



BUDGET MESSAGE

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Economic Outlook

Multnomah County's economic outlook presents challenges that could impact the Sauvie Island Fire District's (SIFD) budget. The county faces a structural deficit due to rising personnel costs and slower property tax revenue growth, compounded by declining commercial real estate values. While the district has managed to secure funding for critical purchases like fire engines and rescue boats, sustaining these efforts amidst a tightening fiscal environment will require strategic planning and potentially increased reliance on additional funding opportunities. This underscores the importance of proactive financial management to ensure the district can continue serving its community effectively.

The West Region all items Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) advanced 2.6 percent for the 12 months ending in February. This means the cost of living in our area is slightly lower than the same time last year. The CPI-U is projected to show modest inflation in March 2026, with estimates suggesting an annual increase of around 2.2% to 2.7%

The Sauvie Island Fire District is committed to capturing opportunities for funding to support its critical operations. By actively pursuing grants, maintaining its current local levy, community partnerships, and participation in State deployments, the district aims to secure resources that will offset capital expense needs such as equipment upgrades and facility improvements.

Successes

2024 was a year for completing or progressing projects. We have had many opportunities which all take planning and execution to bring them to their conclusion. Many of the larger projects started last year were completed or propelled forward. Below is a list of some projects and accomplishments from the previous year.

A long-standing project and major goal of the board was the completion a vehicle exhaust ventilation system for the station. This project was completed during the fourth quarter of 2024.

We determined early in the year that the station generator no longer function. A new station generator was discussed and eventually purchased and installed in Q3 of 2024.

As part of the Oregon State Covid Relief Fund Grant, two of the three goals for this fund where completed. A new fire engine and rescue boat/ tow vehicle where researched and purchased. The third project was a new satellite station. The acquisition of land was the major challenge in kicking this project off. Bailey Nurseries partnered with us on one acre of land on the east side of the Island on Gillihan Rd. We are now in the final phases of the permitting process for Multnomah County with expectation the satellite station completion in Q3 of 2025.

We were successful in gaining funding for the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Seasonal Firefighter Program again. This allows us to have two full-time firefighters on duty during the peak times visitors come to the island. This program usually runs three months during the summer.

Membership successes are another member hired by Portland Fire & Rescue, one firefighter hired by East Olympia Fire District, and one member accepted to medical school. Our members continue to achieve certifications. Another 2 certified at FF 1s, 2 certified as Engine Drivers, 2 more EMTs.

Highlight of the New Budget

Last year was a busy wildland firefighting year for the State. The Sauvie Island Fire District was able to participate in 12 deployments helping fight wildland fires. The District also sent a water tender down to Los Angeles during their fires this winter. The opportunity to participate provided experience and knowledge as well as extra income for those who deployed with the Fire District. This also brought in income for the apparatus which responded. This equals an extra \$55,000 income from 2024 and a potential \$28,000 from 2025 California deployment (at the time of writing this, the reimbursement for the California deployment had not yet been received from the State of Oregon). Here are some highlights for this year's proposed budget:

We follow the recommendation of the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission by only budgeting for 95% of estimated taxes.

The account #545 Workmans Comp was increased by 10%. This is based on the previous years estimates.

The account #565 Payroll Taxes was increased by 5%.

The account #625 Property and Liability Insurance was increased by 30%. This was based on the insurance companies recommendation and previous years premiums.

The account #680 Comms Maintenance was increased by 50% (an extra \$250). This typically is used for purchasing replacement batteries and antennas for portable radios.

The account #750 Equipment Maintenance was increased by 52% as a direct request from the Fire Chief to the board. The Chief asked for this increase to provide for deferred maintenance from last year. This will allow the district to "get caught up" with vehicle maintenance.

The account #905 Capital Expense for Equipment has a requested expense totaling \$67,156 for the purposes as listed below:

\$4,800 for 2 new AED's to replace old, soon to become obsolete models

\$7,000 to purchase 10 SCBA replacement cylinders

\$5,930 6 new nozzles to replace old, obsolete nozzles

\$9,426 for two full sets of structure personal protective equipment (PPE)

\$40,000 to replace manual transmission in one water tender with an Allison automatic transmission. This will allow more members to train on and be able to operate this vehicle. Currently, both vehicles are a 10 speed truck transmission.

Future

We strive to continue fostering strong partnerships with neighboring agencies and the community, we must prioritize open communication, shared goals, and mutual trust. Collaborative training exercises, joint emergency response plans, and community outreach initiatives strengthen our collective ability to serve effectively. Building these relationships ensures seamless coordination during crises, promotes resource sharing, and enhances overall preparedness. Engaging regularly with the community, through education programs, town hall discussions, and volunteer opportunities, further solidifies these connections and demonstrates our commitment to keeping residents informed and involved.

Investing in our members is critical to both individual growth and organizational success. Providing access to advanced training programs, professional

development opportunities, and wellness resources empowers our team to reach their full potential. By recognizing the unique talents and contributions of each member, we can foster a supportive environment that values growth and resilience. Regularly evaluating and refining our approaches to member support ensures we remain aligned with their needs, maintaining morale and fostering a culture of excellence within the fire district.

Keeping our fire district facilities and response vehicle fleet in top shape is essential to maintaining efficiency and reliability in our operations. Routine maintenance schedules, timely upgrades, and investments in modern technology enable us to respond effectively during emergencies. Beyond functionality, ensuring our facilities and vehicles meet high safety standards protects our team and builds public confidence. Strategically allocating resources to preserve and enhance these assets demonstrates our dedication to upholding quality service and readiness, no matter the challenge.

The Fire District Board of Directors and myself would like to thank the Sauvie Island Fire District membership for their unwavering commitment in filling this important duty for our community.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'C' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal tail.

Chris Lake, Fire Chief
Sauvie Island Fire District