

Village of McCook FIRE-RESCUE



2024-28

STRATEGIC *PLAN*

Letter from the Chief

It is both an honor and a privilege to address you on behalf of the McCook Fire Department as I present our meticulously crafted 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. As Fire Chief, I am excited to share with you the comprehensive vision and goals that will guide our department over the next five years.

Our strategic plan is a result of extensive collaboration, analysis, and foresight from our dedicated team of firefighters and department leaders. It outlines key objectives aimed at furthering the department's mission to protect and serve the Village of McCook with the highest level of professionalism, efficiency, and dedication.

This plan encompasses critical aspects such as:

- 1) **Communications & Policies:** Developing a comprehensive policy and procedure program and communications to ensure clear and concise directives.
- 2) **Personnel Development:** Prioritizing ongoing training and professional development for our firefighters, equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate evolving challenges.
- 3) **Community Preparedness:** Strengthening ties with the community through outreach programs, education initiatives, and transparent communication to enhance public safety awareness with domestic threats and natural disasters.
- 4) **Equipment Modernization:** Upgrading and/or replacing expiring equipment to meet the highest standards, ensuring the safety of both our personnel and the community.

Presentation of a Fire Department strategic plan is something that has previously never been accomplished in McCook. However, I believe this to be a testament to our commitment to the safety and well-being of the community. We believe that by aligning our efforts with the objectives outlined in this plan, we can fortify the foundations of a resilient and secure community.

I invite you to review the enclosed strategic plan. Your insights and support are invaluable as we work collectively towards a safer and more prepared McCook. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss our shared commitment to the community's safety and explore how, together, we can ensure a brighter and more secure future.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and ongoing support.

Sincerely

David W. DeLeshe

Fire Chief

History of the Organization

The McCook Fire Department is a multi-faceted emergency response agency that provides for the emergency and safety needs of our residents and visitors. Our service is community-based, and we are continually evaluating and redefining our services as the needs of our Village changes.

Since inception, the Department has continued to grow and expand its services, with call volumes increasing year after year. The Village Board under Mayor Carr and the Board of Trustees, has invested in the Department, by purchasing a new Rescue Squad, Ladder Truck, and recently, a new Ambulance. This equipment is critical and provides the members with state-of-the-art apparatus to provide exceptional services to the community.



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Foundation for the Future

Mission **What we do** » **timeless** Safeguard life, and property, through proactive education, prevention, and rapid emergency response.

Vision **Where we're going** » **3-5 years** To be one of the most respected and high-performing fire and emergency service providers. We will achieve this with a forward-thinking workforce, willingness, and ability to fortify and develop our teams, work culture, and dedication to our community.

Purpose **Why we do what we do** Serving and protecting the Village of McCook with professionalism, compassion, and excellence.

Values **What defines us** » **the way we live** Values form the foundation upon which you build your character and your life. For the McCook Fire Department, they are the moral compass that governs the culture of our organization. Our culture is based on core values of integrity, responsibility, loyalty, and accountability. The below is in addition to and expanding our mission statement.

We **C.A.R.E.** for our community and each other with compassion, holding each other accountable, treating everyone with respect, and demonstrating trust and empathy to all with whom we interact. We empower our workforce to strive for personal excellence by being responsible for their actions, practicing the highest degree of ethical behavior, and using their best judgment when making decisions.

Compassion We value a compassionate environment in which the needs and development of our community and co-workers are a top priority. This environment is fostered by a professional and enthusiastic workforce who diligently adheres to a sound code of moral and ethical conduct.

Accountability We value accountability by holding each other responsible for our performance and ownership of resources bestowed upon us by the community. Our demonstration of talented, purposeful, reliable, and professional behaviors earns the trust of our community and promotes personal integrity and empowerment.

Respect We value respect and recognize the worth of others while consistently exhibiting professionalism and compassion for those in need. We respect each other and the value, dedication, talent, and commitment each co-worker brings to the job every day. We hold ourselves to ambitious standards and strive to be industry leaders in every aspect.

Empathy We value an empathetic workforce that seeks to support, understand, and meet the needs of our community and each other. Services will always be delivered free of bias, as we recognize and appreciate the diversity within our community and workforce.

