

City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission



**125th Anniversary
Report: A Model for
Citizen Oversight**

Cover photo of Milwaukee City Hall courtesy of
Kristin Kappelman, Research and Policy Analyst,
Fire and Police Commission.

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2010 Fire and Police Commission staff. Front row, from left: Cheryl Patane, Susan Bodden-Eichsteadt, Cynthia Janusz, Joan Dimow, and Renee Keinert. Back row, from left: Kristin Kappelman, Nia Norris, Executive Director Michael Tobin, Molly Kuether, and David Heard. Photo courtesy Fire and Police Commission.



2010 Board of Fire and Police Commissioners. Front row, from left: Fire Chief Mark Rohlffing, Executive Director Michael Tobin, and Chief of Police Edward Flynn. Back row, from left: Paoi Lor, Kathryn Hein, Chair Richard Cox, Vice-Chair Carolina Stark, and Sarah Morgan. Photo courtesy Fire and Police Commission.

Forward

On July 6, 1885, the Milwaukee Board of Fire and Police Commissioners met for the first time. Present were Jacob Knoernschild, elected Chairman at that historic meeting; Jerome R. Brigham, elected Secretary; and Commissioners Frederick C. Winkler and Thomas Shea.

The success of this fledgling concept of civilian oversight of the public safety services would rest upon how well these four men would meet this unique public service challenge. Met the challenge they did, and so this history is dedicated to these first four Commissioners, the 98 who followed them, and the dedicated full-time staff who have continued to meet the demands of public service for 125 years.

A Letter from Mayor Tom Barrett



Congratulations on the 125th Anniversary of the Fire and Police Commission! It is with great pleasure that we recognize the history and the hard work by the dedicated staff and citizen commissioners.

The Commission has quietly and effectively served the people of this City for 125 years. The efforts of the Commission have not gone unnoticed; instead, your work directly effects all aspects of public safety in our community.

The role of the Commission is not always an easy one. The Commission has always met its challenges head-on, with sound judgment and knowledgeable leadership.

I join with you and the community in celebrating your anniversary. I extend to the Commission my best wishes for your continued success in keeping Milwaukee a safe city for the past 125 years and into the future.

Message from the Executive Director, Michael Tobin



One hundred twenty five years ago, the Wisconsin legislature enacted the ground-breaking concept of direct citizen oversight of public safety services. As many communities, even today, struggle with enacting their own version of citizen oversight, the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission stands as a model for a system that has withstood innumerable political, fiscal, and social challenges.

The remarkable vision demonstrated in 1885 has truly withstood the test of time. The original enabling legislation has since been revised on multiple occasions, but only for the purpose of strengthening the ability of citizens to prescribe the policies and procedures of our public safety departments. The end result is a Fire Department and Police Department that effectively responds to the needs of the community. This oversight system allows our public safety departments to provide exemplary services and protect lives and property with minimal political interference.

Every successful organization has one important denominator—dedicated, bright, and hardworking people that are willing to go beyond expectations in order to make success a reality. The Commission has had a succession of dedicated citizens serving in its ranks since its inception. An extraordinary staff and a supportive

community have kept the vision of 1885 alive and well for 125 years.

In 1885, the primary mode of transportation was horse-drawn carriage. People commonly read books by candlelight, and the telephone was still a novelty. Our society has experienced an explosion of change, but the underlying principle of citizen oversight, first envisioned 125 years ago, remains constant, vigilantly protected by today's Commission.

What began as “a matter of experiment” now begins its next chapter as a nationally recognized symbol of extraordinary vision. If history continues to serve as a reliable indicator, the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission will be serving our community for many years to come.

Chapter 378 - Wisconsin Laws of 1885

"A Matter of Experiment"

On April 11, 1885, Chapter 378 of the Wisconsin Laws of 1885 was signed into law by Governor Jeremiah Rusk, creating the City of Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission. Chapter 378 provided for the appointment of four unpaid commissioners - no two of whom were to belong to the same political party when appointed - to four-year, overlapping terms. From that date forward, no appointments to the Milwaukee Fire or Police Departments would be made without the approval of the Commission. The civilian Board would be the sole body charged with the responsibility for setting employment standards, examining candidates for positions in the two public safety services, appointing the respective chiefs, and removing the Chiefs of the Fire or Police Departments from office.

To understand why this bill was created, it is necessary to understand a little of the political history of local fire services and police enforcement. It was the political misfortunes of the two departments, particularly that of the Police Department, which led to the creation of the Milwaukee Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.

On September 10, 1855, the City of Milwaukee established a full-time municipal police force. Like other American cities of the time, both the Chief and his Officers were appointed by the Mayor and his council. Milwaukee mayors quickly saw the possibilities of building a political machine through their power to appoint both the Chief of Police and his staff. The Police Department became a political football as eight Chiefs of Police were installed in a 30-year period between 1855 and 1885. One Chief, William Beck, was actually named Chief of Police three times in that period. As incoming mayors would appoint a new Chief, Police Officers hired under the previous administration would resign, knowing that otherwise they would be fired. Although not incorporated as a full-time municipal service until 1875, the Fire Department also suffered under political

cronyism, with the appointment of four Chiefs, one appointed twice, in the ten years between the initial establishment of full-time service and 1885.

By late 1884, many Milwaukee citizens could no longer tolerate this abuse, and the State Legislature was approached to enact a law designed to curb improper political influence on the public safety function. John Wolff, a reporter covering those legislative hearings, sums up the citizen viewpoint rather succinctly:

"They looked the legislators in the eye and said, 'When we hire a Policeman or a Fireman, we don't give a hoot in Wauzeka whether he voted for Hayes or Tilden, for Blaine or Cleveland. What we want is a Policeman to catch crooks and a Fireman to put out fires.'"

In his 1885 inaugural address to the Common Council, reform Mayor Emil Wallber, a supporter of the new law, made reference to the creation of the Board as follows:

"The primary object of the law is to provide effectually that hereafter politics shall have no voice or power in either the Police or Fire Departments, and while the whole matter is one of experiment largely, and some of the provisions of the act, especially the one requiring the commissioners to perform a double duty, are open to criticism, we should take pride in seeing that there shall be no failure in the first formulated attempt at reform in our municipal service. The success of the measure depends, I admit, largely upon the men to be selected to compose the Commission, and it will therefore be my pleasure, as it is my duty, to appoint only those citizens who possess the necessary qualifications and command the confidence of the community, and recognize, as I do, the principle that offices should be filled for the benefit of the government and of the people, and not to be dispensed as rewards for political services."

The 2010 Board of Fire and Police Commissioners invites you to join it now for an overview of highlights from this 125-year "experiment."

Growing Pains: 1885 --1910

In 1885, when the Commission was established, the Fire Department boasted a total work force of 119 men, ten steam engines (one in reserve), and two chemical engines. The Police Department employed 94 men and had three horse-drawn patrol wagons, one for each precinct station. Florian Ries was Chief of Police, and James Foley was Chief Engineer of the Fire Department.

As he had promised in his inaugural speech, the four men selected by Mayor Wallber to sit on that first Board were men who commanded the confidence of the entire community. On May 11, 1885, Mayor Wallber appointed the following four men to the Board: Jerome R. Brigham, former City Attorney; Jacob Knoernschild, former 9th Ward Alderman, hardware merchant, and Lieutenant of the Light Horse Squadron of the State Militia; Thomas Shea, president of Shea and George Dock Company, local philanthropist, and Vice-President of the Milwaukee Council of Associated Charities; and General Frederick C. Winkler, a Civil War general, attorney, and guiding force behind the establishment of the Milwaukee Industrial Exposition Association, who had been mentioned as a possible presidential candidate during the Republican Convention of 1884.

