well as training assessments to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts. Most of the training, but particularly the practical, standardized, hands-on training evolutions should be developed based upon the fire protection District's own operating procedures and operations while remaining cognizant of widely accepted practices and standards that could be used as a benchmark to judge the fire protection District's operations.

Certain Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations dictate that minimum training must be completed on an annual basis , covering various topics that include:

- A review of the respiratory protection standard, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) refresher and user competency training, SCBA fit testing (29 CFR 1910.134).
- Blood Borne Pathogens Training (29 CFR 1910.1030).
- Hazardous Materials Training (29 CFR 1910.120).
- Structural Firefighter Training (29 CFR 1910.156).

In addition, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards contain recommendations for training on various topics such as a requirement for a minimum of 24 hours of structural firefighting training annually for each fire protection District member.

Since so much depends upon the ability of the emergency responder to effectively deal with an emergency, education and training must have a prominent position within a fire protection District. Agencies that place a real emphasis on their training tend to be more proficient in

carrying out day-to-day duties as well. The prioritization of training also fosters an image of professionalism and instills pride in the organization.

The District has a training program for its fire and EMS personnel, that consists of at least six, (3) hours of fire training and three (2) hours of EMS training each month. Such training is a combination of hands-one and classroom instruction. Furthermore, the members of the District also have the opportunities for additional fire and/or EMS by partnering with other fire protection Districts within the area for cornerstone and IFSI training classes, and live burn training.

The District also uses the Fire Rescue 1 platform to provide additional fire and EMS training opportunities to its members. This training is intended to be additional training that is assigned by the training officer. This has resulted in providing the District members with more flexibility to complete additional training. The Fire Rescue 1 platform also provides a platform that helps the training officer manage training records and reports and provides demographics for the areas of specific training that have been covered throughout the year.

The District has an SOG's regarding its required training, which includes but is not limited to the following: Vehicle Operator Training, CPR and AED Training, Communicable Disease Training, Hazard Communication Program Training, Hazardous Materials Training, Hearing Conservation and Noise Control Training, Heat Illness Prevention Training, HIPAA Training, NIMS Training, Firefighter Health, Safety and Survival Training, and Live-Fire Training.

Professional development for fire department personnel, especially officers, is also an important part of overall training. There are numerous, excellent opportunities for firefighters and offices to attend training on a wide range of topics throughout the state of Illinois and beyond. The District has an SOG regarding Fire Officer Development and utilizes resources for its officer development such as the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), the National Fire Academy's Executive Officer Program (NFA-EFOP), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, and certifications of the Illinois State Fire Marshall Division of Personnel Standards and Education (OSFM-PSE).

The District does not currently utilize a formal task book process to provide training guidance and new rank orientation outside of the probationary firefighter position. A growing number of fire protection Districts and departments are employing task books for personnel who aspire to (or in some cases have already been promoted to) a higher rank. For the District, this Decennial



Committee believes that task books would be appropriate for the positions of firefighter, engineer, lieutenant, and captain . The successful completion of any task book could be a prerequisite for promotion to higher rank, or alternatively, could be implemented as a required element of the post promotional evaluation process. Furthermore, it is also the recommendation of this Decennial Committee that the District consider conducting a formal one- or two-day engineer (apparatus operator) class. The aforementioned efforts can help provide the District members with the tools necessary lo successfully and efficiently operate in any field setting.

### ISO Rating.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is a national, not-for-profit organization that collects and evaluates information from communities across the United States regarding their capabilities to combat building fires. The data collected from a District or community is analyzed and applied to ISO's Fire Suppression Rating Schedules (FSRS) from which a Public Protection Classification (PPC) grade is assigned to a fire protection District or community ( 1 to 10).

A Class 1 represents an exemplary community or District fire suppression program that includes all components outlined below. A Class 10 indicates that the community's or District's fire suppression program does not meet ISO ' s minimum criteria. It is important to understand that PPC is not just a fire department classification, but rather a compilation of community or District services that include the fire department or District, the emergency communications center, and the community's potable water supply system.

A community or District's PPC grade depends on:

- Needed Fire Flows (building locations used to determine the theoretical amount of water necessary for fire suppression purposes) .
- Emergency Communications (10 percent of the evaluation).
- Fire Department (50 percent of the evaluation).
- Water Supply (40 percent of the evaluation).