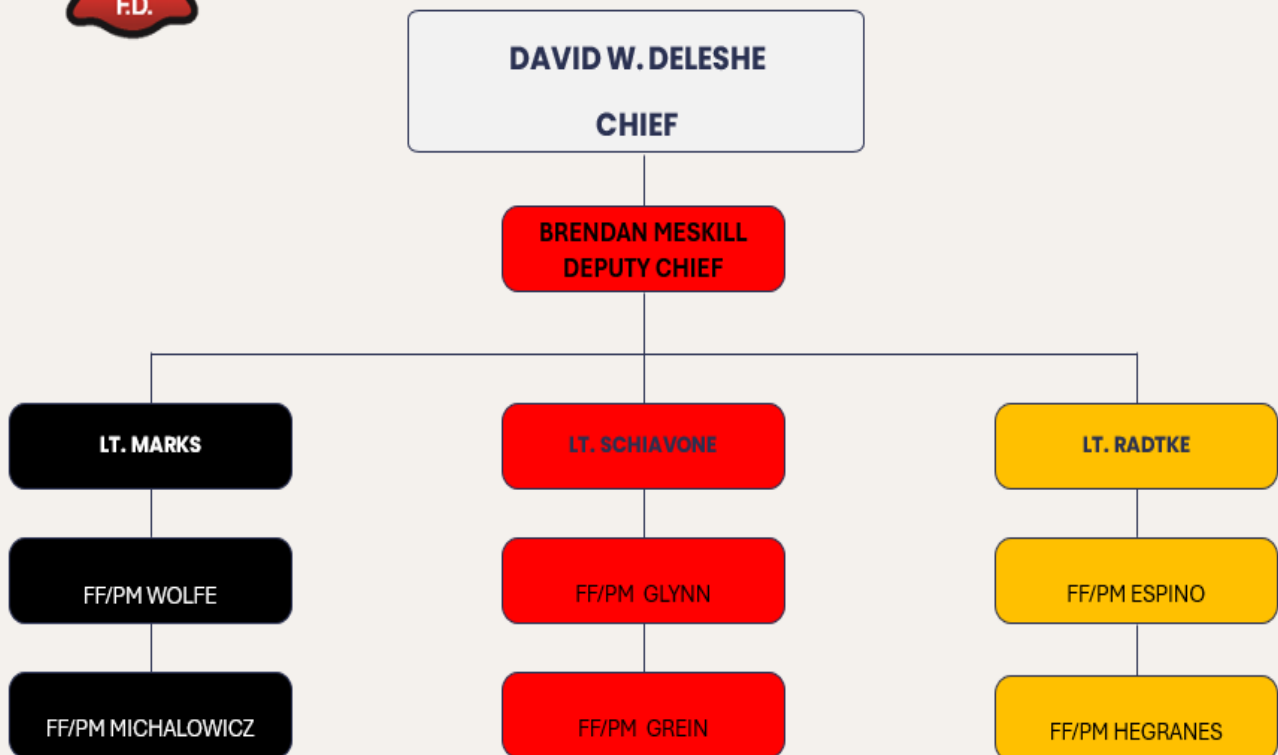


Agency Structure

Agency Organizational Chart



McCOOK FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



The McCook Fire Department is currently staffed with 11 members, who provide fire suppression, emergency medical care, and other emergency services to the community.

The firefighter/paramedics train continuously to ensure proficiency in all areas.

Real heroes are those who fall and fail and are flawed,
but win out in the end because they've stayed true
to their ideals and beliefs and commitments.

— Kevin Costner



Scope of Service

MFD is a full-service, high-performance, emergency service agency operating under many programs.

Program	Details
Hazardous Materials Mitigation	Prevent and resolve hazardous materials from escaping and/or causing larger issues to residents & businesses. Examples include spills and leaks involving chemical, gases, and other corrosive materials.
Firefighter Education, Certification & Leadership Development	Professional training focusing on continued education in Fire, EMS and Rescue with emphasis on maintaining the highest quality emergency services. All operations personnel are Illinois Certified Firefighters and Paramedics, including other specialized certifications including ongoing leadership growth and development programs.
Fire Suppression	Protecting the community from uncontrolled fire. Firefighters are well-trained and well-equipped to search for and remove victims, strategically attack, and rapidly control fires to hold these events to the areas of origin and minimize loss of life and property.
Rescue: Basic & Technical	Perform rescues of victims from what are considered complex or unique "technical" situations - rescue in complex motor vehicle accidents. Several members are trained and assigned to specialty teams for building confined space, structural collapse, high angle, industrial accidents, etc.
Community Involvement & Communication	Empower our community with the tools and knowledge to prevent and respond when faced with fires or EMS related emergencies. Participation in community and Village-sponsored events. Outreach through social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, and Everbridge. We continuously gather feedback provided through social media responses and community business meetings.
Domestic Threat Planning, Communication & Response	Emergency Operations Center and Activation: Prepare and respond to situations of natural disasters. Inform the community of emergency situations using various methods of communication, i.e. weather emergencies.
Fire Prevention, Investigation, Inspection & Plan Reviews	Reduce the frequency, probability and severity of fire resulting in loss of life and property. Conduct frequent quality inspections in all commercial buildings, review proposed plans and work with our business to promote fire safety.
Public Fire/EMS Safety & Education	The Fire & Life Safety Program conducts public education and community outreach. Examples include CPR certification, apparatus displays, fire prevention training, and smoke detector installation.
Emergency Medical Services	Provide definitive care to patients with illnesses and injuries which the patient believes constitute a medical emergency. Personnel are trained in the rescue, stabilization, transportation, and advanced treatment of traumatic or medical emergencies.