The Board's first meeting was held on July 6, 1885, in the law offices of Jerome R. Brigham at 525 Cass Street. Jacob Knoernschild was elected Chairman, and Jerome R. Brigham was elected Secretary on this historic occasion. A new era of citizen oversight of the Fire and Police Departments had begun.

The rules and regulations, developed by that first Board to govern the selection and appointment of individuals to the fire and police services, bear a remarkable resemblance to the procedures governing appointment to these services 125 years later. Even today, the Commission still requires that all applicants be of good moral character and pass written, oral, physical, and medical examinations before being placed on an "eligibility" list.

The first examination governed by the Commission was held on August 1, 1885, for the position of Fireman. Thirty-two men passed that first examination, including Thomas A. Clancy, who was to become Chief Engineer of the Fire Department in 1905. Fred J. Weimar was the first person appointed under the new merit system.



*Police Officer's uniform, circa 1900.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

The first merit examination was greeted by much excitement in the community. The Milwaukee Gymnastic Association donated use of their Fourth Street Gym for the physical portion of the examination, and George Bosius, the Director of Physical Culture, gave this portion of the examination. Marquette College donated their grounds for the educational and oral portions of the examination. Dr. George D. Ladd, who was selected to be the medical examiner for that first examination (and continued to serve as the Commission's Medical Examiner until the 1900's), was paid \$1 by each applicant he examined. After that first examination, Mr. R. C. Spencer, of Spencerian Business College, volunteered the use of his college for future educational examinations,

and Spencerian Business College was the examination site of the Commission for ten years thereafter.

The major impetus for the creation of the Board was to stop the mayoral practice of firing Police and Fire Chiefs at will. Thus, the eyes of the community were on the Commission when newly elected Mayor Thomas H. Brown appeared before the Commission in September 1888, and announced he wished to fire Chief of Police Florian C. Ries, who was hired under the previous administration. The Commission promptly notified the Mayor that specific written charges of misconduct would need to be brought against the Chief before the Commission would act, and that lacking specific charges, the Commission would immediately reinstate Chief Ries.



*One of the earliest pictures of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission.*

The Mayor responded by filing with the Commission a list of charges, including bribery, and on October 1, 1888, the Commission met to consider the charges filed by the Mayor. On October 8, 1888, the Commission announced its decision to dismiss Chief Ries "for the good of the service." The Commission's written decision indicated that the key factor was that not only had it been shown that Chief Ries accepted bribes, but it had also been established that the Chief demanded a percentage of bribes accepted by the men who served under him. The Chief's defense that the taking of bribes was a common practice among his predecessors as well of Police Chiefs in other jurisdictions failed to sway the Commission. On

October 25, 1888, John T. Janssen was selected by the Board to assume the position of Chief of Police.

One of the ways in which early Commissioners exercised their oversight responsibility was to request yearly full-dress inspections of the Fire and Police Departments. On the appointed date, departments would "muster" in full-dress uniform and perform marching-type maneuvers. The minutes of the Board mention a police band concert following the 1898 inspection of the Police Department.

Although the Board was not empowered to hear appeals from disciplinary action or citizen complaints until 1911, prior to that time, the Commissioners appeared at disciplinary and citizen complaint hearings held by the respective departments in an oversight capacity. In these early years, the Commission would frequently write to the Chiefs suggesting a citizen complaint be re-opened or a disciplinary action be reconsidered in light of "new evidence" or other extenuating circumstances.

Two instances were found in the first 25 years of Board existence where the Commission wrote to the Chief of Police regarding local law enforcement. In the first instance, on June 27, 1891, the Board wrote a letter to Chief of Police John T. Janssen directing him to enforce ordinances related to drunkenness and racing, calling to his attention late week-end night disturbances on Whitefish Bay Drive (Lake Drive). On May 26, 1896, the Board asked the Chief to assign police protection to Jones Island. It is not known if Chief Janssen complied with either request.

The Commission did not have offices of its own until April 14, 1896, when it met for the first time in its City Hall quarters. Prior to that date, it met in the offices of its members, in various public offices, and in donated halls. In 1909, the Board was removed from its first floor City Hall offices to make room for the City Gas Inspector. Until its move to the Public Safety Building in 1930, the Board continued to share office space with various City agencies.

A New Chapter:

1910 --1935

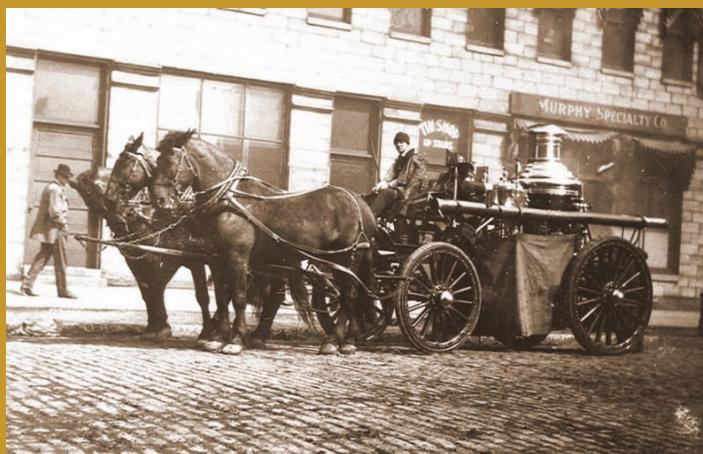
As the Commission's second era of citizen oversight opened, the Police Department had grown to a complement of 492 employees, including janitors, while the Fire Department had grown to 503 members. In 1910, the Fire Department noted a total expenditure of \$22,138.00 for hay, oats, and bran, and employed one full-time veterinarian to care for more than 250 horses. By the end of the era, both departments would be fully motorized.

The second 25 years of Commission history is highlighted by passage of Chapter 586, Laws of 1911. This law expanded the Commission to a five-member Board, and added two new responsibilities: the authority to hear the complaints of property owners against any member of either department, and the authority to hear appeals from disciplinary actions from any member of either department discharged, suspended, or reduced in rank by the Chiefs of the departments. Chapter 586 also decreased the power of the Mayor by eliminating the provision of the 1885 law which had allowed Mayors to suspend Chiefs of the respective departments for cause. This was to be the last major change in Commission statutory authority until 1977.

In addition to significantly expanding the scope of the Board, the Laws of 1911 also gave the chiefs more direct responsibility over their departments. Each Chief was named the head of his department and made responsible for the rules of his department, the efficiency and conduct of its members, and the custody and control of all department property and records. This provision shortly caused some consternation to the Board as both Chiefs could implicitly flout the merit system in appointments and promotions. The minutes of the Commission during this period show constant memorandums were sent to the Chiefs reminding them of civil service requirements. In 1921, when Jacob Laubenheimer was appointed Chief of Police, the Commission meeting minutes note an understanding that

he would "make all appointments and promotions subject to merit and the rules of the Commission."