The District was recently granted an improved ISO rating of 05/5Y in August 1 2023. This rating included the following credit by category:

- Water Supply: 29.91 earned credit points/40.00 credit points available.
- Emergency Communications: 6.58 earned credit points/10.00 credit points available.

- Fire Department: 22.32 earned credit points/50.00 credit points available.

Overall, the community PPC rating yielded 54.59 earned credit points/105.50 credit points available. There was a 1.81-point diversion reduction assessed as well, which is automatically calculated based on the relative difference between the fire department and water supply scores.

The District component received significant point deficiency in the following area:

- Credit for Company Personnel: 2.17/15.00.

According to the District Service Area, August 2023 PPC Summary Report, on-call members are credited on the basis of the average number staffing apparatus on first alarms. As the District has 2 in service engine companies, the report determined that 6.50 on-call personnel responding to first alarm structure fires are necessary.

It is the recommendation of this Decennial Committee that the District can seek to improve the points earned in this area by (1) implementing a SOG and/or by-law that incorporates a minimum number or percent of annual calls that each member must respond to and (2) continue to increase efforts to recruit additional members to increase the number of total members that would be available to respond.

#### Fire Preplanning

An important part of risk management in the fire service is pre-planning inspections of large, high hazard, complex buildings as well as all businesses within its District. Conducting pre-fire surveys by can have a significant impact on both potentially reducing structural fire loss and on reducing firefighter injuries. By improving the firefighters' understanding of complex building and/or business layouts, suppression ground activities can be improved, and potential firefighter injuries avoided.

The process of identifying target hazards and pre incident planning are basic preparedness efforts that have been key functions in the fire service industry for many years. In this process, critical structures are identified based on the risk they pose. Then, tactical considerations are established for fires or other emergencies in these structures. Consideration is given to the activities that take place (manufacturing, processing, etc.), and other specific aspects relating to the construction of the facility or any hazardous or flammable materials that are regularly found in the building. Target hazards are those occupancies or structures that are unusually dangerous when considering the potential for loss of life or the potential for property damage.

NFPA's 1620, *Recommendation Practice for Pre-Incident Planning*, identifies the need to utilize both narrative and diagrams to depict the physical features of a building, its content, and any built-in fire protection systems. Information collected for pre-fire /incident plans includes, but certainly is not limited to. data such as:

- The occupancy type.
- Floor plans/layouts.
- Building construction type and features.
- Fire protection systems (sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, etc.).
- Utility locations .
- Hazards to firefighters and/or firefighting operations.
- Special conditions in the building.
- Apparatus placement plan .
- Fire flow requirements and/or water supply plan.
- Forcible entry and ventilation plan.

The information contained in pre-incident fire plans. allows firefighters and officers to have a familiarity with the building/facility, including but not limited to its features, characteristics, operations, and hazards, thus enabling them to conduct firefighting and other emergency operations more effectively, efficiently , and safely. Pre-incident fire plans should be reviewed regularly and tested by periodic table-top exercises and on-site drills for the most critical occupancies.

The District is beginning to implement a standard, ongoing pre-fire planning program that includes having said pre-plans loaded onto the IAR app so that the pre-plans are readily available, accessible, and reviewable to all members of the department at any given time. This not only allows for every responding member to be able to review the pre-plan while enroute to the call, but also eliminates the waste of precious seconds to grab a pre-plan binder out of the office when arriving at the station for the emergency call. The District is also beginning to upload the location of all fire hydrants within its District into the IAR app so that all responding apparatus, including all mutual aid units can locate the closest fire hydrant to the fire scene while enroute. It is the recommendation of this committee that both of these objectives should continue to remain a high priority for the District members until such time as all pre-plans have been

developed and uploaded into IAR, and until such time all fire hydrant locations within the District have been mapped on IAR.

