
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

October 31, 2025

Ald. Peter Burgelis
(414) 286-3446

Finance & Personnel Committee Approves Amendment to Strengthen Fire Department Fleet and Study Innovative Response Models

The Milwaukee Common Council’s Finance & Personnel Committee today (Friday, October 31) approved a critical budget amendment authored by **Alderman Peter Burgelis** to address urgent fire fleet replacement needs and explore innovative service models to improve public safety and operational efficiency.

Under amendment 95 (co-sponsored by Alderman Mark Chambers, Jr.), \$8 million in new borrowing will be added for the Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) to replace aging fire engines, ladder trucks, and rescue vehicles - many of which now exceed national safety recommendations. The amendment offsets part of this investment by reducing \$4 million in borrowing for the Department of Public Works’ planned Municipal Services Building project, resulting in a net budget increase of \$4.1 million and a tax rate impact of just \$0.002 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

“This amendment is about safety, readiness, and responsibility,” said Alderman Burgelis, Vice Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee. “We’re making sure our firefighters have the equipment they need to respond quickly and safely, while also asking smart questions about how we can deploy resources more efficiently in the future.”

The amendment also directs the MFD to study the feasibility of using light-duty vehicles for medical calls, potentially reducing wear on heavy apparatus, improving response times, and lowering maintenance costs. The study’s findings will be presented to the Common Council by June 30, 2026.

-More-

MFD Budget Amendment/ADD ONE

According to MFD data, 13 of 43 frontline engines and ladder trucks exceed the National Fire Protection Association's 15-year maximum age standard, creating mounting safety and maintenance concerns. The department's 2026 fleet replacement plan calls for the purchase of five new engines, three new ladder trucks, one rescue vehicle, and two medical units, all of which are possible because of this amendment.

"We've heard from residents loud and clear. They expect quality basic city services and that includes dependable emergency services in every neighborhood," Alderman Burgelis added. "This amendment answers that call by prioritizing frontline safety while keeping the city's long-term borrowing in check."

The amendment passed the Finance & Personnel Committee by a vote of 3-2, with Alderman Burgelis, Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, and Alderwoman Sharlen P. Moore voting in favor, and Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs and Alderman Scott Spiker voting against. It will now head to the full Common Council for consideration on budget adoption day on Friday, November 7.