On August 5, 1911, the Board received its first citizen complaint. Filed by attorney Adolph Kanneberg on behalf of former Fireman Edward F. Wiese, the complaint included charges that Chief Engineer Thomas Clancy had been derelict in his duties, alleging that proper building inspections would have prevented many fires in the downtown area. Although this particular charge was not sustained by the Commission, it did have a far-ranging, beneficial effect on the City of Milwaukee. Shortly thereafter, local ordinances enforcing the removal of fire hazards were enacted; and in 1915, a bureau of Fire Prevention was created within the Fire Department.



*Fire Department steam engine, circa 1910.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.*

Labor strikes and ensuing violence became a local problem during this period. Although they did not involve a considerable number of workers, the number of strikes rose from 13 in 1914 to 54 in 1918. Locally, much of the violence, stemmed from the use of strikebreakers provided by so-called detective agencies. In 1919, the Board was charged with the responsibility of approving licenses for local detective agencies and their employees. In order to be granted a license, the Board required detective agencies and agency employees to sign an affidavit that they would neither supply nor act as strikebreakers.

This era saw a number of public safety employment firsts. The first two Policewomen, Mabel E. Lorch and Mary E. Smith, were hired by the Police Department on

November 23, 1922. Policewomen had full police powers but were assigned only to cases involving women and children, and were not eligible for promotion. The Board's job requirements for the job of Policewoman were interesting in that it allowed married women to apply for the position at a time when most employers required female employees to be single. In 1924, the first black Police Officer, Judson Minor, was hired.

The modernization of both departments affected requirements for entry-level and promotional positions. In 1920, the Board held its first examination for the Fire Department where "automotive experience or a willingness to learn" was a job requirement.

In 1931, a national accolade for the Police Department was an accolade for the good work of the Commission as well. The Wickersham Commission, a national commission whose task was to investigate municipal police corruption, honored the Milwaukee Police Department as the "national model of corruption-free policing." The politically independent Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and the "good moral character" of the Chief of Police, Jacob G. Laubenheimer, were seen by the Wickersham Commission as the two factors influencing their selection of the Police Department as a national model.



*Police Officers at career day.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*



*Police ambulance.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

World War II and Beyond: 1935 --1960

The annual reports of the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Police Department for 1935 show the Fire Department as employing 792 members and the Police Department as employing 1,152 members. The burgeoning growth of the two departments produced quite a strain on the Board since it had no full-time employees at the time. By 1937, the Chief Examiner and Secretary James D. Foley was able to report to the Common Council:

"A change has come over the establishment of the eligibility lists. Whereas there used to be a dearth of applicants and a number of examinations in one year, they now have the situation in hand - a larger number of applicants and a smaller number of examinations."

A few short years later, with the onset of World War II, this was no longer true.

More than any other event, World War II and its aftermath impacted upon the employment practices of the Commission. Whereas prior to 1944, those who were on an original eligible list for one public safety service could transfer to the eligible list for the other public safety service while maintaining their original test score, manpower shortages now forced the Commission to discontinue that practice. However, when one service had expended a list, the Commission would offer positions to those remaining on the eligible list for the other service with the understanding that after the war, these men would be offered positions in the first service should they so desire. Only five men, appointed to the police service during the war, elected to transfer to the fire service at the end of the war.

In addition to the concern for manpower shortages, the Board was also concerned that former employees, drafted into the armed services, were allowed to return to their jobs at the end of the war. Therefore, during the war years, all appointments to the police and fire services were provisional, and all recruits had to sign a statement acknowledging temporary appointment during

those years. Although the Commission established the veteran point system to give returning veterans preference in hiring, it was not unmindful of the sacrifice of those who had joined the Fire and Police Departments during the war years as temporary employees. The Board met frequently with the Common Council in an effort to retain these men when the war drew to a close.

The aftermath of World War II brought another public problem to the attention of the Commission. Housing shortages in the City of Milwaukee and the growth of the suburbs caused the Commission to go to state-wide recruitment for the first time in its history. It also relaxed its requirement of City residency, and allowed new employees one year to move into the City.

The mid-1930's and 1940's brought recognition to the Milwaukee Fire Department. Several times in that period, the Fire Department was awarded the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Award for outstanding achievement in fire waste management and fire safety. Milwaukee Fire Chief Peter Steinkellner, the nation's first and only Socialist Fire Chief, was elected president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs in 1936, and in 1948, William E. Curry, the first black firefighter, completed his initial job training.



*Fire Department truck, circa 1950.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.*

Turbulent Times: 1960 --1985

On December 31, 1960, the Milwaukee Police Department reported 1,848 members present for duty. The Milwaukee Fire Department reported a total complement of 1,058 members. At the start of this era, the Board itself employed a two-person staff consisting of the Executive Secretary/Chief Examiner and one Clerk Typist. By 1985, and in concert with the Board's increased responsibilities, the Commission staff grew to include eight professional and three clerical employees under the direction of the Board's first Executive Director, J.R. Brigham.

These 25 years of Commission history were turbulent ones. Legislation and court action affected many of its practices and extended the scope of Board responsibility significantly, while federal grant programs aided both public safety services.

The Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1969 eventually grew to be a three-tiered law enforcement grant-in-aid program. The Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission became the local criminal justice planning body for the City of Milwaukee. The Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Program (L. E. A. P.) provided college educational funds to police personnel and significantly raised the educational attainment level of Milwaukee Police Department members. Under the direction of the Commission, federal grants were used to enhance the training academy, to create a resource laboratory and library for the Youth Aid Bureau, to modernize the Police Department's communications system, to cover the cost of two-way radios, to experiment with beat patrol, and to purchase a police-community relations bus, among other projects. Federal funds were also used to develop the Milwaukee Arson Program, a unique program of intragovernmental cooperation in crime control, which combined the Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee Fire Department, and the District Attorney's Office in a task force approach to the problem of arson.

Federal Court decisions had a significant impact on Board employment practices as well as on Commission staffing needs. Whereas the Commission entered this 25-year period with a two-person staff consisting of a Chief Examiner/Executive Secretary and one secretary, it eventually employed a staff of twelve. The staff included professional testing staff composed of a Research Psychologist and two Personnel Analysts, as well as two Community Relations Specialists who, in part, were charged with the recruitment of public safety personnel. Court orders to assure the representative hiring of females and minorities were strictly adhered to by the Board, which maintained separate employment lists for minority, majority, and female applicants.

Significant legislative changes, beginning in 1969, also altered the scope of Commission authority and changed its staffing patterns. In 1969 and again in 1977, state legislation revised the Commission's complaint law by broadening the scope of those who could file complaints against fire and police personnel from property owners only (Laws of 1911) to electors (1969) to any aggrieved person (in 1977).



*Fire Department engine on-scene.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.*

In July 1977, the Board experienced its first major change in authority since 1911, when state law was amended to grant the Board the responsibility of conducting an annual policy review of the Fire and Police Departments and the authority to suspend the rules of either department. The tenure of chiefs of the public safety services also underwent change when the Wisconsin Legislature enacted law to permit cities of the

first class to establish a term of office for future Chiefs. Coincidentally, City Ordinance 275, passed in that same year, limited the term of office for future Chiefs to renewable terms of seven years. In 1980, the Commission was given a limited form of Fire and Police Department rulemaking authority by state lawmakers when Chapter 307, Laws of 1979, was amended to allow the Board to promulgate rules to replace rules suspended by the Commission.

