

SBM Fire Department

Lexington City Council Presentation

Fire & Life Safety Services for the Future



Fire Chief Dan Retka

Introduction

Fire Chief Dan Retka



Who is SBM?

Spring Lake Park- Blaine- Mounds View Fire Department

- Independent Non-Profit
- Established in 1944
- Built through regional collaboration
 - Provides professional, sustainable, and cost-effective fire and life safety services.

Communities Served:

- Blaine
- Mounds View
- Spring Lake Park
- Circle Pines (Service Contract)
- Centerville (Service Contract)
- Lexington (Currently in contract for Administrative Services)





Population Served:

- More than 106,000 residents
- 5 School Districts
- Blaine Airport
- NSC Sports Center / Super Rink

Department Structure:

- Combination fire department
- 20 Full-time staffing
- 55 Duty crew staff
- 30 Fire Corps



Staffing & Coverage

Now Staffing Three Stations 24/7



1710 County Hwy 10
Spring Lake Park



11920 Ulysses St. NE,
Blaine



2 East Road,
Circle Pines

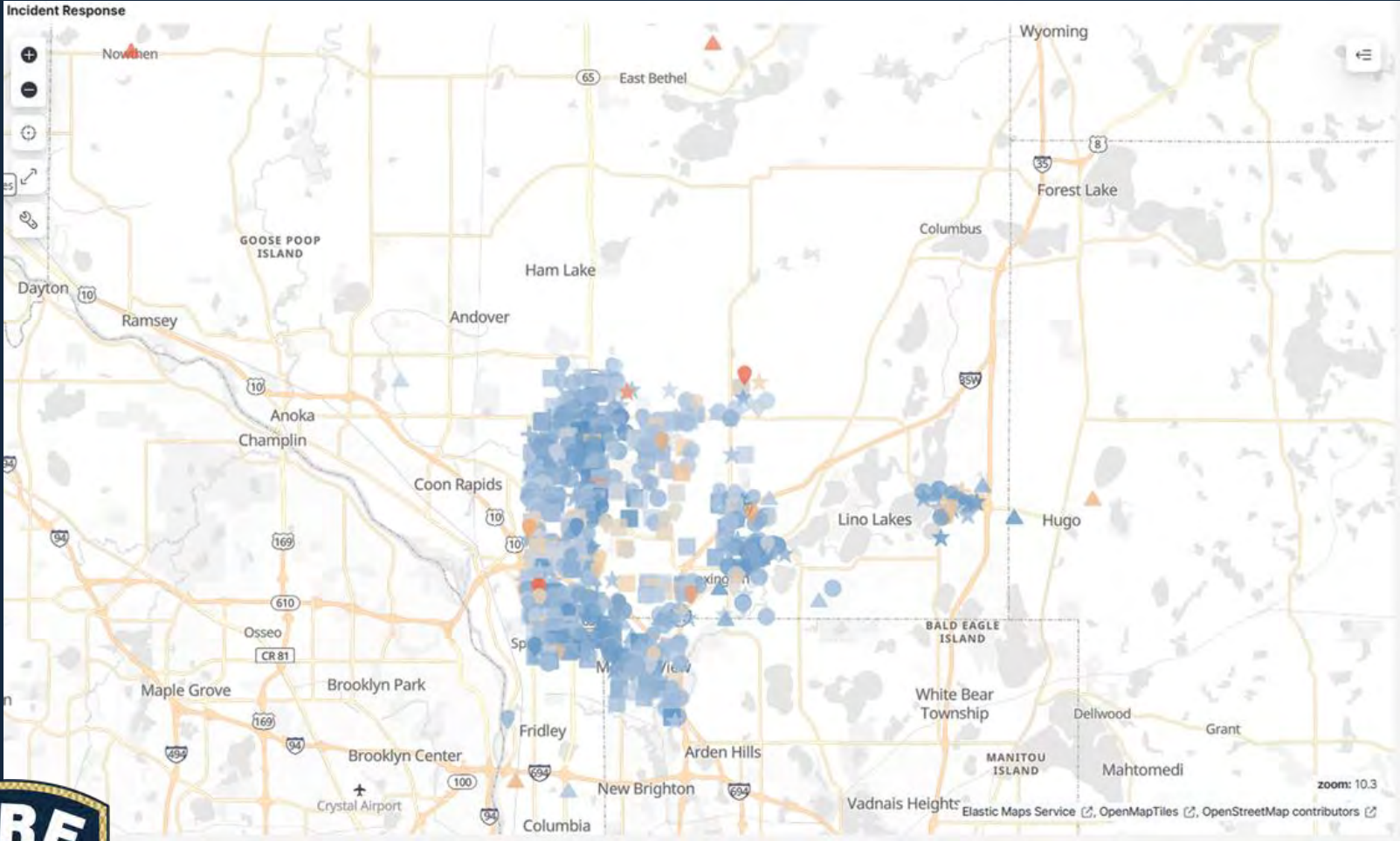
Battalion Chief on Shift 24/7

Impact:

- Response time dropped
- Better on-scene command presence= Safer Scenes
- Consistent numbers on scene



Incident Response



Governance:

- Governed by a Board of Directors
- Board representation from member cities and department membership
- Operates independently from direct municipal control
- Structured to operate efficiently and strategically
- Long-term focus on sustainability and regional collaboration



Operational Philosophy:

