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Ald. Peter Burgelis
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\$60.9 Million in Fire Department Needs \$3 Million Funded Zero New Fire Trucks

Alderman Peter Burgelis today sharply criticized the proposed 2027 city budget for funding less than 5% of the Milwaukee Fire Department's requested capital needs and failing to fund even one new fire truck. The department requested \$60,922,000 for equipment and facilities. The proposed budget provides \$3,000,000, leaving nearly \$58 million in identified needs unfunded.

"Firefighters don't get to skip an emergency because the equipment is worn out. Residents don't get to postpone a house fire until the city catches up," Ald. Burgelis said. "But this proposed budget puts off critical investments and leaves our firefighters to make do, again and again."

During today's Finance and Personnel Committee 2027 budget hearings, the Budget Office said its goal was to "deal with fleet across all departments."

"The Fire Department fleet was forgotten, and it's a serious public safety need," Ald. Burgelis noted. "The recommended investment isn't a serious answer to a serious public safety need."

The proposed 2027 budget would reopen Fire Station 6 near Brady Street, but provides no new fire apparatus to accompany the reopening. "Given all the new residential units east of the river, we all welcome reopening that station. But opening the doors doesn't put a new engine behind them," Ald. Burgelis said. "We cannot keep pointing to that reopening while ignoring equipment needs."

The proposed budget also excludes the department's \$2 million request for a facility planning and assessment study to guide long-term decisions about its buildings. "Not only were trucks left out of the budget, but so was the planning needed for our fire facilities. It leaves these needs for the next budget, and Milwaukee residents who depend on this department to deal with the consequences," Ald. Burgelis added.

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“Our firefighters show up for Milwaukee every day. Our budget needs to show up for them,” the Alderman said. “Three million dollars against nearly \$61 million in identified capital needs is nowhere close to enough. The Common Council needs to fix this.”

Budget hearings continue through October 17, and the Finance and Personnel Committee will consider budget amendments on October 29. The 2027 budget adoption is scheduled for November 6.