#### **VI. Internal Efficiencies.**

- Improved ISO rating provides opportunities for potential savings to residents of the District through improved insurance rates.
- Submission of Individual and Regional Grant Applications increases revenue potential for District.
- Receipt of Individual Grant Funds increases the revenue for the District without increasing the financial tax burden on the District's residence.
- Increased fundraising efforts increase the revenue for the District.
- Member of Mutual Aid Box Alarm System provides the District with access to more manpower through pre-designed "run" cards for mutual aid support; access to more equipment as well as access to equipment that the District does not have in its own fleet, such as ladder and/or tower apparatus; access to coverage for the District when the District resources are committed to an incident for an extended period of time; as well as access to numerous specialty teams such as hazardous materials teams, underwater rescue/recovery teams, technical rescue teams, urban search and rescue team, and incident management teams.
- Agreements with other Districts and regional grant applications provide purchasing efficiencies and savings through bulk purchasing with other districts .

## VII. Areas of Revenue and Budget.

The District's equalized assessed values for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 Assessment Years are shown in the following table:

<b>2021 Assessment</b>	<b>2022 Assessment</b>	<b>2023 Assessment</b>
\$60,009,696	\$63,511,490	\$68,496,215

The District operating budgets for FY 2021 and FY2022, and the approved budget for the FY2023 are shown in the following table:

<b>FY 2021 Final Budget</b>	<b>FY 2022 Final Budget</b>	<b>FY 2023 Approved Budget</b>
\$416,277	\$428,156	\$437,508

Much like every other paid-on-call fire protection District in the nation, the District's budget is primarily consumed by equipment. For the District, this budget area consistently represents approximately 25 percent to 30 percent of the total budget. The next largest budget areas are ambulance payroll and maintenance on apparatus and building. This leaves little discretionary funding for day-to-day service delivery and other supplies, training and education, employee uniforms and protective clothing, station improvements, and overall new programs/improvements to the District.

The District Decennial Committee also recommends seeking referendums to increase the revenue to help with personnel cost to continue to provide ambulance coverage and to purchase needed equipment. An increase in the corporate (general) tax rate limit from .30% to .40%. Based on the 2023 equalized assessed value of the district of \$68,496,215 (rate setting number), the District would realize about an additional \$68,500 per year from such an increase. Voter approval of such an increase in the rate limit would be required. An increase in the ambulance tax rate limit from .30% to .40%. Same effect as the corporate except the additional \$68,500 would be limited to use for EMS operations. Voter approval is required.

The addition of a tax for rescue operations (personnel & equipment) with a rate limit of .10%. Same financial result and this would essentially fall into the general fund portion of the budget since fire and rescue are lumped together operationally and covered by the same section of the budget. Voter approval is required.

The District has also taken a conscious effort to locate more grant opportunities and to submit more grant applications to apply for additional funding to help cover ever increasing costs of fire protection service. The District Decennial Committee also recommends that the District investigate and consider hiring a grant writing company to help further grant opportunities and potentially increase approval percentage of the grant applications that the District submits.

#### **VIII. Surveys of Public and Public Comment.**

During each of the three meetings, the District Decennial Committee conducted a public comment period and at the conclusion of each of the three meetings, the District Decennial Committee offered surveys to the public members in attendance to seek additional input and comments. There were no public member in attendance.

#### **IX. Transparency.**

The Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA) (5 ILCS 120/1 *et. seq.* ) provides the people of the state of Illinois with the right to be informed as to the conduct of public business. Although the OPM does not require the District to post notices, calendars, agendas, and minutes on its website since the District does not maintain full-time staff and its website is not maintained by its full-time staff, this Decennial Committee proposes that as a means to further its accountability to the public, that the Board of Trustees start making this information available to the public for inspection without request on its website.

The District also maintains a presence on social media through the District Face Book page and website. This presence on social media maintains transparency to the public and provides it followers with fire prevention and safety education materials, important news and other information related items within the District and provides the community with a another means to communicate with the District.

The Committee concluded that the services provided by the District and the Fire Department are essential to the residents and property owners of the District, but that addressing the needs identified above in a timely and sufficient manner will be necessary to maintain the efficiency of the District.

Upon submission of its Report, the Committee is dissolved in accordance with the Act.

Respectfully submitted on July 25, 2024

Mike Stoltz  
Angela Tappan  
Billy Wells  
[Signature]  
James Mann  
[Signature]

Being all of the Members of the Mt. Hope-Funks Grove  
Fire Protection District Decennial Efficiency Committee