SBM operates with a business-minded approach to government service. By nature, the organization is structured to remain lean, adaptable, and operationally efficient. The independent non-profit model gives SBM the flexibility and agility to quickly adjust to changing service demands, staffing challenges, and regional growth without the layers of bureaucracy often found in traditional municipal systems.

This approach allows SBM to focus resources where they matter most—frontline staffing, training, equipment, and service delivery—while continuing to operate in a financially responsible manner for the communities we serve.



What makes SBM different?

- Regional collaboration model
- 24/7 staffed operations
- Modern command structure
- Strong focus on training and leadership
- Community-driven culture
- The lowest per-capita costs among comparable Minnesota departments

Core Mission:

To provide professional, reliable, and sustainable fire and life safety services while maintaining strong relationships with the communities we serve

SBM was built around the idea that communities are stronger when they work together. Our model allows us to provide high-level emergency services in a way that is both operationally effective and financially responsible.



Where SBM Came From

Originally Founded As:

- Spring Lake Park Fire Department 1944

Evolution:

- Built on collaboration between neighboring communities
- Expanded through partnerships and operational efficiency
- Transitioned from a traditional volunteer model into a modern combination department

Key Turning Point:

- Move toward 24/7 staffing and regionalized response
- Focus shifted toward:
 - Faster response times
 - Better staffing reliability
 - Improved firefighter safety
 - Long-term sustainability



SBM has continually evolved to meet the changing demands of modern fire service.



Where We Are Today

Current Operations:

