



January 27, 2023

Orono City Council  
City of Orono  
2750 Kelley Parkway  
Orono, MN 55356  
[VIA US MAIL AND EMAIL]

**RE: Response to Offer for the Transition of the Long Lake Fire Department to Orono**

Members of the Orono City Council,

I write as a follow-up to a letter from the City of Orono on September 27, 2022, and to our letter to the City of Orono on October 12, 2022. The City of Long Lake provides the following counter-offer regarding future fire service in our cities:

**Option A (Long Lake's Preferred Path):**

Over the past several weeks, we have noted that members of the Orono Council have, on several occasions, responded to inquiries from Orono residents about the Fire Department by informing them that a "partnership" with Long Lake has been proposed by Orono. Orono representatives have previously led us to believe that Orono would not consider extending or modifying a co-ownership and/or mutual operation (partnership) model in which both cities would continue to have a meaningful say in operation and management of the Long Lake Fire Department. If these comments, suggesting that a partnership model is on the table, represent a departure from Orono's position to refuse to discuss such models, the City of Long Lake would continue to welcome and encourage meaningful discussion of a partnership model and would recommend promptly scheduling the appropriate collaborative meetings to map out the details of that partnership as soon as possible.

**Option B (If Orono Refuses to Consider a Partnership Model):**

If Orono refuses to explore a partnership model with Long Lake in favor of a demand for full control, Long Lake provides the alternative proposal below:

**Ownership and Equipment:** The City of Orono would provide the City of Long Lake with a lump sum of \$2,000,000. This payment allows the City of Orono to acquire a ready, fully functioning, and highly trained fire department with a well-funded relief association. This sum will purchase Long Lake's interest in the existing capital equipment vehicles, and Long Lake's interest in the other miscellaneous capital equipment such as but not limited to turnout gear, SCBA, radios, and extraction tools. The only equipment exception is the 1928 Studebaker Fire Truck as it was donated to the City of Long Lake and Long Lake wishes to maintain full ownership for historical purposes. Long Lake would also retain some traditional LLD historical artifacts (which would be specifically identified at a later date). It should be noted that the City of Medina also owns an interest in certain vehicles and equipment and the City of Long Lake is under contract to provide fire service to the City of Minnetonka Beach through the term of that contract. Orono would purchase Long Lake's interest in the Fire Department and assume control of the entity, subject to all contractual obligations.

**Ownership of Station 1:** The City of Long Lake would acquire 100% ownership of PID 3411823320050 and all improvements thereon, currently known as Station 1, which is located at 340 Willow Drive North. The City of Long Lake will oversee and fund the structural and mechanical maintenance and repair of the building at no expense to Orono, including the current \$1.5M of deferred maintenance that has been identified by Orono. Routine maintenance such as painting, carpet cleaning, etc. would be at Orono's expense. The City of Orono would lease the facility from the City of Long Lake at a rate equal to what Long Lake would pay for annual fire service, which is:

- Year 1-10 - Annual fee of \$70,000
- Year 11-20 - Annual fee of \$85,000
- Year 21-30 - Annual fee of \$105,000

Any expansion or significant upgrades of Station 1 would be outside the scope of building maintenance and would need to be addressed via a separate Capital Improvement Plan agreement in the future.

**Location of Station 1:** Contract language would specify that the location of the fire station closest to the City of Long Lake would not change from the current location at 340 Willow Drive North for the 30-year contract. The only exception would be if the facility were expanded or relocated to property contiguous to the current location. Also after 30 years, the City of Orono may cancel its lease of Station 1 by giving at least 36 months' prior notice to the City of Long Lake.

**Recordable form agreement:** To coincide with full ownership of Station 1, the City of Long Lake would require a recordable form agreement stating that the City of Orono agrees to not condemn the property for as long as it is owned by the City of Long Lake. Further, the City of Orono would agree to not to take any adverse zoning or land use action on the property which would hinder or restrict the present fire services use of the property or a reasonable expansion of that use on the property in the future, so long as the property is devoted to fire service use.

**Fire Service for Long Lake:** The City of Long Lake proposes a 30-year contract for fire service provided by the City of Orono for the following time periods and rates:

- Year 1-10 - Annual fee of \$70,000
- Year 11-20 - Annual fee of \$85,000
- Year 21-30 - Annual fee of \$105,000

**Right of Cancellation:** The City of Long Lake may cancel its participation in the contract and/or the corresponding lease for Station 1 by providing 36 months' notice to Orono. Examples of reasons for separation could include for the purpose of joining a fire district or similar jointly operated organization or for receiving fire services from another city or fire department.

**Personnel:** All members of the Long Lake Fire Department will become City of Orono employees. As such, the City of Orono will take on all administrative responsibilities and all employer obligations and liabilities from that point.

**Relief Association:** The City of Orono will take over municipal relief association responsibilities. The transfer requires action by the state legislature and, per your letter dated September 27th, Orono agrees to lead the coordination necessary with the Relief Association Board, Long Lake, State Fire Marshal's Office, and the Legislature to facilitate the transfer.

**Fire Department Name and Legacy:** The City of Long Lake reserves the naming rights to the Long Lake Fire Department. Although we request that Station 1 be renamed the *Long Lake Station* in order to assist with continuing the legacy of our nearly 108-year-old Fire Department, any fire department operated solely by the City of Orono would need a name other than “Long Lake” in the title.

**Fire Advisory Board:** The City of Long Lake would require that Orono establish and implement a Fire Advisory Board (FAB) modeled after our current board. Each city served by the department will appoint two council members to the FAB. The FAB shall meet as frequently as the committee determines, but not less than on a quarterly basis, to discuss and make recommendations regarding concerns or problems identified regarding fire services, and to review and provide input regarding the proposed fire budget.

**Effective Date:** The new contract, lease, and ownerships would become effective at the conclusion of the current contract on January 1, 2026. The City of Long Lake is under contract to provide fire protection services to the cities of Orono and Medina until December 31, 2025.

The City of Long Lake continues to believe that the best long-term solution for the provision of fire services for both of our communities is a district or JPA model that involves the partnership, collaboration and contribution of multiple communities. However, we offer this proposal to Orono in the interim and await a response from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie Miner".

Charlie Miner, Mayor  
*On Behalf of the Long Lake City Council*