



UNITED FIRE FIGHTERS OF WINNIPEG
LOCAL 867-INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS
303-83 GARRY STREET WINNIPEG MB R3C 4J9
PHONE 204-783-1733 FAX 204-772-2531
info@uffw.ca



June 15th, 2025

Re: JUNE 11TH APPARATUS REDUCTION AND RELOCATION

Brothers and Sisters,

On June 11, the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service implemented a change that the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg (UFFW) believes undermines both public safety and the operational integrity of our service: the removal of a fully staffed apparatus from active duty at station #6, and the relocation of a 4-person engine company from station #23.

In response, I met directly with Deputy Mayor Markus Chambers and Standing Policy Committee on Community Services Chair Vivian Santos. Mayor Scott Gillingham was included in formal correspondence. I also engaged the Government of Manitoba's Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations, the Hon. Glen Simard. My message to all was clear and unequivocal: removing an apparatus during a period of record-breaking structure fires, unprecedented medical call volumes, and a historic spike in vacant structure fires—especially in Winnipeg's North End—is reckless and indefensible.

Let me be clear: we are sincerely grateful to the Province of Manitoba for stepping up with funding for 24 additional firefighter positions in a period of desperate need. That support was meaningful and timely. But it defies logic that the City of Winnipeg would accept \$3.4 Million in provincial funding only to reduce the number of frontline fire apparatus protecting our residents.

Winnipeg's North End and Point Douglas neighbourhoods experience more property and life loss to structure fires and arson than anywhere else in Canada. Removing an apparatus protecting this vulnerable and high-risk population—where every second counts—places residents' lives, property, and the safety of our members in direct peril.

Equally troubling is the quiet removal of the second engine company from Station 23 in Winnipeg's South End and Fort Richmond Community. While we have long advocated for the addition of a ladder truck in this underserved region—consistent with the 2018 Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS), which revealed Winnipeg to be operating at approximately half the recommended ladder capacity—it should absolutely *not* have

come at the expense of a four-person engine. That engine is required to provide critical support to both our water/ice rescue unit and out-of-water district tanker apparatus in a community that already suffers from the worst response times anywhere in Winnipeg.

Its removal not only threatens our ability to maintain FUS Superior Tanker Shuttle certification—potentially impacting residential and commercial insurance grading and subsequently raising costs for residents—but more importantly compromises our ability to deliver adequate water supply to outlying areas in a timely manner. Water supply we rely on to conduct search & rescue and fire suppression tasks critical to victim and firefighter life safety. This is simply unacceptable for a modern urban fire service. This says nothing about the detrimental impact on our response times to the countless medical calls, water rescues, as well as the prolific volume of tragic motor vehicle collisions occurring regularly in this rapidly growing and already underserved south perimeter highway corridor that has become gruesomely referred to as “*the death zone.*”

Just days into this change we’ve already witnessed near **14-minute first-in response times** to priority 1 incidents—like the structure fire 2 days ago on James Carleton Drive in the Maples community where the first-in apparatus responded all the way from Downtown, only to be further delayed making entry waiting for a second trucks arrival from the West End. When I heard this, I could hardly believe it. That’s **three and a half (3 ½) times the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standard** for first due arrival and nearly double the standard for full compliment arrival. That is *not* a standard befitting a major metropolitan fire service, or any service for that matter.

In 2020, using 4-year-old response continuum data, the Strategic Direction identified we had **already been missing our 90th percentile target response times by a staggering 2 minutes as early as 2016**. A first-of-its kind report containing all the details necessary to prepare WFPS to meet current and future needs - the Strategic Direction took into consideration 3 reports: the *Fire Underwriters Survey*, *Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover*, and *WFPS Master Plan*. The recommendations in each report were said to be transformative for our department – moving from its current state (which had changed very little since the unicity amalgamation in the 1970’s) to a “future state” which was said to include “new traffic management technology, updated performance standards, industry best practices, and preparation for a consistently growing population and coinciding call volumes”. The recommendations were intended to address the “**serious infrastructure and operating capacity deficits that threatened the ability of the department to fulfill its response and regulatory mandates**” already present in WFPS, ahead of what was forecast to be a 30% increase in call volume by 2040.

Seven years later:

- 2018 FUS has expired,
- We've already *drastically surpassed* 2040 call volume estimates,
- The only increase in staffing ratio has come from UFFW's lobby for provincial funding,
- Budget deficits and overtime overruns exceed \$10M annually,
- WCB costs have reached an all-time high,
- Council has yet to implement key programs, staffing, and equipment recommendations,
- We have fewer frontline apparatus than we did when the report was published,
- Response times have compounded reaching unprecedented delays 3.5x (10mins) beyond the acceptable standard.

The residents of Winnipeg deserve better. The firefighters who protect them expect better. And your union will not stop demanding better.

If you experience or witness a critical incident – that being the delay of first-in apparatus response times exceeding the four-minute standard (especially those approaching or exceeding eight minutes) on a call that results in threat or loss to life or property, I ask that you report them directly to me. These examples will form the evidence we bring forward to City Hall to demonstrate the consequences of ignoring these recommendations. Consequences on our calls, our staff, and most importantly, to the families and communities we are sworn to hold safe.

Hopefully this time, those elected to serve will choose to act without further delay - before a needless and preventable tragedy occurs.

In solidarity,



Nick Kasper

President
United Firefighters of Winnipeg
IAFF Local 867