In April 1984, when Senate Bill 56 was signed into law, the Board acquired the authority to prescribe general policies and standards for the Fire and Police Departments, the ability to inspect any property of the departments, including books and records, and the authority to review the efficiency and general good conduct of the departments. The Board could also issue written directives to a Chief based on such reviews, which are to be carried out unless overruled in writing by the Mayor. The Board also acquired original rule-making authority for both departments, with the option that this authority can be delegated to the respective Chiefs. During this time period, the Fire and Police Commission's authority as an oversight body of the public safety departments was expanded. These legislative mandates created a need for specialized staff to enable the Commission to meet its increased responsibilities. A Research Services Specialist position, which incorporated the function of hearing examiner, and a Research Analyst position were added to the authorized staff total.

In the years since it was granted independent rulemaking authority, the Board endeavored to use its authority sparingly in the best interests of the departments and community. Two rules promulgated by the Board and affecting the Police Department generated a great deal of controversy: a rule which prohibited off-duty officers from carrying a firearm while drinking alcohol and the "Deadly Force" rule. The "Deadly Force" rule required officers involved in an incident involving a citizen death or serious injury to be removed from street duty for a period of time following the incident in order to allow a thorough investigation to be conducted.

In terms of policy review, in 1983 the Commission selected crime prevention as an area of police policy

review. This review resulted in a recommendation that the department create a crime prevention bureau; and in 1985, per the Commission's recommendations, a pilot crime prevention program was launched by Chief of Police Robert J. Ziarnik.

Two historic employment events occurred during this time period within the Fire Department. First, the Fire Department became responsible for emergency medical service in the City of Milwaukee, creating the need for a new position of Paramedic. It was through the position of Paramedic that the first women were inducted into a sworn position with the Milwaukee Fire Department. Mary Ann Polasek and Sue Bethke began work on January 12, 1981. The Board and Commission staff worked very closely with the Milwaukee Fire Department to develop a method for the selection of qualified females to the position of Firefighter. The first female firefighter, Debra Ann (Pross) Walsh, graduated from the training academy in 1982.



*The first paramedic class.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.*

New Horizons: 1985 - 2010

The past 25 years of Commission history is highlighted by increased opportunities and advancements. By the late 1980's, committees and programs were developed and implemented specifically targeting public safety issues in the community. Commission committees, such as the Special Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention; ad hoc committees on chemical dependency and cultural diversity; and programs such as FOCUS (Firefighters Out Creating Urban Safety), Operation RAGE (Remove Area Gang Environments), and a revamped citizen complaint program helped to engage the community and continue to expand innovative practices into the 21st century. These committees also directed changes within the departments, such as creation of the Citizens Police Academy and the Firefighter for a Day program, to expose the internal workings of the departments to community leaders and the general population. Internships and summer programs for students were also developed.



*Police Department officers pose with the re-designed logo.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

The Fire and Police Commission also underwent significant changes in technology as the information age became a global phenomenon. By 1997, public access to the Commission, Fire Department, and Police Department was provided via the internet. By 2010,

citizens could file complaints and download accident reports, crime statistics, and fire statistics for their neighborhood, apply for employment as Police Officers or Firefighters, view YouTube videos of crime suspects, and follow the latest department developments on "Twitter." With the internet now recognized as the main source for obtaining and disseminating information for much of the general public, visibility increased exponentially, and thus, provided for greater access for the community.

In addition to technological advances, the Commission continued to receive increased responsibilities. In January 2007, when the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances Chapter 314 was enacted by the Common Council, duties of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners were clarified to require increased emphasis on the oversight of the policies and procedures of the Fire and Police Departments. In addition to the duties of hiring, promoting, disciplining, and setting the policies and standards of the departments under Wisconsin Statute Section 62.50, local law expanded the Commission's duties and Chapter 314 gave specific authority to the Commission and its executive director to 1) conduct policy reviews of Fire and Police Department operations; 2) ensure credible internal Fire and Police Department investigations through audits; 3) oversee the citizen complaint process; and 4) identify systemic problems and opportunities for improvement within both the Fire and Police Departments. Chapter 314 also required all members of the Board to undergo a background investigation by the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and complete training sessions on both Fire and Police Department operations.

As a result of the increased role in policy development and implementation, the citizen oversight provided by the Commission helped to reduce negative political scrutiny and community suspicion concerning Fire and Police Department operations. Policies implemented within these 25 years aimed to establish a more open and transparent public safety environment. These policies included the incorporation of a drug-free workplace; an emphasis on community-oriented policing initiatives; the approval of hand-held chemical agents and conducted energy device (Tasers®); and many technological advances in fire suppression and law enforcement.

To ensure that Fire and Police Department personnel treat community members with courtesy and respect according to the rules and regulations of the respective department, the Commission's citizen complaint process underwent a comprehensive review in 2008. The complaint process was revised to 1) increase transparency and community confidence in the citizen complaint process; 2) establish an independent system for receiving, investigating, and disciplining department members for acts of misconduct; 3) provide a means to analyze complaints for the purpose of identifying trends or patterns within the Fire or Police Departments; and 4) monitor and audit complaints and discipline investigations conducted by the Fire and Police Departments to ensure a fair and thorough process. As a result, the Commission hired its own citizen complaint Investigator/Auditors and Research and Policy Analyst, added advanced software analysis tools, began real-time data and report-sharing with the public safety software systems, developed public-private partnerships with community groups and universities, and began a professional mediation program for citizen complaints.

The Fire Department reported employing around 964 personnel and the Police Department reported employing 2,703 in 2010. Most notably, since 1985, there were significant increases in diversity and retention of women and minorities in various positions. In 1989, Chief Phillip Arreola became the first Hispanic Chief of Police in Milwaukee's history and the first Chief of MPD to be appointed from outside the department. In 1990, Laura Lawson became the first woman promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator for the Milwaukee Fire Department, and Michael Morgan became the first African-American Executive Director of the Fire and Police Commission. Nannette Haggerty was appointed Chief of Police in 2003, becoming the first female Chief of Police in Milwaukee's history. Stephanie Hampton was appointed to rank of Fire Lieutenant in 2004 and became the first African-American woman in the state of Wisconsin to attain that rank. Most recently, Chief Douglas Holton was appointed in 2007 as the first African-American Fire Chief in Milwaukee's history and was also selected from outside the department.

In addition to increased diversity within the departments and Commission, there were increased efforts to provide education and outreach to all parts of the Milwaukee community. The Commission and its Executive Director became involved in regional and local initiatives in public safety, such as the Milwaukee Commission on Police Community Relations, the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, prisoner reentry programs, victim-witness initiatives, problem oriented policing strategies, and fire and violence prevention programs.

As a sign of the times, the Commission grudgingly approved a "reduction in pay" for Fire and Police personnel in the form of four unpaid furlough days in 2009 in response to a local and national economic downturn. That same year also saw consolidation of City services, and the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security was subsequently recognized as a division of the Fire and Police Commission in 2010.



Fire Department engine outside of the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.

As the 125 years of what Mayor Emil Wallber referred to as "a matter of experiment" draw to a close, it is clear that the experiment has proved to be a successful one. The Commission looks forward to its next 125 years with the same zeal and sense of public responsibility as that exhibited by those first four Commissioners so many years ago.