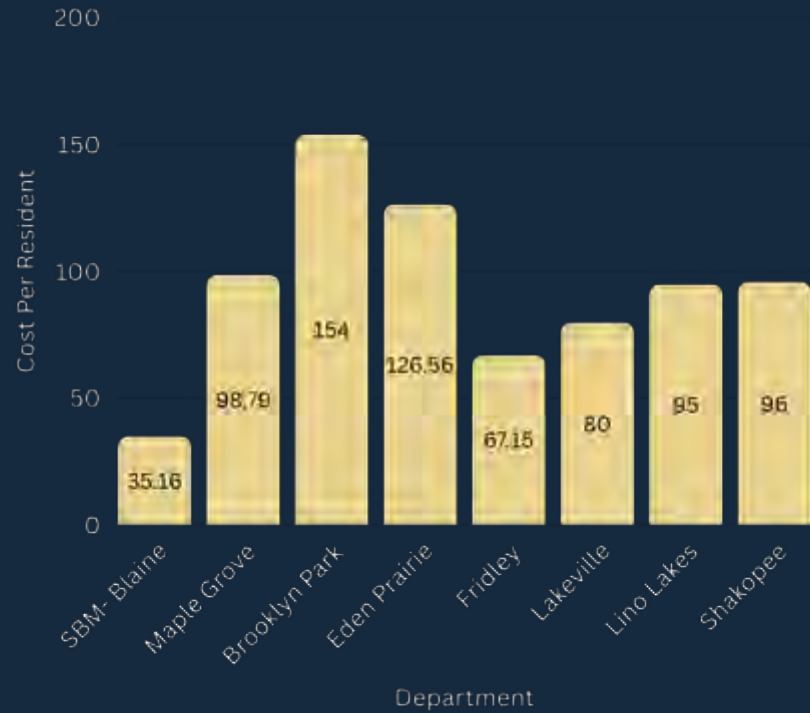
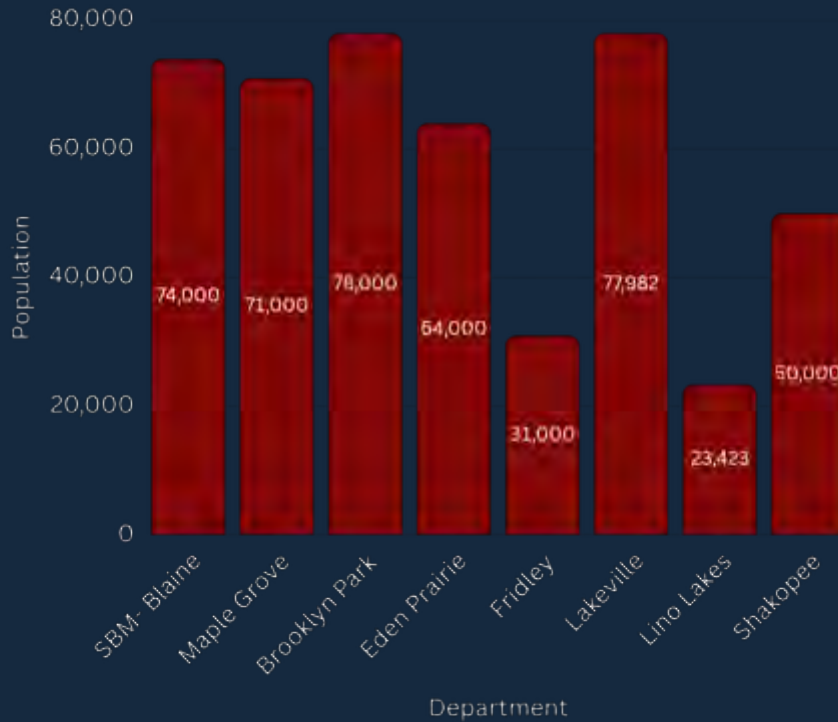
- Multiple staffed fire stations
- 24/7/365 staffing model
- Battalion Chiefs assigned by shift
- Full-time Captains assigned to every shift
- Advanced mutual aid and regional response network

Capabilities:

- Fire suppression
- Rescue operations
- EMS first response (all EMT Certified)
- Hazardous materials response
- Water rescue
- Wildland firefighting
- Incident command
- Fire prevention and inspections
- Community risk reduction



Financial Performance



*We continue to provide the **lowest** per capita cost among comparable departments in the state.*

