

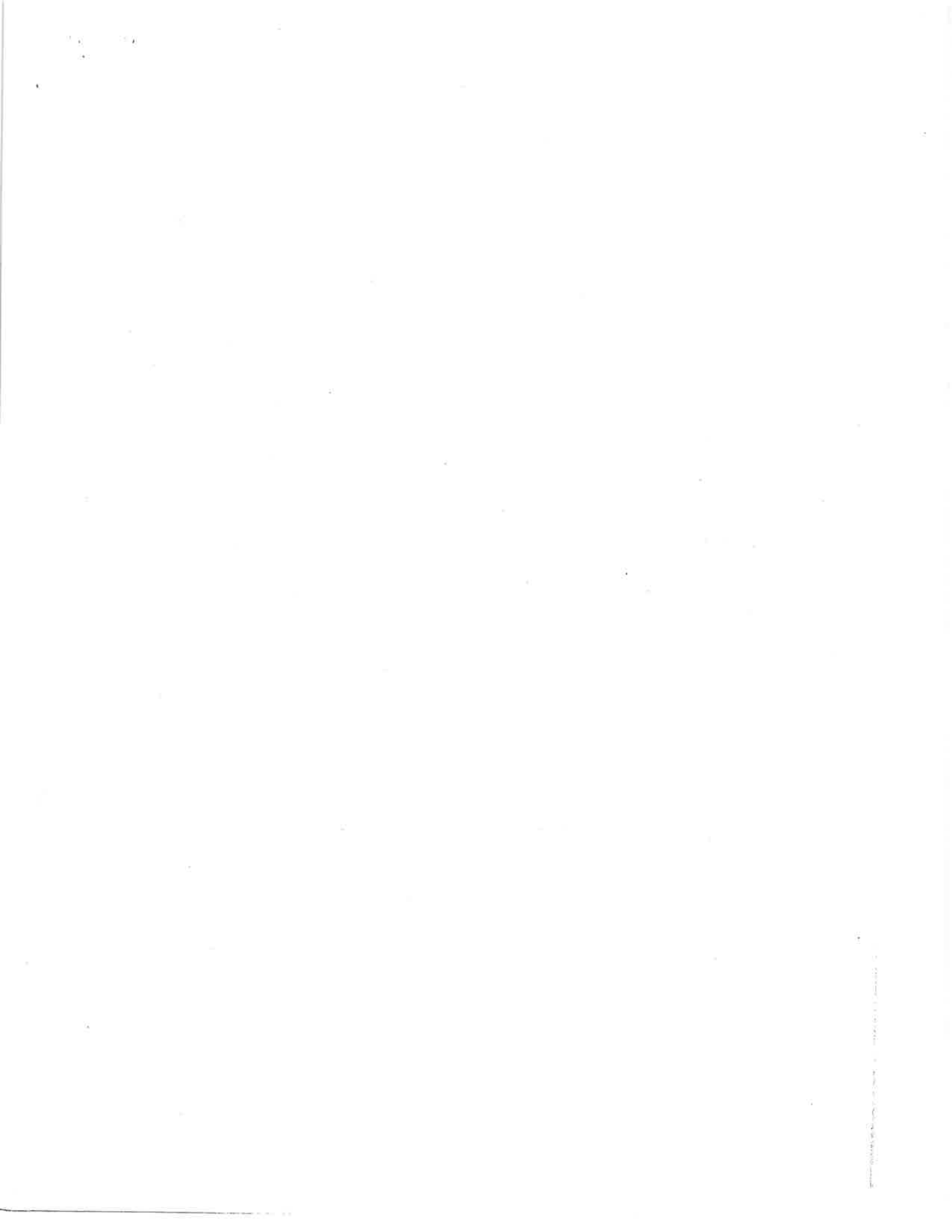
**MILTON JOINT FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**PLANNING TASK FORCE**  
**FINAL REPORT**

May 29, 2007

## CONCLUSION

The cost of operating the Joint Fire Department could increase significantly during the next three years (2008 to 2010). The two factors having the most impact on the operating costs will be vehicle replacement and a full time supervisory position. These changes are necessary to provide safe and reliable fire protection to the residents, businesses, and industries located in the service area. Each political jurisdiction served by the Joint Fire Department will experience an increase in their cost of service if the recommendations of the Task Force are implemented. Although property taxes are typically utilized to support fire service costs, two revenue generating alternatives are presented in the Funding Methods section of this report for consideration by the taxing jurisdictions which are served by the Joint Fire Department.

The Task Force strongly supports a strategic plan for the Joint Fire Department. It is important to have the strategic plan completed in a timely manner (no later than 2010) so it can begin to serve as a planning document for the next 10 to 20 years. Using those issues identified by the Task Force in this report, as well as new or unforeseen concerns, the Joint fire Commission could develop a written request for proposals (RFP). The request for proposals would then be provided to several consulting firms for their response.