One for the Record Books

A Compendium of Fire, Police, and Commission Trivia

- According to the 1885 Chief Engineer's Report, the Fire Department had a total of 129 "officers and men", ten steam engines, six four-wheel hose carts, four two-wheel hose carts, six hook and ladder trucks, two chemical engines, and 17 wagons. The total budget for the department was \$161,487.07. In 2010, the Fire Department employed 964 sworn and non-sworn employees, with a complement of 36 fire stations, 37 engines, 16 trucks, 12 paramedic units, and one fire boat, with a budget of over \$100 million dollars.
- In 1885, the Police Department had a total of 152 employees covering three districts. In 2010, the Police Department employed 2,703 sworn and non-sworn personnel, covering seven districts.
- Ninety-eight citizens have served as Board members in its 125 year history. Their length of tenure has ranged from one meeting attended by William D. Cantillion in 1899, to 25 years - a record held by Richard Block, who served from 1949 through 1974. Commissioner Block was instrumental in the creation of the Police Aide program established in 1952.
- James D. Foley, who served as Board Secretary and Chief Examiner for a record 40 years, was the son of Milwaukee Fire Chief James Foley, who served in that capacity from 1883 to 1903. Incidentally, the deaths of Fire Chief James Foley and three other firemen in the aftermath of the Schwaab Stamp and Seal acid spill were the first hazardous materials incident deaths recorded in the city.
- In the late 1800's, annual Police reports listed the trades and occupations of persons arrested. Among the occupations of those arrested in 1885 were listed 1,254 laborers, 53 schoolboys, 45 cigarmakers, 8 horseshoers, two puddlers, and one ex-city comptroller.
- The Milwaukee of the late 1800's was a contrast between its rural past and urban future. The 1885 Fire Department Annual Report showed fires occurring in such diverse structures as barns, outhouses, and theaters, in addition to one Turkish bathhouse.
- Chief of Police John T. Janssen, the first Chief of either the Police or Fire Departments to be appointed by the Board, also holds the record of tenure by a Chief of either Department. Chief Janssen served as Chief of Police from October 1888 to May 1921 - a period of almost 33 years!
- Milwaukee's first fire boat, the Cataract, was launched in 1889 from the foot of Edison Street. In 1922, the first police boat, Killjoy I, was launched. In its first year of operation, the Cataract was reported to have stopped vandalism and thievery along the river and to have discouraged night romancing on the lake.
- In the 1890's, one function of the Police Department was to provide emergency shelter and aid to the homeless and the traveler. On November 28, 1893, the Minutes of the Board reflect that a letter of appreciation was sent to the Uihlein Brothers, thanking them for their gift of \$1,000 to provide "emergency aid for the needy."
- Commissioner Jobst Buening, appointed to the Board in 1893, was Chief of the Milwaukee Fire Department during its volunteer years (1860-1867).
- The Milwaukee Police Band was formed in 1898, becoming the first police band in the nation.
- Emanuel L. Phillip, elected Governor of Wisconsin in 1914, served as a Commissioner from 1909 until his election in 1914.
- The attorney for the Board in the case of *Clancy vs. The Milwaukee Board of Fire and Police*

Commissioners (1911) was Daniel W. Hoan, who later became mayor.

- The police training school, established in 1921, was the first police training facility in the United States.
- Members of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners received no salary compensation until 1934, when the Common Council approved an honorarium of \$480 per year. Today, they receive \$6,600.00 per year.
- In 1936, the Milwaukee Police Department purchased a bullet-proof "fort on wheels," the largest armored car of its kind in the nation. It was delivered by the manufacturer to the Chicago area by train, and then driven to Milwaukee by members of the Police Department. The weight of the vehicle was so great that all four tires gave out before the fort reached the city limits, and it was never used by the Department.
- The first Fire and Police Softball Game was played on April 9, 1942. The proceeds were donated to the Milwaukee County Council of Defense.



Firefighter Kevin Monaghan demonstrates his equipment. Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.

- In commemoration of the Board's Diamond Jubilee celebrated in 1960, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported: "Seventy-five years ago, in 1885, the Milwaukee fire and police chiefs got a new boss. He is still around.

He is actually five men who make up the Fire and Police Commission."

- The appointment of Inspector of Detectives Harold A. Breier to Chief of Police in 1964 from a field of 63 candidates marked the first time that the Board recruited nationally for this position, and the last time a Chief would be appointed for life tenure. Chief Breier's 20-year tenure as Chief is second only to the 33-year tenure of Chief John T. Janssen. Chief Breier's successor, Chief Robert J. Ziarnik, was the seventh Chief of Police appointed by the Board, and the first to be appointed for a limited term of office.
- Former Milwaukee County Sheriff Richard Artison was the Commission's first Community Relations Specialist, and upon his resignation in 1968 to enter the FBI, a second notable Milwaukeean, Reverend Kenneth A. Bowen, was appointed.
- Louis G. Miller, Jr., the first black member of the Board, was appointed in 1968.
- Attorney Arlene Kennedy was the first woman appointed to serve as Executive Secretary of the Commission, serving in that capacity from 1969 to 1975. She returned to the Commission in 1977 as a Board member, a position she filled with honor until her retirement in 1980.
- In 1969, attorney Marjorie L. Marshall became the first woman appointed to the Board.
- Richard Froemming was employed by the Milwaukee Fire Department for 57 years, which may be a record for length of employment with the Fire Department.
- Turn of the century police reports illustrate how crime problems change over time. As an example, today we are faced with a growing number of computer-related crimes, while in 1885, citizens were arrested for crimes unique to that period, such as horse-stealing, shooting within the city limits, incorrigibility, and leaving a horse unhitched.

Chronology of Significant Events

Milwaukee Fire Department, Police Department, and Fire and Police Commission

1855 - Police Department formed.

1875 - Full-time Fire Department established.

1885 - Board of Fire and Police Commissioners established.

1887 - Milwaukee Police Department began photographing prisoners.

1888 - Commission fired Chief of Police Florian C. Ries, appointed John T. Janssen Chief of Police.

1889 - First fireboat, the Cataract, launched.

1890 - First Police Department Rule Book became effective.

1895 - Fire Department headquarters moved to City Hall. Chapter 379 enacted, which provided pensions for members of the Fire and Police Departments. Board responsible for hearing pension petitions.

1897 - Police Department initiated Bertillion system of identification.

1898 - Police Band formed.

1899 - Pension law of 1895 revised to remove Board oversight.

1902 - First Police Surgeon hired.

1903 - Fire Chief James Foley and three others die in Schwaab Stamp and Seal Company acid spill. Herman Meminger appointed Chief Engineer.

1905 - Fire Chief Meminger died. Board appointed Thomas Clancy as new Fire Chief.

1907 - Police ambulance service began. Police Department fingerprint identification began.

1909 - Policemen's Protective Association formed.

1910 - Motorcycle patrol instituted.

1911 - Chapter 586 passed by State lawmakers, expanding the size of the Board to five members and the Board's scope of responsibility. National Fire Prevention Week inaugurated.

1912 - Fire Department received its first motor driven apparatus, a combination chemical and squad wagon.

1914 - Fire Department received first motor driven fire engine.

1915 - Fire Prevention Bureau established.

1919 - Board of Fire and Police Commissioners became responsible for approving local detective agency licenses and agents. Milwaukee Professional Fire Fighters' Association, Local 215, organized.

1920 - First traffic light installed in city.



*The old Police command van.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

1921 - Police training school founded. Crime record file system implemented. Chief of Police John Janssen died; Jacob Laubenheimer appointed Chief.