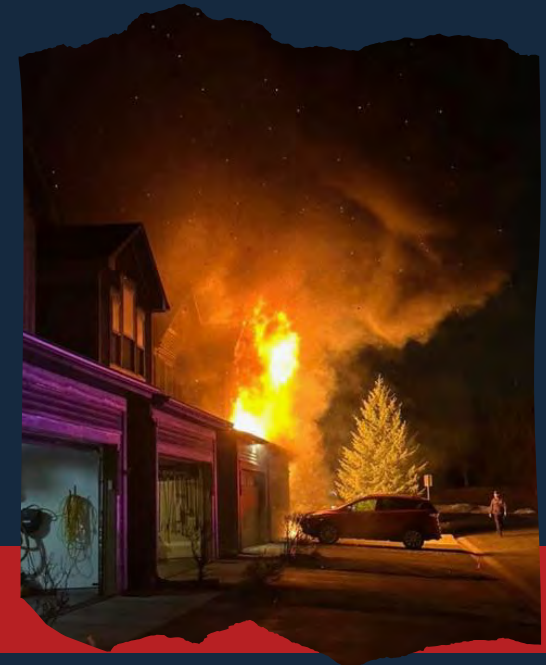


Recent Operational Improvements

- Response times cut nearly in half
- Increased staffing reliability
- Enhanced training standards
- Safer fireground operations
- More incidents stopped earlier with less property loss

Operational Efficiency

- Fewer large fires. We are arriving earlier
- Reduced duplication of equipment
- Strategic Station Locations
- Battalion Chiefs preventing over-and under-response.



Centennial Fire District Integration

Background:

- Centennial Fire District approached SBM looking for long-term sustainability
- Started with an administrative services model
- Transitioned into a full fire protection partnership

Results:

- 24/7 staffing added to the east side
- Improved response times
- Enhanced training and leadership
- Stabilized operations
- Modernized equipment planning
- Improved firefighter recruitment and retention



Regional collaboration works when the focus remains on service, sustainability, and public safety.



Lexington Today

Current Status:

- SBM currently operating under an administrative agreement with Lexington
- SBM currently providing operational coverage
- Lexington Fire Department taken offline due to critical staffing shortages

Reality Facing Smaller Departments:

- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Rising equipment costs
- Increased training requirements
- Aging infrastructure and apparatus
- Limited staffing availability
- Increased service demands

The challenges facing Lexington are not unique. Smaller departments across Minnesota are facing the same pressures.



Why SBM Makes Sense for Lexington

Immediate Benefits:

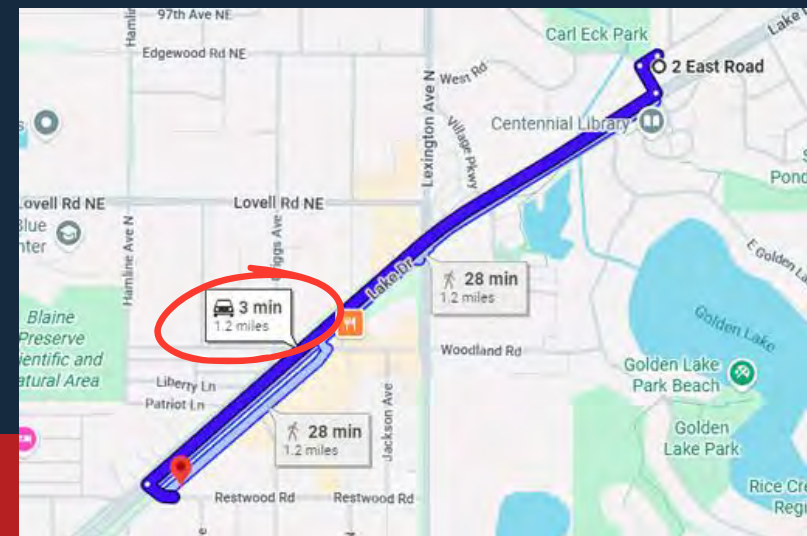
- 24/7 staffed response model
- Reliable staffing every day
- Established command structure
- Immediate operational depth
- Regional mutual aid network
- Access to specialized resources

Strategic Benefits:

