

28.



# City of West Allis Matter Summary

7525 W. Greenfield Ave.  
West Allis, WI 53214

File Number	Title	Status
2010-0080	Communication	Introduced
West Allis Police & Fire Commission letter supporting the West Allis Fire Department in response to unfavorable comments made by Milwaukee Fire Fighters Union President.		
Introduced: 2/2/2010		Controlling Body: Administration & Finance Committee

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION *approve + Pof*

ACTION DATE:	MOVER	SECONDER		AYE	NO	PRESENT	EXCUSED
<u>FEB 02 2010</u>			Barczak				
			Czaplewski				
	X		Kopplin	✓			
			Lajsic	✓			
			Narlock	✓			
			Reinke	✓			
			Roadt				
			Sengstock				
		X	Vitale	✓			
			Weigel				
			TOTAL	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>		

## SIGNATURE OF COMMITTEE MEMBER

*Krist Kopplin*  
 Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Vice-Chair \_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMON COUNCIL ACTION **APPROVAL + PLACE ON FILE**

ACTION DATE:	MOVER	SECONDER		AYE	NO	PRESENT	EXCUSED
<u>FEB 02 2010</u>			Barczak	✓			
			Czaplewski	✓			
	✓		Kopplin	✓			
			Lajsic	✓			
			Narlock	✓			
			Reinke	✓			
			Roadt	✓			
			Sengstock	✓			
		✓	Vitale	✓			
			Weigel	✓			
			TOTAL	<u>10</u>	<u>-</u>		



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  
Kathleen Dagenhardt  
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, EMTs 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





Fire and Police Commission

Michael G. Tobin  
Executive Director

Richard C. Cox  
Chair  
Carolina M. Stark  
Vice-Chair  
Kathryn A. Hein  
Paul X. Lor  
Sarah W. Morgan  
Commissioners

FAX COVER SHEET

DATE: February 1, 2010

TO: West Allis Common Council

FAX #: 302 - 8207

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES (including this cover sheet): 3

FROM: Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission  
Michael Tobin

FAX #: (414) 286-5050

Original documents being mailed:  Yes

If you do not receive the total number of pages sender immediately by calling (414) 286-5000.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Attach to log. file.  
Copies Mayor Devine  
to Alds.  
P. Zickler  
Chief Hoos

cc: Mayor  
Ald.  
Paul X  
Chief Hoos

RECEIVED

FEB - 1 2010

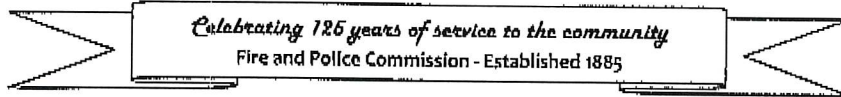
CITY OF WEST ALLIS  
CLERK/TREASURER

Richard C. Cox  
Chair  
Carolina M. Stark  
Vice-Chair  
Kathryn A. Hein  
Paul X. Lor  
Sarah W. Morgan  
Commissioners



**Fire and Police Commission**

Michael G. Tobin  
Executive Director



February 1, 2010

Joseph Kempen, President  
Board of Police and Fire Commissioners  
11301 West Lincoln Avenue  
West Allis, Wisconsin 53227

Dear Mr. Kempen,

We have received your correspondence dated January 25, 2010 concerning statements made by David Seager, President of the Milwaukee Professional Fire Fighter's Association during a radio interview broadcasted on January 20, 2010.

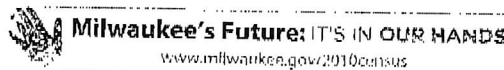
Mr. Seager is currently detached from the Milwaukee Fire Department and serves as the full-time union liaison. While he is certainly free to express his opinions concerning our neighboring fire departments, you may be assured that his statements do not reflect the official position of the City of Milwaukee, Mayor Tom Barrett, or the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission. We appreciate the competent and professional assistance the West Allis Fire Department has provided during the Pizza Man fire and we look forward to continued mutual cooperation during major alarms and training exercises with all of our neighboring communities that are members of MABAS.

We have attached for your reference a communication recently forwarded to your Fire Chief. Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Tobin  
Executive Director

MGT:mk  
Attachment  
CC: West Allis Common Council (w/ att.)





