

City of West Allis: Wauwatosa and West Allis approve intergovernmental agreement to form Milwaukee metro fire rescue

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Feb. 25, 2026 - WEST ALLIS, WIS - The Common Councils of Wauwatosa and West Allis have each voted to approve an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to move forward with the creation of a joint fire department, which will be named Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue. The Wauwatosa Common Council voted 12-2 in favor and the West Allis Common Council voted 10-0 in favor.

This historic collaboration reflects both communities' shared commitment to providing cost-effective municipal services, prioritizing fiscal responsibility, and providing excellent fire and EMS services to the community. By merging resources and expertise, Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue will enhance emergency response capabilities while reducing duplication and maximizing taxpayer value.

"This merger is an exciting step forward for both West Allis and Wauwatosa," said West Allis Mayor Dan Devine. "By joining forces, we're creating a stronger, more efficient fire and EMS service that benefits every resident. This partnership means faster response times, better use of taxpayer dollars, and access to additional funding opportunities that will strengthen public safety for years to come."

"For many years, through shared service agreements, our fire departments have worked closely together," said Wauwatosa Mayor Dennis McBride. "The merger is a logical step forward, and will preserve and strengthen the level of service we offer to residents of both communities."

There are many next steps before a joint fire department can officially begin. One step includes is for Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue to apply for funding through the State Innovation Fund, which offers a significant opportunity for the merged department. Under the program's rules, Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue could be eligible for an annual payment of over \$4.25 million, totaling between \$16 million and \$21 million over five years, depending on funding availability. This grant would provide critical support for the successful implementation and sustainability of the joint department. Other steps related to beginning a joint fire department include forming a governing board and fire commission, working on decisions that would affect facilities, staffing, and more. Milwaukee Metro Fire Rescue will combine the strengths of both departments to deliver exceptional fire and emergency services to residents of Wauwatosa and West Allis.

This partnership underscores the communities' dedication to innovation and collaboration in municipal service delivery. We anticipate the joint fire department to begin operations in early 2027.