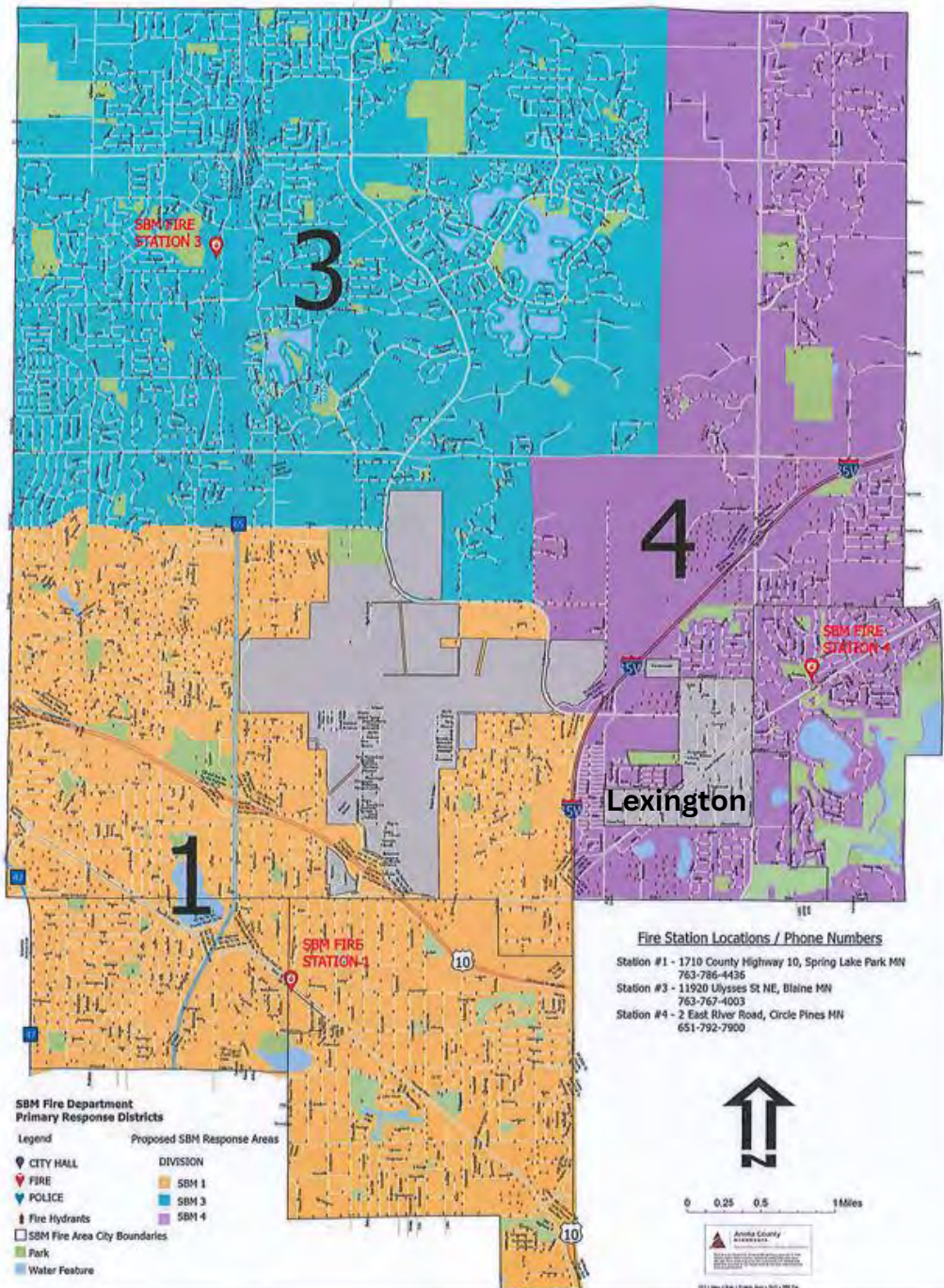
- Long-term sustainability
- Shared Regional Resources
- Economies of scale
- Reduced duplication of services
- Improved training standards
- Better purchasing power
- Reduced long-term capital burden

Geographic Advantage:

- SBM Station 4 is located close to Lexington
- Fast response capability with staffed crews already in service