Also discussed were methods that could be used to recruit and retain volunteers. Included in the discussion was the possibility of offering retirement benefits in conjunction the State of Wisconsin, offering a one time payment for new recruits, and offering a bonus for current fire fighters for each five years of service as a volunteer. The Fire Chief indicated he has also been contacting local businesses about providing opportunities for their employees to become volunteer fire fighters.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Task Force shares the Fire Chief's concerns about the sustainability of the Department's staff, but the Task Force is also concerned about the cost of converting the department to a combination of full time and volunteer fire fighters at this time. The Fire Chief has developed an excellent interim solution to address those concerns, using a platoon system, which should sustain the Department for the next two to three years.

With regard to the recruitment and retention of volunteers, the Task Force believes the Fire Chief has a very good understanding of the incentives available for this purpose and would defer those decisions to him. The Fire Chief is currently implementing a program to facilitate the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The Task Force recommends that a full time supervisory staff member be added to the Joint Fire Department no later than 2010. This could be either a full time fire chief, or a deputy chief/fire inspector. The full time position would provide consistent personnel supervision and would be available for budget administration, policy development, and public relations activities. The Task Force also recommends an increase in hourly wages for the "paid on call" personnel be included in the 2008 budget.

The implementation of a combination department (full time and volunteer fire fighters) should be studied by a consultant. The study should include growth and development projections within the service area and address the effectiveness of the recruitment and retention efforts by the Fire Chief.

## FIRE FIGHTING APPARATUS

### BACKGROUND

The type and quantity of fire fighting apparatus currently owned, operated, and maintained by the Milton Joint Fire Department is consistent with other departments of similar size (see attached Table 5).

### DISCUSSION

The fire department staff indicated the current apparatus has the flexibility to meet the fire fighting needs of the service area for the immediate future. However, Fire Department staff is concerned with the ever changing requirements for fire fighting apparatus. The State of Wisconsin and the National Fire Protection Association mandate that the vehicles used for fire fighting meet rigid national standards. This places a financial burden on all fire departments, including Milton's, as the escalating costs of replacement apparatus must be funded through local revenue. The Vehicle Replacement Schedule (see attached Table 6) lists the Department's apparatus and the proposed year of replacement. The schedule indicates seven fire service vehicles need to be replaced in the next 18 years (2008 to 2025) at an estimated cost of \$2,908,700. A significant staff concern is the ability of the Department to maintain reliable fire fighting apparatus through timely replacements. Based on age, three vehicles should have been replaced in 2007, one of these Tender (tanker) 135 will be replaced in 2008 while Ladder (aerial) 139 and Engine (pumper) 133 may have to be rescheduled for a subsequent year.

The fire department staff suggested combining Engine 133 and Ladder 139 into one apparatus known as a quintuple combination pumper, or quint. The current ladder has no pumping capability and requires "support" to operate the large bore water gun. The quint would have the capabilities of a pumper and a ladder truck. Considering the age of the two existing apparatus (Engine 133 and Ladder 139) this is a good time to consolidate the two pieces of equipment. Also, with the limited availability of daytime staff, having a ladder truck with pumping capabilities would be beneficial. Because of its age, Engine 133 has been moved to reserve status which limits the ability of the department to support a large water movement.

### RECOMMENDATION

It was the consensus of the Task Force that funding for the scheduled replacement of fire fighting apparatus should be included in a five year capital expenditure program for the City and Town of Milton, or annual deposits should be made to an established vehicle replacement fund to allow for the purchase of apparatus in the recommended year. Although variations to the Vehicle Replacement Schedule may be made from time to time based on the condition of each apparatus, it is important to maintain the Department's vehicles through timely replacement.

The Task Force supports the concept of combining Engine 133 and Ladder 139 into a single piece of fire apparatus (quint). The purchase of a replacement apparatus (quint) needs to be accomplished during the next one to two years.

## FUNDING METHODS

### BACKGROUND

The cost of operating the Milton Joint Fire Department is shared equally between the City of Milton and the Town of Milton. This cost sharing includes the operation, maintenance, and capital expenses for the Joint Fire Department. It should be noted that there is cost recovery from the other contracted townships, resulting in the City and Town of Milton sharing the net cost of the fire service charges. The contracted Townships pay an annual fixed standby charge, but the contracted Townships are also billed a per call charge for each fire run. The number of fire calls in the Milton service area has averaged about 120 calls per year for the last five years, but the volume of fire calls varies significantly from year to year (see attached Table 7). As a result, it is difficult to accurately estimate the annual fire department revenue when the income from the contracted Townships is based on the volume of fire calls.