RECEIVED

FEB - 1 2010

CITY OF WEST ALLIS  
CLERK/TREASURERMichael L. Jones  
Acting Chief  
Debra J. Weber  
Acting Assistant Chief

Fire Department

January 25, 2010

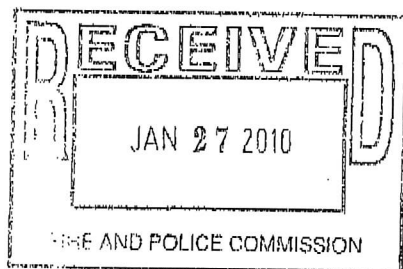
To All County Chiefs:

On behalf of the Milwaukee Fire Department, I am immensely appreciative of the prompt assistance firefighting personnel from around the county provided us during this past week's intense fire on Milwaukee's east side.

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to validate my support for MABAS. I am a strong proponent of mutual aid and see it as a valuable tool that proved to be beneficial to the MFD during our time of need. The crews that were sent to our fire houses from county departments ensured that the City of Milwaukee was not without sufficient coverage. All helped protect our city and I am profoundly grateful.

I look forward to the Milwaukee Fire Department cultivating a stronger relationship with each county fire department and working more closely together in the future. I was very pleased with the response I received from the personnel who responded to our needs and it immeasurably assisted in helping us fight a massive fire that exhausted a majority of our resources.

The willingness to step in and take action epitomizes the MFD motto "Courage, Integrity, and Honor." On behalf of the entire City of Milwaukee, thank you!



Sincerely,

MICHAEL L. JONES  
Acting Chief

MLJ/tw/cf

cc: Mayor Tom Barrett  
Patrick Curley, Mayor's Office  
Michael Tobin, Fire & Police Commission  
Fire & Police Commissioners  
Alderspersons, City of Milwaukee





West Allis

# Fire Fighters

IAFF, LOCAL NO. 1004

2055 S. 103<sup>rd</sup> Ct.  
West Allis, WI 53227

January 22, 2010

Milwaukee Fire Fighters IAFF Local 215  
5625 W. Wisconsin Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

To: Milwaukee IAFF Local 215

As President of West Allis Fire Fighters IAFF Local 1004, I feel compelled to respond to Mr. David Seager's comments regarding suburban Milwaukee County firefighters, specifically West Allis. Mr. Seager, President of Milwaukee Firefighters IAFF Local 215, made these comments while representing Milwaukee Firefighters IAFF Local 215, on the Jeff Wagner radio show, airing the afternoon of January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Mr. Seager was commenting on MABAS, "moving up" and staffing of MFD stations during the "Pizza Man" fire, by firefighters on suburban departments. Mr. Seager questioned these firefighter's ability, performance, and aggressiveness, etc.

Mr. Seager referred to nine suburban union departments, and names; "*Greendale, Menomonee Falls, Cudahy, South Milwaukee, West Milwaukee, West Allis and Wauwatosa*".

During his comments, Mr. Seager states that firefighter's in these suburban union departments, lack ... "*the experience, the wherewithal, to conduct urban firefighting.*" He continues... "*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 buildings and fight the fire to reduce any further damage...*".

I understand Mr. Seager's frustration with budget cuts, cuts that have been necessary in most communities throughout the state, including my own. However, to defend your position by attacking union brother and sister firefighters in Milwaukee County suburban departments, asserting they don't have adequate training or tactical skills, is naive and irresponsible. To suggest that MFD is the only Milwaukee County fire department that makes aggressive, interior fire attacks is mind boggling, and a lie. I find Mr. Seager's comments aggressive and attacking, but mostly, unfounded and without base. Furthermore, it is one of the worst displays of unionism I have witnessed in my 27 years as an IAFF member. To use your union brothers and sisters in order to gain a better position in your own community is unconscionable.

What is blatantly clear is Mr. Seager did not consider his comments prior to making them. This evidenced by, his lack of knowledge that his own union members staff and respond in the Village of West Milwaukee. Further, it is my hope that Mr. Seager does not actually believe what he said, and has greater respect for his union brother and sister firefighters than indicated during his radio show comments.

For the record, West Allis is one of two departments in Wisconsin, and the only Milwaukee County fire department that is internationally accredited by CFAI, and was re-accredited in 2008.

I surely hope, Mr. Seager considers his comments the afternoon of January 20<sup>th</sup>, and initiates an appropriate course of action.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P Rohde".

Peter Rohde, President  
West Allis IAFF Local 1004

Cc Steve Tipple, President SESC  
Mike Woodzicka, President, PFFW  
Joe Conway, Vice-Pres. IAFF 5<sup>th</sup> District