3 Minute Drive: NON-Emergent



Fire Station Locations / Phone Numbers

- Station #1 - 1719 County Highway 10, Spring Lake Park MN
763-786-4436
- Station #3 - 11920 Ulysses St NE, Blaine MN
763-767-4003
- Station #4 - 2 East River Road, Circle Pines MN
651-792-7900

**SBM Fire Department
Primary Response Districts**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Legend | Proposed SBM Response Areas |
| CITY HALL | SBM 1 |
| FIRE | SBM 3 |
| POLICE | SBM 4 |
| Fire Hydrants | |
| SBM Fire Area City Boundaries | |
| Park | |
| Water Feature | |



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



2011-2012 Anoka County Board of Commissioners

Professional Emergency Response

Staffing Model:

- Battalion Chiefs / EMTs
- Captains/EMTs
- Firefighter/EMTs
- Firefighter/Operators
- Duty Crew personnel

Operational Philosophy:

- Fast response
- High accountability
- Professional leadership
- Aggressive training
- Safety-focused culture

Operational Capabilities:

- Structure fires
- Vehicle extrications
- Water rescue
- Hazardous materials
- Technical rescue support
- Wildland deployments
- Regional strike teams



Fleet

Structure Fire Response:

- 3,300 Gallons Water (E3,E4 & T1) *responding to each* reported structure fire in district
- Two Engines and an Aerial staffed with a minimum of 3 firefighters

Unique to SBM:

- Rescue 3: Grass Fire Response Vehicle with UTV trailer attached, Airport Response
- Total of 3 dedicated tracked Grass UTVs
- Stations 1, 3, and 4 equipped with water rescue boats
- Incident Command Vehicle
- Dedicated reserve apparatus to ensure operational readiness in the event of a frontline apparatus being placed out of service
- Fleet Manager: Dedicated to the upkeep and wellbeing of all SBM apparatus
- Minneapolis / North Metro Haz-Mat



Station 1:

Tower 1- 2019 101' Aerial, 500 gallons water, 2,000 GPM fire pump

Engine 1- 2025 Engine, 750 gallons water, 1,500 GPM fire pump



Tower 1



Engine 1



Station 3

Engine 2 - 2012 Engine, 500 Gallons water, 1,500 GPM Fire pump

Engine 3 - 2023 Engine, 1,800 gallons water, 1,250 GPM Fire Pump

Rescue 3 - 2018 Rescue / Pumper, 300 gallons water

Grass 3- 2018 Polaris UTV 55 Gallons water, with 100 GPM pump

Ladder 3 - 2018 109' Aerial - 500 gallons water, 2,000 GPM pump

Engine 22 (Reserve) - 2012 Engine, 500 Gallons water, 1,500 GPM Fire pump



Engine 2



Engine 3



Rescue 3



Grass 3



Ladder 3



Engine 22



Boat 3



Utility 16

Station 4

Engine 4 - 2024 Engine - 1,000 gallons water, 1,500 GPM Fire pump

Ladder 4 - 2001 75' Aerial , 500 gallons water, 1,500 GPM Fire pump

Utility 4 - 2013 Utility Truck pulls Grass 4

Grass 4 - 2023 UTV, 95 Gallons water, 100 GPM Fire pump



Engine 4



Utility 4 and Grass 4



Now Ladder 4



Boat 4

Station 6

Engine 6 – 2012 Engine, 500 Gallons water, 1,500 GPM Fire pump

Utility 6 – 2013 Utility Truck pulls Grass 4

Grass 6 – 2026 UTV, 95 Gallons water, 100 GPM Fire pump



Engine 6



Utility 6



Grass 6

Station 5

Only staffed during the day, M-F at Blaine City Hall. Only responds to calls within our district-No mutual aid.

