

## **Linn comparison**

The purpose of this summary is to compare selected factors as they pertain to two models of providing Fire/EMS coverage to the Town of Linn; a “stand-alone” Linn Fire/EMS Department versus a contracted services/collaborative model with the City of Lake Geneva (“City.”) This is a compilation of findings contained in the Town of Linn Fire & EMS Comprehensive Analysis (PAA, July 19, 2023; hereinafter “Report.”)

The following chart assumes that the Town has the ability to pay for either plan. Either plan will cost significantly more than the current model. How to pay for implementation of a new model was beyond the scope of our original study. The Town should seek a legal opinion on this subject to determine whether it needs to conduct a referendum, approve a levy increase via passage of a special resolution and vote of electors at a town meeting or by enacting a fee for fire protection services. Whichever source of funding is adopted will add time to the implementation schedule, regardless of whether you choose a Linn “stand-alone” or Lake Geneva model (“City.”)

With respect to the collaborative model with the City, a second factor that needs to be considered is the length of time that it will take both the Town and City to approve an intergovernmental agreement. We use two months, considering that you already have an intergovernmental agreement, but this assumes that the parties make it a priority and achieve a relatively quick “meeting of the minds” regarding key elements.

In terms of costs, we have used our best estimates. As indicated in the original study, this is not a guarantee; actual costs may differ.

In terms of timeframes, we used our best estimates. Here, however, it is important to point out that there are more risks attendant to the stand-alone model. This is because the City already has an established combination department. Two variables are critical in a stand-alone model; recruitment of a Chief capable of building a combination department and recruitment of personnel.

Finding a full-time Chief who is capable of building a new combination department is paramount to the “stand-alone” model. A Chief who is not up to this task will doom this approach. Our assumptions depend upon finding an individual who can direct a station remodel, draft new policies and SOGs and recruit new career and POC members beginning on “day one.” Bringing a new key leader into any organization is always a risk. Despite best recruitment efforts, some fail in even maintaining the status quo. Any misstep by a new Chief in any one of the areas identified above would have significant negative consequences for the Town. The same holds true for recruitment of firefighter/EMTs. In the collaborative model, this would be the responsibility of the City. Pay being equal, we believe that the recruitment process would be more challenging for the Town. The lack of upward mobility (due to a smaller department) and the lower call volume are two factors that might make recruiting and retention more difficult. Two vacancies in a combined Lake Geneva-Linn Department would not be ideal, but would have much more serious consequences in a stand-alone Linn Department. As this is a combination model, there is a reliance on also having an effective and reliable Paid on Call (POC) force

component. Recruiting and retaining this force was the key factor which led to our study in the first place. The demographics and the Town and seasonal residents will continue to make this a challenge. The City of Lake Geneva has a well-established and robust POC force in place, which would be immediately available for service and support if that option is pursued.

The next factor to consider, not included in our analysis below, is the ability of existing Town administrative staff to assist the new Chief with placing employment ads, onboarding ten new full-time personnel, administering payroll, benefits, FMLA, etc. If there is a concern in this regard, additional Town Hall staffing may be needed.

A final factor that needs to be considered is how long the City of Lake Geneva will continue to provide EMS and North Shore coverage in the event the Town chooses to pursue a stand-alone option. This needs to be discussed and understood prior to embarking with a stand-alone model. If the City were to discontinue its support, say six months after the Town announced its intention to pursue a stand-alone model, there would be a period of time where EMS service (and potentially Fire service to the North Shore) would be seriously compromised until the Town could “staff-up” with adequate career hires and find another partner to provide North Shore coverage or negotiate the same with the City. In any case, geography dictates a two-station model for a Town of Linn in order for a fully stand-alone department to serve all of its citizens and properties effectively. We did not present this model in the study in any depth as it is not a realistic option.

With the above-stated caveats in mind, the summary follows.