1922 - Fire Department Drill School founded. First Policewomen, Mabel Lorch and Mary Smith, hired. First police boat, Killjoy I, launched.

1924 - Fire Chief Thomas Clancy resigned, Board appointed Peter Steinkellner. First black Police Officer, Judson Minor, hired.



*An officer issued a parking ticket.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

1926 - Traffic Bureau formed.

1928 - Fire Department retired last horsedrawn apparatus.

1929 - Mounted police began.

1930 - Safety Building opened. One-way radios installed in police cars.

1931 - The Milwaukee Police Department called “the national model” by the Wickershem Commission.

1936 - Chief of Police Jacob Laubeneimer retired; the Board appointed Joseph T. Kluchesky to the position of Chief.

1940 - Police initiated voluntary fingerprinting of school students.

1943 - Two-way radios installed in police car.

1945 - Fire Chief Peter Steinkellner resigned, and Edward E. Wiseher appointed by Board. Chief of Police Joseph T. Kluchesky resigned, and John W. Polcyn appointed by the Board.

1946 - Youth Aid Bureau formed. Fire Bell Club organized. Vernice Gallimore became the first African-American woman to serve as Policewoman in Milwaukee.

1947 - Mounted patrol ended.

1949 - First diesel-powered fire boat launched, the Deluge.

1952 - Police Aide program began.

1954 - George A. Ruger, the Commission's first full-time Chief Examiner, hired.

1957 - Chief of Police John W. Polcyn retired, and the Board appointed Howard O. Johnson.

1959 - Fire Chief Edward E. Wischer retired, and the Board appointed Edward B. McCabe.

1961- Fire Chief Edward B. McCabe died in office, and the Commission appointed James R. Moher. Professional Policeman's Protective Association gained union status.

1962 - Fire Department underwater rescue team formed.

1964- Chief of Police Howard O. Johnson retired, and the Board appointed Harold A. Breier.

1967 - Police Department Tactical Enforcement Unit formed.

1969 - State law allowed voters to file citizen complaints against members of either department. Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act passed.

1970 - Board no longer responsible for approving local detective agency licenses. Fire Chief Moher retired, and William Stamm appointed.

1971 - Newly constructed Police Administration Building opened.

1974 - Safety Academy opened at the site of the former Madonna High School.

1975 - Fire Department health monitoring program began. Ada Wright became the first woman to be hired as Patrolman. She retired in 2001.



*The fallen Firefighter memorial outside of headquarters.
Photo courtesy Kristin Kappelman.*

1977 - Change in state law gave the Board public safety rule-making authority.

1980- Fire Department Paramedic Service initiated. Police ambulance service ended. Fire Department formed Hazardous Materials (Haz-Mat) Team.

1981- Mary Ann Polasek and Sue Bethke hired as the first female Paramedics. Arson program began.

1983 - Debra (Pross) Walsh graduated from the training school and became the first female Firefighter.

1984 - Senate Bill 56 passed by the State Legislature, significantly conferring new authority and responsibility on the Board. The fire boat Deluge is retired. Chief of Police Harold A. Breier retired, and Robert J. Ziarnik hired by the Board.

1985- Pilot Crime Prevention Program began. Police reorganization put into effect. Fire Department formed Tunnel Rescue Team, which eventually merged with Heavy Urban Rescue Team.

1986 - Fire Chief William Stamm resigned; Richard Seelen appointed. Chief Seelen is the first Fire Chief to serve a limited 7 year term, rather than life tenure.

1988 - Civilians hired for the first time as dispatchers for the Milwaukee Fire Department.

1989 - Chief of Police Robert Ziarnik retired; Phillip Arreola appointed. Chief Arreola became the first Hispanic Chief of Police in Milwaukee's history and the first Chief of Police appointed from outside the department. September 11, at 9:11 am, the 911 emergency number became operative in Milwaukee County. Fire Chief Richard Seelen resigned; August Erdmann appointed.

1990 - Laura Lawson became the first woman promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator for the Milwaukee Fire Department. Michael Morgan became the first African-American Executive Director of the Fire and Police Commission.

1991 - Police Captain Nanette Hegerty became the first woman to command a Milwaukee Police District. For the first time, 3 women-Barbara Duffy, Cynthia Kuzminski, and Christine Welk-were placed on Milwaukee Fire Department's Lieutenant eligibility list. All three would be appointed to Lieutenant.

1992 - Risa Crowder and Toni Grisham became the first African-American women to be promoted to Sergeant with the Milwaukee Police Department. MFD opened the Survive Alive house at 2059 South 20th Street.

1993 - Monica Ray became the first African-American woman to hold a supervisory position in the Criminal Investigative Bureau as Lieutenant for the Milwaukee Police Department. Detective Procopio Sandoval, the police department's first Hispanic officer, retired. Rosa Dominguez appointed to the board as the first Hispanic Commissioner.

1994 - Retirement of Barbara Burkard, the last MPD member with title Policewoman.

1995 - Using RFLP (Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism) technology, MPD made the first arrest using DNA as evidence.

1996 - Chief of Police Phillip Arreola resigned. Chief Arthur Jones became the first African-American Chief of Police in Milwaukee's history. Fire Chief August Erdmann resigned; Lawrence Gardner appointed.

1997 - Within the Milwaukee Fire Department, Gloria Murawsky became the first woman to reach rank of Deputy Chief, and Barbara Duffy became the first woman outside of Emergency Medical Service to reach rank of Fire Captain. Monica Ray became the first female Deputy Inspector in the Milwaukee Police Department. The Fire and Police Commission and Fire and Police Departments became accessible via the World Wide Web. Mounted horse patrol unit reinstated, but is authorized to only be used for special events, such as parades.

1999 - Mounted horse patrol expanded to five units and began patrolling downtown Milwaukee.

2001 - Psychological testing administered to all Police Officer candidates. The Fire and Police Commission and the City of Milwaukee Public Safety Report published on-line for the first time. On September 11, departments put on alert due to terrorist attacks in New York City and the Pentagon.

2002 - Lieutenant of Detectives Andrew Anewenter of MPD was recognized as the longest-serving law enforcement officer in the nation's history. Lieutenant Anewenter retired after 61 years of service at the age of 87.

2003 - Chief of Police Arthur Jones retired; Nannette Hegerty appointed as the first female Chief of Police in Milwaukee history. Fire Chief Lawrence Gardner resigned; William Wentlandt appointed. The Fire and Police Commission administratively merged functions with the Department of Employee Relations (DER).

2004 - The FPC received more than 100 citizen complaints in one year for the first time in its history.

2006 - Fifteen anti-crime cameras were placed around the city: 10 in high crime areas, 3 at the Summerfest grounds, and 2 near the Bradley Center.

2007 - Fire Chief William Wentlandt resigned; Douglas Holton, Fire Chief of St. Paul (MN) Fire Department and former Deputy Chief in Milwaukee, appointed as the first African-American Fire Chief in Milwaukee's history, and the first Fire Chief hired from outside of the department. The Commission ended its administrative merger with DER. Michael Tobin, former Milwaukee Police Officer and Assistant City Attorney, appointed as Executive Director.

2008 - Chief of Police Nannette Hegerty resigned; Edward Flynn, Police Chief of Springfield (MA) appointed. State law increased the number of citizen board members from five to seven. Debra Weber promoted to Fire Battalion Chief, the first woman to do so. First Hmong commissioner, Paoi Lor, appointed to the Board. Citizen complaint program revised to allow independent investigations and mediation. The Police Department hired its first civilian Crime Analyst, Nicole DeMotto. Commission staff reorganized.

