



Board of  
Police and Fire Commissioners

January 25, 2010

Mayor Dan Devine  
Members of the Common Council  
Citizens of West Allis  
Members of the West Allis Fire Department



Commissioners

Joseph F. Kempen  
*President*  
Kevin Haass  
*Vice-President*  
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*Secretary*  
Donald R. Nehmer  
Wayne B. Clark

On Wednesday, January 20, 2010, Mr. David Seager president of the Milwaukee Professional Firefighters Union, IAFF Local 215 said on Jeff Wagner's afternoon radio program on WTMJ, Radio 620, "...none of these nine communities, ; "Greendale, Menomonee Falls, Cudahy, South Milwaukee, West Milwaukee, West Allis and Wauwatosa" have the experience, the wherewithal, to conduct urban firefighting. He continued on, "we have specialized training of 20-some odd weeks", "ongoing training", "it's blatantly clear that these communities, if called upon, to respond to a working structure fire of any nature, within the City of Milwaukee, they would have extreme difficulty"... "Not to mention the fact that the City of Milwaukee conducts aggressive, offensive firefighting tactics, which means that we actually go into the building and fight the fire to reduce any further damage".

He went on to say that if another alarm had occurred while we were staffing their stations, "the city would have been at risk because the communities that responded do not have the experience of urban firefighting".

We are deeply disappointed by these comments. As a Commission and individually we believe that nothing could be farther from the truth. We are confident that our firefighters, EMT's and paramedics perform at the highest levels of proficiency and aggressiveness.

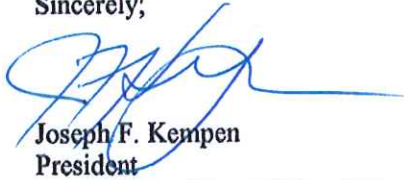
It is important that the citizens and taxpayers of the City of West Allis know that we spend our tax dollars wisely in support of a stellar fire service and that our service is second to none. West Allis is one of two departments in Wisconsin, and the only Milwaukee County fire department that is internationally accredited by CFAI, *The Commission on Fire Accreditation International, a division of the Center for Public Safety Excellence* in 2003, and subsequently re-accredited in 2008. A significant portion of the certification process requires the establishment of standards for service including timeliness of response and training followed by measurement of results against those standards assuring that an atmosphere of continual service improvement exists.

Our fire service employees are carefully selected, well educated, highly trained and professional, they deserve our ongoing support. We have a certified deep tunnel rescue team. We are part of the Milwaukee County Paramedic Service. Our officers are well respected within the fire service community as evidenced by the many State Committees they serve on.

Each and every year the West Allis Fire Department provides aid to and receives aid from our surrounding communities. This is done to provide the highest level of support and service to our citizens and remain fiscally responsible, recognizing that we do not control the time or place where services may be required.

I am confident that our West Allis Firefighters are as well trained and proficient as any of the area's top performing departments. The Commission and our Department leadership are committed to ongoing training in the latest firefighting and emergency response techniques to maintain and continuously improve our proficiency. We are proud of the proficiency and responsiveness of our department to calls for service within West Allis and the surrounding communities.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Kempen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph F. Kempen  
President  
West Allis Police and Fire Commission