Strategic Planning Defined

"Strategy is about shaping the future."



Plan Goal & Process

The overall goal is to obtain cross-functional, strong leadership engagement, buy-in and ownership based on a series of external and internal assessments with intermediate and long-term goal setting.

Objective	Actions
Process & Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Determine roles & objectives of leadership team and workgroup team » Identify budget, location & other restraints » Conduct Strategic Plan kick-off to validate plan process, timing, set expectations, and map out mitigants for roadblocks & constraints
Previous Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No comparisons – this would be first-ever plan for Fire Department
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct two focus groups: internal MFD employees & MFD partners » Feedback & suggestions provided on how MFD can be even more successful » Map partially into SWOT [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats]; validate alignment & identify gaps/missing points
Competitive Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct research with area fire departments to see what works – what doesn't » Extract best practices to use with the new Strategic Plan
Current & Future Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Create a list of current or future projects that are already in the works » Determine budget and timing approval » Align to new Strategic Plan work
Driving Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify values and behaviors as "the way things are done": Reality » Compare desired or differing values and behaviors from actual & draw conclusions
Strategic Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use collected data, feedback, current information & future desires to build the plan » Roadblocks, speed humps & hiccups: what could get in the way? » Potential risks or impacts; minimize or stop from occurring » Finalize plan objectives, SMART goals & accountable leaders
Post Plan Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Gain personal commitment, buy-in and ownership » Internal & external communication plan: actively demonstrate ongoing plan progress » Unite the organization with consistent "We Heard You" content & solicit ongoing feedback » Measure results and ongoing inspection of progress of goals & objectives every 1-3 months » We Heard You: focus group check-back with validation of Strategic Plan progress

Keys to a Successful Plan

“Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.”

– President Dwight D. Eisenhower

- Allow time for big-picture thinking**
- Ask the hard questions**
- Concentrate on what moves the dial**
- Allow for open & free discussion, regardless of each person’s position**
- Be flexible » no plan should be written in stone**
- Keep it simple & clear**
- Make strategy planning a habit**
- Have fun & celebrate successes**



The Top 10 Projects Identified

Upon reviewing data, conducting multiple fact-finding activities, and analyzing our current foot-print, we named the top 10 projects for this Strategic Plan.

This success was attributed to everyone:

- » Concentrating on what moves the dial
- » Remaining focused but flexible
- » Keeping it simple & clear
- » Acknowledging this plan is not a "one & done"

MFD's Top 10

- 1. Develop Policies & Standard Operating Guidelines**
- 2. Increase Number of Hazmat Techs**
- 3. Development & Training**
- 4. New Engine / Refurbished Engine**
- 5. Staff Additions**
- 6. Improve Oral and Written Communications & Directions**
- 7. Domestic Threat Preparedness**
- 8. New Ambulance / Remount Ambulance**
- 9. Mental Health – Physical Fitness**
- 10. Replace Outdated / Expiring Equipment**



1.

Developing Policies & Standard Operating Guidelines

To ensure all facets of the Department are identified and policies are written.

- » **Accountable Leader** Fire Chief David DeLeshe
- » **Work Team** Deputy Fire Chief Brendan Meskill, Lt. Patrick Marks
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Start & Completion dates | Complete by June 1, 2025
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Policies that reflect MFD safety and operations
 - Includes all facets of the Department, to ensure employees understand policy, procedures and Department guidelines.
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Other projects become a priority
- » **Cost**
 - No cost

2.

Increase the Number of Hazardous Materials Techs

As a community with an influx amount of hazardous materials, having a trained technician on each shift.

- » **Accountable Leader** Deputy Fire Chief Brendan Meskill
- » **Work Team** Lt. Patrick Marks
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Schedule immediately – complete by Summer 2025
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Get all officers certified, resulting in at least one FF/PM per shift
 - Enhance our Department's hazardous materials equipment / meters
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Class scheduling, covering shifts so personnel can attend
- » **Cost**
 - The Hazmat classes are grant funded – free class
 - Will supplement with trade days to avoid personnel costs

PROJECT 3.

