

**AARON K. LEONARD**

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May 20, 2024

Effingham County Board  
Attn: Effingham County Clerk  
P. O. Box 628  
Effingham, Illinois 62401

Re: North Clay Fire Protection District  
Report of the Decennial Efficiency Committee

Dear Clerk:

Enclosed for filing please find two copies of the Report of the Decennial Efficiency Committee completed on behalf of the North Clay Fire Protection District. Please proceed to submit the Report to the County Board as required in 50 ILCS 70/25. Once filed, please forward us a copy of the filed Report for our records. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Taylor Law Offices, P.C.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron K. Leonard", written over a horizontal line.

Aaron K. Leonard

AKL:sk  
Enclosures

**NORTH CLAY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT  
CLAY & EFFINGHAM COUNTIES, ILLINOIS**

**REPORT OF THE DECENNIAL EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

Pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1 et seq., the Decennial Efficiency Committee of the North Clay Fire Protection District respectfully submits to the administrative office of Clay & Effingham Counties its report as follows:

**A.** On May 18, 2023, the Board of Trustees of the North Clay Fire Protection District formed the committee required by 50 ILCS 70/10. The committee was comprised of the members of the Board of Trustees of the District, the District's Fire Chief, and two (2) residents of the District.

**B.** The committee met on the following dates: January 18, 2024; March 21, 2024; and May 16, 2024. All meetings were held pursuant to the notice requirements of 50 ILCS 70/20 and public input was solicited at each meeting of the committee. Meetings were conducted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

**C.** In connection with its work, the committee examined or considered the following:

1. District and Fire Department Policies and Ordinances currently in effect and the laws which apply to the District such as the Illinois Fire Protection District Act.
2. The District's current fire department rating (ISO Rating) by the Insurance Services Office.
3. The District's compliance with IL-OSHA requirements (Illinois Department of Labor).
4. The District's compliance with the recommended Annual Calendar & Checklist promulgated by the Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts.
5. The District's Budget and Appropriation Ordinances for the current and preceding two (2) fiscal years.
6. The District's real estate tax levy, tax extension, equalized assessed value (EAV), tax rate limits, and actual tax rates for the last three (3) years.
7. The District's Annual Financial Report (AFR) filed with the office of the Illinois Comptroller for the last three (3) fiscal years.
8. The District's Treasurer's Statement of Receipts & Disbursements for the last three (3) years.

9. The location, condition, and adequacy of District's physical facilities including its fire station or stations.
10. The District's inventory of fire apparatus and other emergency vehicles including the make, model, age, mileage, and condition of each vehicle.
11. The District's inventory of firefighting, rescue, and if applicable, EMS equipment, including firefighter personal protective equipment (PPE); self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and equipment; radio and communications equipment; rescue gear and equipment; and EMS equipment (if applicable).
12. Water supply sources and their sufficiency for fire suppression in all parts of the District.
13. Dispatching services and radio communications utilized by the District for Fire Department communications and their adequacy or lack of adequacy.
14. The District's current mutual aid agreements and other intergovernmental agreements and how those agreements relate to and affect the District's performance and needed updates to any of those agreements or arrangements.

D. After examining each of the foregoing areas, the committee has determined that:

1. With its available resources, the District and its Fire Department are providing the most adequate service it can provide at this time.
2. The following are the areas of the District's greatest strength and efficiency:

**The greatest strength of the District is the volunteers and their willingness to serve the District and their communities. While the District covers a large geographic area, the implementation of a firehouse in both Louisville and Bible Grove and a variety of volunteers from both Louisville and Bible Grove contributes to the efficiency of the District's operations. Further, the upgrading of the rural water system has greatly increased water availability and this contributes positively to the strength and efficiency of the District.**

3. The following are the District's areas of weakness, need, or inefficiency which need to be addressed by the District:

**While the District works hard to continually update its fleet and facilities, the rising costs of trucks, apparatuses, equipment, and labor have led to aging. Further, there is always a need for further involvement by the citizens of the District to volunteer to serve the District.**

4. The District can best address its areas of weakness, need, or inefficiency by doing the following:



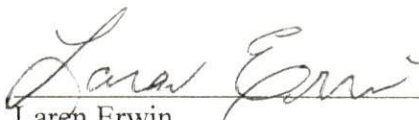
To address areas of weakness, need, and inefficiency, the State of Illinois should: (1) Remove the application of the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act to Fire Protection District, or at a minimum, create an exception when volunteer workers are willing to complete the necessary repairs and improvements to the District's equipment and facilities; (2) Lessen the application of competitive bidding processes that lead to unnecessary publication costs and processes when there are limited, to no, available bidding parties within the community; (3) Publish and promote the availability of grants and other alternative financing projects; (4) Make grant writing less cumbersome and costly; (5) Lessen the application of the Illinois Open Meetings Act and FOIA considering the volunteer nature of both the Board of Trustees and the members of the District's volunteer force; (6) Generally lessen the application of laws, regulations, and rules applicable to the District to avoid unnecessary costs and façade of "form over substance" when it comes to operating a volunteer fire protection district; and (7) Allow Districts to provide financial assistance on a "per call" basis without encumbering the process or creating an employer/employee relationship.


In addition to the foregoing, the District should continue to promote the benefits of being a member of a volunteer district that provides necessary services to its citizens. The need for new and younger members is always present. Further, the District should continue to promote and organize training for the volunteers.

5. The District as a provider of an essential emergency service in its jurisdictional territory is in need of additional federal, state, and county support to address its areas of weakness and need by providing additional direct financial support; supporting the District's efforts to increase its financial support by tax and bond issue referenda; and by working with the fire service organizations in the Counties to recruit and retain volunteer and paid personnel.

Dated: May 16, 2024

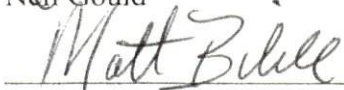
Respectfully submitted,

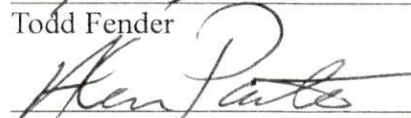
  
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Laren Erwin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alan Griffy

  
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Neil Gould

  
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Todd Fender

  
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Matt Bible

  
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Alan Porter

Being all of the Members of the North Clay Fire Protection District Decennial Efficiency Committee