The Task Force reviewed various revenue sources for the Fire Department and identified potential sources of additional revenue. The possible sources included:

- Charges for false alarms
- Charges for fire inspections
- An increase in annual fees for other contracted Townships

### DISCUSSION

The Task Force discussed the alternatives for increasing revenue and considered implementing charges for fire inspections and responses to false alarms. The Task Force concluded the potential revenue was small compared to the level of effort required to collect for these activities.

The remainder of the discussion focused on the standby and per call charges for the contracted Townships. The 2007 per capita cost for fire service in Milton's service area is \$23.72, but the cost per capita cost for fire service for City/Town of Milton is \$25.77 compared to \$16.92 per capita for the contracted Townships. This disparity in costs could increase if there are a below average number of fire calls in 2007. The fire standby charges for 2007 are \$21,000, but the 2007 Fire Budget anticipates additional revenue of \$15,000 for fire calls and \$8,000 for motor vehicle accidents for a total of \$44,000 in revenue from the contracted Townships. However, the only guaranteed revenue from the contracted Townships for 2007 is \$21,000. **During a year when the volume of fire calls are significantly below average, the amount of unrealized revenue also becomes significant.** If the per capita cost of fire service for 2007 (\$23.72) would have been uniformly distributed throughout Milton's service area, the estimated amount that would have been charged to all the contracted Townships would have been about \$60,000.

The implementation of a user fee or an availability charge by the various jurisdictions within the fire service area was discussed. These methods would provide the City of Milton, the Town of Milton, and other contracted Townships an opportunity to offset the cost of fire service for their community. A user fee would only be charged to a property if there was a call for fire service. The charge could be a fixed fee per call, or it could be based on the actual cost of responding to

**Table 8**  
**Population Comparison**  
**City of Milton and Town of Milton**  
**(Population from Wisconsin DOA Website)**

Year	City of Milton		Town of Milton		Total Combined Population
	Pop.	% of Total	Pop.	% of Total	
1970	3699	65	1977	35	5676
1980	4092	64	2306	36	6398
1990	4444	65	2353	35	6797
2000	5132	64	2844	36	7976
*2006	5588	65	2991	35	8579

\* Population estimate by Wisconsin Department of Administration, all other years are from the Federal Census.

**SUMMARY**

The population of the City of Milton and Town of Milton have both increased 51% from 1970 to 2006. Although the City's population has increased 1889 and Town's population has increased 1014 during this time period, the relative population of the combined jurisdictions has remained 65 percent City and 35 percent Town.

**Rural Fire Service Contracts Expenditure Worksheet  
Used to Calculate 2004 Fees Based on Expenditures  
7/1/03 - 6/30/04**

Operating Expenditures:

Personal Services	\$7,352,810
Contractual Services	474,364
Supplies & Materials	137,855
Rural Fire Protection	317,514
	<hr/>
Total Expenditures	8,282,544

Total Expenditures	8,282,544
Add: Depreciation	88,000
Less: Paramedic Service	2,133,072
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**Total Adjusted Expenditures  
For Fiscal Year Ended 6-30-04** \$6,237,471

Total Adjusted Expenditures  
For Fiscal Year Ended 6-30-03 5,633,520

Increase (Decrease) in Adjusted Expenditures 2003-2004 \$603,951 Or 10.72%

	Harmony Township	Janesville Township	Rock Township	LaPrairie Township	City of Janesville	Total
Adj. Full Values 1-1-04	\$39,135,953	\$244,639,553	\$73,263,980	\$39,135,404	\$3,433,005,900	\$3,829,180,790
County Value 1-1-04 (a)	-	-	-	-	106,655,279	106,655,279
Total Value 1-1-04	\$39,135,953	244,639,553	73,263,980	39,135,404	3,539,661,179	3,935,836,069
Adj. Full Values 1-1-03	N/A	232,704,338	70,848,837	37,252,541	3,656,153,434	3,996,959,150
County Value 1-1-03 (a)	-	-	-	-	100,169,642	100,169,642
Total Value 1-1-03	N/A	232,704,338	70,848,837	37,252,541	3,756,323,076	4,097,128,792
Valuation Percent Increase 1-1-03 to 1-1-04	N/A	5.13%	3.41%	5.05%	-5.77%	-3.94%
<b><u>Rural Fire Service Rate for 2005</u></b>						
Percentage of Fire District Equalized Value	0.994%	6.216%	1.861%	0.994%	89.934%	99.999%
Gross Cost of Service Based on Percentage of Adjusted Value	\$62,000	\$387,721	\$116,079	\$62,000	\$5,609,607	\$6,237,409
Net Cost of Service Based on Percentage of Value (b)	\$42,346	\$264,814	\$79,282	\$42,346	N/A	\$428,788
<b><u>Rural Fire Service Proposed 2005 Rates</u></b>	\$42,346	\$264,814	\$79,282	\$42,346	N/A	\$428,788
Amount Increase Proposed 2004-2005	\$42,346	\$46,265	\$12,755	\$7,370	N/A	\$108,736