Factors	Lake Geneva Collaboration	Linn “Stand alone”
<p><b>1. Lead time to implement (Fire and EMS basic coverage).</b></p>	<p><b>8-9 months to fully implement.</b>            Assumptions: 2-3 months to negotiate and approve an intergovernmental agreement. (This could be an amendment to your existing agreement.) 6 months to approve, publicly bid and complete fire station remodeling to accommodate 24-hour staffing.</p> <p>In the meantime, the City could continue to provide its daytime EMS coverage as well as coverage to the North Shore. The Town could continue its POC Fire/EMS response.</p>	<p><b>12 months to fully implement.</b>            To pursue this model, PAA recommends hiring a full-time Chief who, in turn would develop policies and SOGs for the “new” combination department and recruit staff. We estimate that the time to get a Chief on board would be a minimum of 4 months. While policies and SOG’s do not need to complete, we assume an additional 3 months for the Chief to develop key one’s including appointment procedures, updates to residency provisions, position descriptions and others. The hiring process, to fill most of the positions would take another 3 to 4 months. Some of these processes can take place simultaneously with the fire station remodel (an estimated 6 months to complete.)</p> <p><u>Whether the City would continue its EMS staffing and no-cost North Shore coverage during this transition is a critical consideration. If the City would not, the Town’s current daytime EMS coverage could be severely compromised. We would recommend getting a commitment from the City prior to embarking on a stand-alone model.</u></p>
<p><b>2. Lead time to implement the model with paramedic level services.</b></p>	<p>Potentially, immediate upon approval of an intergovernmental agreement.</p>	<p>14 + months (minimum).            Achieving licensing for paramedic level service is a challenging task, especially given all of the other priorities of the new chief. Steps in this process would include successfully hiring a Chief, developing appropriate SOGs and</p>

		Policies, preparing application and obtaining state approval, recruiting and training staff.
<b>3. Approximate time and costs to train and certify staff prior to implementation.</b>	<p>Time: Immediate on approval of an agreement with the City.</p> <p>Cost: This level of coverage would be a term that would need to be negotiated in the intergovernmental agreement.</p>	<p>Time: 12 months</p> <p>Cost: An additional \$30,000 + annually in wages plus up-front costs of \$50,000 +/- to train 3 paramedic positions. This cost includes tuition and other associated costs of licensing paramedics. Turn-over in these ranks would require on-going certification costs.</p>
<b>4. How many FT staff will be necessary?</b>	<p><b>0*</b></p> <p>The City would be responsible for providing necessary staff. 9 positions would be required at the Linn Fire Station.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>The Town would need to hire 10 fulltime staff members. (9 plus a Chief).</p>
<b>5. How many POC members will be necessary?</b>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>We estimate that the model would depend upon 12 POC members. (page 39)</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>The model would depend upon a minimum of 18 POC members. A significant increase in the roster of active POC members would be required. (page 35)</p>
<b>7. In consideration of both the north and south shore, what equipment/vehicles will be required prior to implementation?</b>	<p>Coverage is already being provided by the City.</p>	<p>Contracting with the City or another municipality is the only practical solution to this.</p>
<b>8. In consideration of both the north and south shore, what facilities will need to be added or converted prior to implementation?</b>	<p>Remodeling of the current Linn Fire Station would need to take place to ensure quarters for 24-hour staffing to fully implement the plan.</p> <p>Remodeling would be less costly with the collaborative model as office and training space could be reduced; there would be no Linn Chief and training space could be provided at the City's current station.</p>	<p>Remodeling of the current Linn Fire Station would need to take place to ensure quarters for 24-hour staffing to fully implement the plan. That remodeling would be more extensive as the Linn station would not be a "satellite" station but a main station.</p> <p>It seems unlikely that the City would continue free North Shore coverage in a "stand-alone" scenario. Contracting with the City or another municipality is the only practical solution in our estimation.</p>

		To provide adequate coverage to the North Shore solely with a Linn “stand alone” department would require construction of a new station. We estimate the cost of this to be \$3.0M +/- in land acquisition and construction costs; apparatus costs at \$1.4M and annual staffing costs at \$1.2M +/-.
<b>9. Is a contract required prior to implementation?</b>	<b>Yes.</b> It would be very important for the Town to negotiate a long-term Agreement with the City that would cover factors ranging from performance to cost.	<b>No for South Shore; Yes for North Shore</b> An intergovernmental agreement would not be required for South Shore coverage. The Town would need to be prepared to negotiate and administer a collective bargaining agreement, however. Given the call volume and geographical challenges, providing North Shore coverage with a stand-alone department is not economically reasonable. An intergovernmental agreement would be needed with Lake Geneva or another partner to provide this coverage.
<b>10. Can this model meet the response time standard (80% responses withing 10 mins or less)?</b>	<b>Yes.</b>	<b>Yes. for South Shore; No for North Shore.</b> See earlier comments. The Town will not be able to provide this level of response without a new fire station and additional full-time staffing.