2009 - Fire Chief Douglas Holton retired. The Trident, the Fire Department's new fire boat, was commissioned. The first in-house investigator/auditors hired by the FPC. A record 319 citizen complaints were filed with the FPC, reflecting the community's renewed confidence in the FPC's citizen complaint process. Psychological testing and background investigations conducted for all Firefighter candidates.

2010 - Mark Rohlring, Fire Chief of the Rapid City (SD) Fire Department, appointed as Fire Chief. Chief Rohlring became the first Fire Chief appointed that had not previously been employed by the Milwaukee Fire Department. Lieutenant of Detectives and Lieutenant of Police ranks combined into one position title of Police Lieutenant. Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security became a division of the Fire and Police Commission.

Rules Regulating Appointments to the Police Force and Fire Department of the City of Milwaukee

*Adopted by the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners,
July 7, 1885.*

Rule 1. Applications for the position of patrolman on the Police Force must be addressed to the Chief of Police, and applications for either of the positions of driver, stoker, truckman or pipeman in the Fire Department, must be addressed to the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department. Applications must not be made to the Board, or to any member of the Board. No such applications will be considered. All applications must be in the handwriting of the applicant, and signed by him. Every application must state the position sought, the age and place of birth of the applicant, his height, weight and chest measure, his present place of residence, his occupation and his schooling. Applications must also state how long the applicant has resided in the City of Milwaukee, what trade he has learned, if any, and where and by whom he has been employed, in the city, during the last three years. Applications will also state what language, if any besides the English, the applicant can speak understandingly.

Rule 2. Every application must be accompanied by the certificates of not less than three reputable citizens of Milwaukee, not holding any city or county office, each certifying that he has been personally acquainted with the applicant for at least one year last past, and believes him to be of good moral character, of correct and orderly deportment, of temperate and industrious habits, and in all respects fit for the service he wishes to enter, and that such citizen is willing that his certificate should be made public.

Rule 3. Every applicant must answer such questions and submit to such examination as to physical strength, capacity and activity, and also as to educational qualifications, as the Board may deem necessary to

ascertain his fitness for the position sought. No applicant will be admitted to an examination who does not appear to be physically sound and of good habits and reputable character.

Rule 4. Examinations for an educational test of applicants will be confined to the following subjects:

1. Reading from print and manuscript.
2. Handwriting, as shown from copying manuscript.
3. Writing from memory the substance of matter communicated orally.
4. Arithmetic - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of whole numbers and of decimals applied to United States money.
5. Applicants for positions as patrolman will be questioned about city government, location of streets, public buildings and such general matters as strangers in the city inquire about. Applicants for positions in the Fire Department will be questioned about location of streets, location and construction of buildings with especial reference to precautions against fire. Applicants for stoker will be examined as to their qualifications as machinists. Each applicant will also submit to a thorough medical examination by a physician or surgeon designated by the Board, who will report the result of his examination to the appointing officer. The charges for such examination must be paid by the applicant.

Rule 5. No person will be appointed patrolman who is less than 25 or more than 35 years of age. No person will be appointed driver, stoker, truckman or pipeman who is less than 21 or more than 33 years of age. No person will be appointed stoker who is not a practical machinist. No person will be appointed to any of the above positions on either force who is less than 5 feet and 7 inches high; who is not a citizen of the United States and a legal voter in the City of Milwaukee; who has not resided in the City of Milwaukee for at least three years immediately preceding, or who does not speak the English language understandingly. No person will be appointed who has been convicted of crime.

Rule 6. All appointments of patrolmen, drivers, stokers, truckmen or pipemen will be upon probation. If, during the first two months of actual service, the person

appointed proves unfit for the position, he will be dropped from the force.

Rule 7. If the exigencies of the service should at any time so require, a person who has applied for any of the positions in the Fire Department named in Rule 1, may be appointed to any other of said positions, and any person appointed to any of said positions may be transferred at any time, to either of the other positions named, in the discretion of the Chief Engineer, provided that no person shall be appointed stoker, or transferred to that position, unless he is a practical machinist.

Rule 8. Appointments to positions on either force, of higher grade than those named in Rule 1, will be made by promotion of persons already in the service.

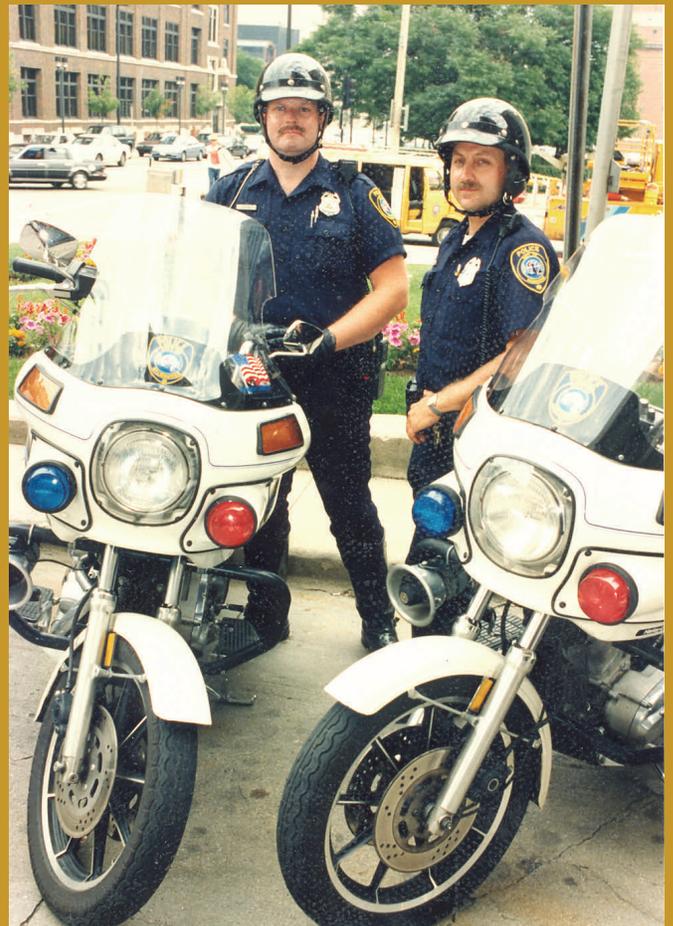
Rule 9. These Rules do not apply to the appointment of special policemen for a particular emergency for a limited time.

Rule 10. These Rules will take effect on Monday, the 13th of July, 1885, and be in force on and after that date.

Copies of the Rules and blanks for application in either Department will be furnished by the respective Chiefs.



Above, the old motorcycle patrol. At right, the new motorcycle patrol. Photos courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.



