

To: Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue Board

From: Beth Mbow, HR Director

Date: 4/9/2026

Subject: Recommended Pay Structure and Philosophy for Non-Represented Employees – MMFR

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## **A. Issue**

As part of the formation of the Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue (MMFR) and the upcoming recruitment of a Fire Chief, it is important to establish a clear, competitive, and administratively sound compensation approach for non-represented employees within the new organization.

This memo outlines a recommended pay philosophy and structure designed to support the long-term success, efficiency, and competitiveness of the department.

## **B. Background/Options**

It is recommended that the MMFR adopt the existing pay plan structure currently utilized by the City of Wauwatosa for its non-represented employees.

### **Rationale**

#### **1. Market-Validated and Competitive Framework**

The City of Wauwatosa's pay plan has been recently evaluated through a comprehensive compensation study and new plan implementation completed in 2024, followed by a market refresh in 2026. This ensures that the structure is:

- Aligned with current labor market conditions
- Competitive within the region
- Designed to attract and retain high-quality leadership and professional staff

Leveraging this work allows the new department to immediately operate from a position of market strength without duplicating time and cost-intensive analysis.

#### **2. Administrative Efficiency**

Adopting an existing, well-functioning pay structure reduces administrative complexity by:

- Eliminating the need to develop and maintain a separate compensation system
- Streamlining payroll, HR processes, and policy administration
- Allowing HR resources to focus on strategic priorities during this transitional period

Given that the number of non-represented employees in the new department will be relatively small, maintaining a separate pay system would create unnecessary administrative burden.

### **3. Consistency and Internal Alignment**

Utilizing the City of Wauwatosa's pay plan promotes consistency in compensation practices across related governmental entities, which supports transparency and equity in pay decisions.

### **4. Flexibility for Future Growth**

The City of Wauwatosa's pay structure is designed to be scalable and adaptable. As the Milwaukee Metro Fire Department evolves, the framework can accommodate:

- Additional positions
- Market adjustments
- Organizational changes

### **Pay Philosophy Considerations**

In adopting this structure, the following compensation philosophy is recommended:

- **Market Competitiveness:** Targeting pay at or near 50-70% of the market for comparable roles. The target market is made up of more than 60 public sector employers, including regional cities such as Milwaukee, Green Bay, Racine and Village of Schaumburg.
- **Internal Equity:** Ensuring fair and consistent placement within the pay range based on experience, qualifications, and responsibilities
- **Performance Recognition:** Allowing for pay progression based on performance
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Balancing competitiveness with sustainable financial practices

### **C. Fiscal Impact**

The recommended solution provides a fiscally responsible plan in that it initially saves the agency from the monetary and administrative cost of conducting a compensation study.

The plan itself provides a balanced opportunity to attract and retain a strong workforce while maintaining fiscal responsibility in the future.

### **D. Recommendation**

If the Board is supportive of the recommendation to adopt the existing pay plan structure currently utilized by the City of Wauwatosa, the HR Department will:

- Map non-represented positions within the MMFR to the appropriate pay grades once an organizational chart is established
- Develop a recommended salary range for the Fire Chief position using this framework and relevant market data
- Establish initial administrative guidelines for implementation

This approach allows MMFR to move forward efficiently while ensuring a competitive and equitable compensation structure that supports recruitment, retention, and organizational success.