Engine 5 - 2016 Engine - 1,000 gallons water

Rescue 4 - 2006 Rescue / Pumper - 300 Gallons water



Engine 5



Rescue 4

Building a Sustainable Organization

Administrative Structure:

- Fire Chief
- Deputy Chief
- Assistant Chiefs
 - Assistant Chief Emergency Management
 - Assistant Chief Administration
- Administrative support staff
- Fleet management
- Training leadership

Administrative Focus Areas:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Strategic planning
- Capital planning
- Policy development
- Employee development
- Risk management
- Grant management
- Regional collaboration

Financial Philosophy:

- Efficient operations
- Long-term planning
- Responsible spending
- Maintain service while controlling costs



Training & Education

North Metro Fire & EMS

Regional Training Leadership:

- Operates county Fire Academy
- Operates EMS Academy
- Provides training across Anoka County

Benefits:

- Standardized operations
- Safer firegrounds
- Better prepared firefighters
- Revenue generation for the organization
- Recruitment pipeline development

Training Philosophy:

- Realistic training
- Small-group hands-on learning
- Professional instruction
- Leadership development



Training is not an expense. Training is what protects our firefighters and our communities.



Fire Prevention & Community Risk Reduction

Preventing Emergencies Before They Happen

Services:

- Fire inspections
- Plan reviews
- Public education
- Business partnerships
- School education programs
- Smoke detector programs
- Community outreach

Community Engagement:

- Santa Tours
- Community events
- School visits
- Safety demonstrations
- Public relations initiatives



Reduce emergencies through education, prevention, and proactive engagement.

Fire Corps

One of the Most Unique Parts of SBM

- Volunteer Support System made up of 30 volunteers
- 2025: **4,334.50 total hours volunteered**

Teams:

- Culinary
- Care Team
- EMS
- Outreach Team
- Photography Team
- Special Events
- Rehab

Why It Matters:

- Creates a family culture
- Supports firefighters during major incidents
- Expands community involvement
- Saves significant operational costs



Fire Corps allows firefighters to focus on emergencies while volunteers support the mission behind the scenes.”



Financial Responsibility

Operating Efficiently

SBM Financial Philosophy:

- Operate lean
- Eliminate duplication
- Share resources regionally
- Long-term capital planning

Capital Planning:

- Apparatus replacement schedules
- Facility planning
- Equipment modernization
- Strategic reserve planning

Examples:

- Reduced Unnecessary Apparatus Inventory
- Shared training resources
- Shared command structure
- Centralized administrative systems

SBM has proven that high-level service can still be delivered responsibly and efficiently.



The Future of the Fire Service

Where the Fire Service is Going

Industry Trends:

- Fewer volunteers nationwide
- Increased call volume
- More training requirements
- Higher equipment costs
- Greater operational complexity
- Increased staffing expectations

The Reality:

- Small standalone departments are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain
- Regional collaboration is becoming the future of fire protection

SBM's Vision:

- Sustainable regional service delivery (Same as it's always been)
- Continued staffing improvements
- Expanded training leadership
- Strong community engagement
- Modernized facilities and equipment
- Community-focused service
- Long-term sustainability
- Predictable budgeting



Partnership Benefits

Lexington Would Gain:

- Reliable 24/7 response
- Regional depth and resources
- Strong leadership structure
- Established training systems
- Modern operational standards
- Community-focused service
- Long-term sustainability
- Predictable budgeting

Lexington Would Maintain:

- Community Engagement
- Local representation
- Community-focused service delivery
- Strong relationship with SBM leadership



The Mission

This Decision is about:

- Resident safety
- Reliable emergency response
- Firefighter safety
- Financial sustainability
- Long-term service stability
- Protecting the future of fire service in Lexington



Our Commitment to Lexington

- SBM stands **ready** to serve the City of Lexington
- The focus remains on partnership and service
- SBM is committed to professionalism, transparency, and collaboration
- The goal is not simply to provide fire protection — the goal is to build a sustainable future for emergency services in Lexington

We believe strongly that SBM is uniquely positioned to provide the City of Lexington with stable, professional, and sustainable fire and life safety services not only for today, but for generations to come



Questions?
Thank you!