(a) Replacement Values have been reduced 20%  
(b) Applied Discount Factor of 68.3%



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGREEMENT  
*BETWEEN THE CITY OF JANESVILLE and THE TOWNSHIP OF HARMONY*

This AGREEMENT, made this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_\_\_, by and between the City of Janesville (City) and the Township of Harmony (Township), as follows:

1. Term This agreement shall be effective for the year 2005 and is automatically renewable, subject to a rate adjustment, on an annual basis. Either party may terminate this agreement subject to an advance notice of no less than one hundred eighty (180) days.

2. Services Provided The City hereby agrees to provide the Township with Emergency Medical Service at a level that meets or exceeds Emergency Medical Technician standards. The City also agrees to maintain a standard of service that is in compliance with the Department of Health and Social Services Administrative Code, Sections H.20 and H.21. It will be within the discretion of the City to determine whether or not the call received is an emergency and the type and extent of service rendered. The City will also have the right to determine the destination and manner of transport of a person if transport is necessary.

3. Area Covered The area to be covered by Emergency Medical Service is identical to the previously established service area for Rural Fire Protection. (See attached Appendix A)

4. Payment for Services

a. For the period beginning January 1, 2005 through and including June 30, 2005, the Township is required to pay the City of Janesville Five Hundred Eighty Dollars and No/100 Cents (\$580.00) per patient, plus any costs for non-reusable expendable medical supplies utilized at the time of service, where services are rendered, within thirty (30) days of the invoice date.

b. For the period beginning July 1, 2005 through the remainder of the contract period, the Township is required to pay the City of Janesville an adjusted rate not to exceed Six Hundred Thirty Dollars and No/100 Cents (\$630.00) per patient, plus any costs for non-reusable expendable medical supplies utilized at the time of service, where services are rendered, within thirty (30) days of the invoice date.

c. In the event that there is a request for Emergency Medical Service and the City responds accordingly, but the City services are refused, not required or not rendered, the Township is required to pay the City One Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars and No/100 Cents (\$125.00) as a call fee.

d. The City will not charge the Town of Harmony, but may charge the individual, for accidents on STH 11 & STH 14.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY OF JANESVILLE

HARMONY TOWNSHIP

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor

With regard to ambulance service billings, the following shall apply:

- A. **BILLING PATIENTS FOR SERVICES:** If Beloit transports a person from Rock, or if Beloit transports a Rock resident from Beloit, then Beloit, or its billing contractor, shall bill the patient, their insurers or other persons responsible for payment for the ambulance services rendered at the rate provided for in this Agreement. Each billing shall contain the date, time and place of the occurrence. In addition, the billing shall give the name and the address of the patient, the mileage and shall indicate whether additional services, such as oxygen, were supplied.
- B. **BILLING ROCK FOR SERVICES:** If the patient, the insurer or other person responsible for payment of the ambulance bill, fails to pay the bill in full within ninety (90) days of the initial billing, Beloit shall submit the complete ambulance bill as well as any unpaid portion of the bill to Rock for payment. Rock shall pay the unpaid portion of such ambulance bills to Beloit within sixty (60) days after receipt of the bill from Beloit. When Rock pays Beloit for any unpaid ambulance bill, all of Beloit's right, title and interest in any claim against the patient, or other person responsible for payment of the bill shall be considered to be assigned and transferred to Rock.

It is understood between the parties that if Beloit transports any Beloit resident from Rock, it shall be the responsibility of Beloit to collect such bill for services rendered from their resident.

2002 FEE SCHEDULE  
**Town of Rock**  
**Fire and Ambulance Contract**

Equalized value of total area serviced by Town of Beloit Fire Department

Town of Beloit	\$	310,529,700	
Town of Rock		61,179,605	
Town of Newark		<u>23,967,952</u>	
	\$	395,677,257	Total equalized value of service area

Town of Rock	\$	<u>61,179,605</u>	
Total service area	\$	395,677,257	0.15462

2002 Fire Operating budget	\$	1,004,175	
Plus Depreciation	\$	68,311	
Less Ambulance 690 bill write-offs	\$	<u>(5,000)</u>	
	\$	1,067,486	
		<u>0.154620</u>	times percent serviced in Rock Township
		165,054.70	
		<u>0.683</u>	Discount factor
		112,732.36	