



BUDGET MESSAGE

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Challenges - Inflation & Volunteerism

Despite the prevailing economic challenges faced by our country, our local FIRE district has demonstrated remarkable financial stability. The ability to maintain a balanced budget has been a cornerstone of our operations. Even during times of economic uncertainty, we have diligently managed our resources, ensuring that our financial health remains robust. By adhering to prudent fiscal practices, we've safeguarded our ability to continue serving the community effectively.

Some of the financial challenges we face are a CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers) which is expecting inflation to drop 1 percent by 2025 and also forecasting rent prices will continue to calm down in 2024. Lastly and unfortunately, food prices will remain high for a while longer. Another existential threat to our Fire District is the fact that the number of volunteer firefighters in the United States continue to decline. The National Volunteer Firefighter's Association estimates it's decreased 24% while the overall number of alarms has tripled. Specific to Sauvie Island Fire District, fire alarms have increased 46%, general alarms have increase 26% all while we have maintained a 7% increase in volunteer staffing over the last 5 years.

Our commitment to the community extends beyond financial considerations. While economic downturns may strain resources, we have consistently prioritized the safety and well-being of our residents. Our firefighters and emergency responders remain steadfast in their duty to protect lives and property. Whether it's responding to fires, medical emergencies, or natural disasters, our well-maintained operations allow us to serve with unwavering dedication. By striking a balance between financial responsibility and community service, our Fire District exemplifies resilience in challenging times.

Successes - Fleet Improvement, Seasonal Firefighter Program, Strengthening Core Members, Grants

Last year, our Fire District successfully operated with efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. The ability of the fire district to not only fund typical operations, comply with local, state, and federal mandates, but also the ability to fund administrative staff to seek out, apply for and manage grant funding opportunities has been

significantly beneficial to the Fire District and the community of Sauvie Island. It is with pleasure that I share some highlighted accomplishments improving our ability to operate and added abilities enhancing our service from this past year.

- Grant purchased rescue boat and tow vehicle, currently training our members to respond
- Grant purchased new fire engine,
- Purchase a replacement brush engine (Type 6) from Hillsboro Fire & Rescue to update older brush engine,
- Purchase 2 - (Type 3) 4x4 fire engines from Cal Fire,
- Partial grant purchased new vehicle ventilation system for the station,
- Kitchen update to provide better facilities for the volunteers when staying at the station,
- Replacement of old generator (mechanical failure, cost prohibitive to fix),
- OSFM Seasonal Firefighter grant allowing us to hire 2 full-time firefighters from July through September (40 hours per week).
- Volunteer training so far, 1 member has completed NFPA Firefighter 1 certificate, 1 has completed NFPA Engine Operator certificate, and many members are in process toward these certifications
- Member success stories, 2 volunteers hired by Portland F&R. Typically new members come to us organically, but we have increased the number of off-island volunteers with allowing some members to live with proximity close enough to the station.

Overview and Highlights of the 24/25 FY Proposed Budget

No real significant changes to this proposed budget. There are a few increases to accounts in Materials and Services to adjust for inflation, but most accounts remain the same as from last year. The areas you will see changes are Equipment/ Fleet improvement, Personnel and Grant Expenses.

Under Personnel, funds were added to accounts that may or may not be used throughout this next fiscal year. These are grant funded positions and or State emergency conflagration wages, which are reimbursed by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's office.

Grant funded expenses are expected expenses related to adding a new satellite fire station to the East side of the Island. This project has been in process for the last two years and will most likely be completed during this coming fiscal year.

This year will bring also about the following anticipated budgetary expenses:

- Sealing part of the fire station driveway.
- Upgrading the second water tender with a swivel chute and electric dump valve.
- Continue purchasing new firehose and nozzles to add to and replace worn existing hose and nozzles.

Look to the Future

Building Strong Partnerships. We recognize the importance of collaboration with our neighboring agencies. By fostering strong relationships, we can enhance information sharing, joint training exercises, and coordinated responses during emergencies.

Investing in Our Team. Our members are our greatest asset. We commit to providing comprehensive training opportunities. Whether it's skill development, leadership programs, or specialized certifications, we empower our team to excel. A well-trained workforce ensures efficient operations and better service to our community.

Facilities and Fleet Excellence. Maintaining district facilities and a reliable fleet is essential. Regular maintenance, upgrades, and adherence to safety standards are non-negotiable. Our facilities should be conducive to productivity, and our fleet must be ready for any mission. We prioritize safety, functionality, and sustainability.

Operational Excellence. Continuous improvement drives our operational effectiveness. We analyze data, learn from incidents, and adapt our procedures. Whether it's refining response protocols, optimizing resource allocation, or adopting new technologies, we strive for excellence in every aspect of our work.

Diversifying Funding Streams. While traditional funding sources are crucial, we explore additional avenues. Grants, partnerships, and community fundraising initiatives can supplement our budget. By diversifying funding, we ensure stability and resilience, allowing us to better serve our constituents.

The District remains confident in their financial practices and focus on fiscal responsibility and transparency to the residents of Sauvie Island. On behalf of the Sauvie Island Fire District membership, I thank you for your continued support and willingness to allow us to serve your community in this vital role.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Lake', with a stylized, flowing tail.

Chris Lake, Fire Chief
Sauvie Island Fire District