Development and Training

Continue to train our members to enhance and develop their skills.

- » **Accountable Leader** Lt. Patrick Marks
- » **Work Team** Deputy Fire Chief Brendan Meskill, All certified instructors
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Begin January 2024 | monthly activity execution
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Push our FF/PM to excel / expand their knowledge in operations and safety
 - More practical exercises to challenge skill level
 - Quality over quantity training
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Buy-in; skill level of instructors, available props, commitment
- » **Cost**
 - Will work within our means – budgetary under training.

PROJECT 4.

New Engine / Refurbish Engine

Replace / Upgrade 22-year-old engine by 2027 – or refurbish

- » **Accountable Leader** Fire Chief David DeLeshe
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort**
Begin 2024 | Completion December 2027
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Begin pricing apparatus from vendors
 - Order/lock-in pricing by end of 2024 if new – delivery in 3+ years
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Budget, Current life expediency of engine in current state – Price increases
- » **Cost**
 - \$242,550.00 to refurbish current engine / buys us 8+ years to bridge gap between major apparatus purchases (**see Appendix A**)
 - 2024 KME Engine Demo - \$900,000
 - Pierce – order new engine – 3+ year delivery / quarterly price increases of 3+ percent. As of today - \$950,000.00

PROJECT 5.

Staff Additions

Increase manpower to staff both ambulances

- » **Accountable Leader** Chief David DeLeshe
- » **Work Team** Deputy Fire Chief Brendan Meskill
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Definition of process | December 2025
- » **High-level Goals**
 - All shifts at 4 personnel – meet operational needs
 - Ability to man both ambulances 24/7
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Budget, manpower
- » **Cost**
 - Approximate \$32,000 per month – for 3 additional firefighter/paramedics

PROJECT 6.

Improve Oral and Written Communications and Directions

To ensure clarity and positive messaging within the department

- » **Accountable Leader** Fire Chief David DeLeshe
- » **Work Team** Deputy Chief Brendan Meskill
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Completion December 2025
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Enhance current communication methods
 - Design portal on website for employees only
 - Develop a clear and consistent communication template
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Participation, we have always done it this way mentality
- » **Cost**
 - No cost

PROJECT

7.

Domestic Threat Preparedness

Emergency Operations Center and activation for response to natural disasters, pandemics, active shooter, and terrorism. Inform community of emergency situations using various methods of communication.

- » **Accountable Leader** Deputy Chief Brendan Meskill
- » **Work Team** All Officers
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Begin June 2024 | Completion December 2024
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Ability to provide training & communication
 - Response & mitigation of multiple types and sizes of threats to the Village
 - Infrastructure [personnel & online] is flexible and adaptable with the ability to adjust to any situation
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**

Ability to communicate; unknown staff impact; inability to partner/use other resources; impact to short & long-term goals; difficult to measure impacts; budget, timing
- » **Cost**
 - Will work within our means – budgetary under training.

PROJECT

8.

New Ambulance / Remount 1415

Look at impact of current/future calls for service / additional commercial structures being built, ability to maintain a spare / second-out ambulance.

- » **Accountable Leader** Deputy Chief Meskill
- » **Work Team** Fire Chief David DeLeshe
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Begin looking at options – proposal by 3rd quarter 2024
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Ability to have two-working front-line ALS ambulances
 - Have a replacement cycle
 - Newer vehicles will result in lower maintenance costs
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**

Budget, availability, cost increases

 - Cost of new Ambulance = \$283,000 – 9-month program or 36-month delivery (**see Appendix B**)
 - Cost of Remount = \$260,000 – 6 months turn-around (**see Appendix C**)

PROJECT 9.

Firefighter Health & Safety

Make improvements to current station and equipment to make the environment more firefighter friendly, safe, easy-to-use and enjoyable.

- » **Accountable Leader** Lt. Patrick Marks
- » **Work Team** All Employees
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Begin May 2024 | Completion December 2024
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Reduce firefighter injury & illness
 - Improve overall firefighter mental & physical well-being
 - Eliminate outdated fitness equipment, develop physical fitness program / goals
 - “Clean” area to protect personnel from cancer causing carcinogens
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
None
- » **Cost**
 - Utilization of Foreign Fire Funds to complete this task

PROJECT 10.

Replacing Outdated / Expiring Equipment

Evaluate all Department equipment, identify all equipment that is due to expire or end-of-life.

- » **Accountable Leader** Lt. Patrick Marks
- » **Work Team** All Lieutenants
- » **Multi-Phase Work Effort** Begin March 2024 | Completion July 2024
- » **High-level Goals**
 - Inspection of all equipment on all apparatus
 - Improved equipment that may reduce firefighter injury
 - Identify all equipment and target replacement dates
- » **Potential Roadblocks | Hiccups | Speedbumps**
Budget limitations, multi-year replacement
- » **Cost**
 - Utilize possible AFG - If not, approximately \$75,000.00 to be budgeted over two years.

Ideas & Feedback

Breakdown » Opportunities

- » Communicate to all the importance of the 5-year Strategic Plan
- » Communicate what you have at your disposal regarding the “cool and fun” toys
- » Communication is infrequent – help us feel like regular part of the department – share department goals so we can contribute and feel ownership
- » Communicate using Website & Facebook
- » Chief needs to be able to rely on his leaders to communicate better and create steps to help employees advance
- » Continue to encourage critical thinking and keep lines of communication open
- » Would like to see Department updates via email
- » Emails – allow for opt-in from website; monthly
- » EMS training – More of it, schedule in advance
- » Give time for messages to circulate – can’t send out and expect all to get it on time
- » Have roundtable roadblock remover sessions
- » Quarterly info on how the department handles domestic threats and expectations for community response
- » Better education – more safety
- » More time spent at the businesses with large employee base to educate on emergencies – quarterly
- » Move toward department goals with consistency
- » What is our identity with the new leadership – what is our story?



- » Mutual training with Public Works
- » Identify the appropriate way to open and close hydrants
- » Newsletter – Quarterly; ability to sign up via website
- » Once a year co-training with Village staff
- » Openly communicate the Strategic Plan and progress/impact
- » Provide employees where we are going – overall scope and vision and connectivity to others
- » Conduct quarterly feedback sessions
- » Tornado Siren – early warning system
- » Quarterly smoke detector/carbon dioxide program and training
- » State of the Department - annually
- » Suggest expanding training to internal and external resources
- » Provide information on website when fire codes change
- » Rental properties – keep owners/landlords up to date of fire safety
- » Utilize a mentor program to help disseminate information and develop others

Ideas & Feedback

Breakdown » Threats/Roadblock

- » Community engagement – sharing what we do, what we are doing and the impacts to residents and businesses
- » Communicate fire code changes as they occur
- » Lack of resources, time and budget constraints
- » Need more public education people
- » Offsite EOC – make it fully functional



Breakdown » Unknowns

- » Need interpretation and communication with building & permitting so we are on same page. Remove the surprises and be more involved so there are no unexpected fire code violations. Let's meet earlier in the process.
- » We're a small Village – it shouldn't be that hard to talk to each other
- » Create a focus group together to talk about communication
- » Community leaders rated Domestic Threat and Public Fire/EMS Safety & Education programs over EMS, Fire Suppression & Rescue
- » Active shooter would be highest priority; safety inspections & planned training
- » Take the time to reach out - victim advocacy and/or outreach – follow ups/survey
- » Ownership and pride – equipment belongs to all of us – treat it accordingly
- » Annual testing & driver training to maintain status
- » Do not let the message get diluted or modified based on personal preferences, experiences or beliefs
- » Community engagement - first-aid training – CPR training, classes
- » Onsite department training – participation and number of personnel



Roadblocks, Risks & Mitigation

Roadblocks

- » Ourselves/egos
- » Time
- » Lack of buy-in
- » Budget / economy
- » Disasters [tornado, pandemic]
- » Unexpected /no internal actions
- » Poor Planning or poor execution
- » Depending on a few to do the work
- » Lack of focus
- » Wrong expectations / outcomes
- » Lack of teamwork
- » Too many take the lead rather than follow
- » Hiring or assigning the right people
- » Being afraid to ask the tough questions
- » Lack of communication



Risks

- » Loss of respect, momentum & morale
- » Liability
- » Not achieving goals
- » Loss of people & confidence

Mitigants

- » Address the plan; keep it active
- » Be informed & keep others informed
- » Flexibility with the Plan & actions taken
- » Have checkpoints along the way
- » This is a process, not a project
- » Stay committed
- » Delegate activities & responsibilities
- » Create a baseline & measure results
- » Celebrate successes big & small

Plan Wrap Up

Given our collective talents, skills, knowledge, experience and operating according to our stated values, we will achieve the goals stated in this Strategic Plan. We will demonstrate transparency and frequently communicate so the workforce may be guided and motivated by the accomplishment of our collective goals, objectives, and day-to-day activities.



We are excited about what the future will bring and we believe the best is yet to come.

McCook Fire Department - 2024