Members of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners: 1885 - 2010

Thomas Shea 1885-1894	Ignatz Czerwinski 1898-1906	Walter P. Celechowski 1912-1915	Chauncey Yockey 1935 -1936
Frederick C. Winkler 1885-1888	William D. Cantillion 1899-1899	Henry O. Fuldner 1914-1919	Herbert G. Kuethle 1935 -1942
Jacob Knoernschild 1885-1888	John F. Burnham 1899-1906	Otto H. Falk 1915-1918	Edward Millot, Jr. 1937 -1940
Jerome R. Brigham 1885-1888	William Schoen 1900-1912 1916-1921	William G. Thwaits 1915 -1920	George W. Ernst 1940 -1943
Charles M. Kipp 1888-1895	Jacob E. Friend 1901-1904	Sylvester Koszczewski 1915 -1917	August Reisweber 1941 -1959
August Von Trott 1888-1889	Sherman Brown 1904-1909 1911-1916	Walter Rybacki 1917 -1932	A. Lambert Siocombe 1942 -1952
William W. Wright 1888-1897	Michael Carpenter 1906-1911	Henry Imse 1919 -1929	William N. Lisch 1943 -1948
George J. Obermann 1889-1892	Joseph J. Komorowski 1906-1910	Sigmund Krawczak 1920 -1921	Eugene Schramka 1943 -1950
George W. Porth 1892-1893	Emanuel L. Philip 1909-1915	Edward Murray 1921 -1935	Dr. G. W. Leitch 1944 -1949
Jobst H. Buening 1893-1896	Dr. C. M. Kraft 1910-1910	Joseph Stein 1921 -1935	Dr. Leon A. Nowak 1948 -1953
John P. Murphy 1894-1898	Chester M. Wright 1910-1911	William Baumann 1928 -1932	Richard Block 1949 -1974
John E. Hansen 1895-1899	Nicholas Peterson 1911-1914 1918-1928	John P. Luer 1929 -1944	John A. Seramur 1950 -1960
Louis Kindling 1896-1900		Max Grass 1932 -1943	George A. Ruger 1952 -1954
Samuel E. Tate 1897-1901	Ben F. Sherer 1911-1915	John Banachowicz 1932 -1942	Albert Pawlak 1953 -1961

Frank Hodik 1954 -1962	John Giacomo 1971 -1980	Larry N. Scruggs, Jr. 1988 - 1989	Carla Cross 1998 - 2004
Albert M. Davis 1959 -1961	William I. Gore 1973 - 1988	M. Nicol Padway 1988 - 1994	Eric Mandel Johnson 1998 - 2005
Theodore R. Kurtz 1960 -1969	Gilbert Jewell 1974 - 1988	Robert Harris, Jr. 1989 - 1993	Leonard J. Sobczak 2000 - 2009
Peter Pavlovich 1961 -1968	Arlene Kennedy 1977 -1982	Sarah M. Dean 1989 - 1992	Ernesto A. Baca 2001 - 2010
Andrew W. Brunhart 1961 -1962	Franklyn M. Gimbel 1977 -1982	Kathy Harell-Patterson 1991 - 1993	Earl A. Buford 2005 - 2008
George C. Secora 1962 -1968	Michael Balen 1980 -1984	Phoebe Weaver Williams 1992 - 1997	Richard C. Cox 2005 - present
Francis X. Swietlik 1962 -1968	Deborah Egan 1982 -1983	Walt A. Buckhanan 1993 - 1998	Kathryn A. Hein 2008 - present
Louis L. Miller, Jr. 1968-1973	Ronald S. San Felippo 1983 - 1989	Rosa M. Dominguez 1993 - 2001	Carolina M. Stark 2008 - present
Charles W. Mentkowski 1968-1977	Patrice M. Hargarten 1984 - 1991	Michael J. Soika 1994 - 1999	Paoi X. Lor 2008 - present
Julius L. Drozewski 1969 -1971	Stephen E. Kravit 1984 - 1987	August G. Erdmann 1997 - 2000	Sarah W. Morgan 2009 - present
Marjorie L. Marshall 1969-1976	Leonard W. Ziolkowski 1987 - 1996	Robert J. Welch 1997 - 2008	



*The Police Department's branding campaign, encouraging everyone to "Be a Force."
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.*

Executive Directors of the Board

J. R. Brigham	Secretary and Member of the Board, 1885
William W. Wight	Examiner in Chief and Secretary October 12, 1886
Charles E. Monroe	Examiner in Chief and Secretary February 13, 1889 Resigned January 11, 1898
Frank Barry	Examiner in Chief and Secretary January 1898 Resigned August 31, 1899
John J. Gregory	Chief Examiner and Secretary August 29, 1899 Resigned June 1910
James D. Foley	Chief Examiner and Secretary June 11, 1910 Resigned January 1, 1951
Robert W. Hansen	Chief Examiner and Secretary January 18, 1951 Resigned May 3, 1954
George A. Ruger	Chief Examiner and Secretary September 1, 1954 Resigned February 1, 1969
Arlene Kennedy	Chief Examiner and Executive Secretary July 28, 1969 Resigned August 1, 1975
James F. Blumenberg	Chief Examiner and Executive Secretary August 4, 1975 to March 1, 1982 Chief Examiner and Executive Director March 1, 1982 Resigned December 29, 1990
Michael L. Morgan	Executive Director December 31, 1990 Resigned July 19, 1992

Kenneth Munson
Executive Director
July 19, 1992
Resigned March 11, 1997

Joseph J. Czarnecki
Executive Director
March 17, 1997
Resigned April 24, 2003

David L. Heard
Executive Director
April 24, 2003
Resigned November 2, 2007

Michael G. Tobin
Executive Director
November 5, 2007 to present



*Commissioner Carolina Stark (right) discusses MFD water rescue with Assistant Chief Michael Jones, Battalion Chief Jeffrey Friedrich, and Lieutenant Gill Gonzalez during an orientation tour hosted by MFD for FPC staff and Commissioners.
Photo courtesy Fire and Police Commission.*



*Commissioner Sarah Morgan (left) converses with Firefighter Julie Hall about water rescue.
Photo courtesy Fire and Police Commission.*

Chiefs of Police

William Beck

1855 - 1861

1863 - 1878

1880 - 1882

Colonel W. S. Johnson

1861 - 1862

Herman L. Page

1862 - 1863

Daniel Kennedy

1878 - 1880

Robert Wasson

1882 - 1884

Lemuel Ellsworth

1884 - 1885

Florian J. Ries

1885 - 1888

John T. Janssen

1888 - 1921

Jacob G. Laubenheimer

1921 - 1936

Joseph T. Kluchesky

1936 - 1945

John W. Polcyn

1945 - 1957

Howard O. Johnson

1957 - 1964

Harold A. Breier

1964 - 1984

Robert J. Ziarnik

1984 - 1989

Philip Arreola

1989 - 1996

Arthur L. Jones

1996 - 2003

Nannette Hegerty

2003 - 2007

Edward Flynn

2008 - present



Chief of Police Edward Flynn leads role call in the streets of Milwaukee in 2008. Photo courtesy Milwaukee Police Department.

Volunteer Fire Chiefs

Gideon P. Hewitt
1846 - 1848

Allen W. Hatch
1848 - 1849

A. J. Langworthy
1849 - 1850

Anson Eldred
1850 - 1851

John S. Fillmore
1851 - 1855

S. S. Daggert
1855 - 1856

John C. Goodrich
1856 - 1857

Daniel Schultz
1857 - 1859

Thomas H. Eviston
1859 - 1860

Jobst H. Buening
1860 - 1867

Patrick McLaughlin
1867 - 1871

Henry Lippert
1871 - 1878

Full-Time Fire Chiefs

Henry Claymier
1878 - 1880

Henry Lippert
1880 - 1883

James Foley
1883 - 1903

Herman Meminger
1903 - 1905

Thomas Clancy
1905 - 1924

Peter Steinkellner
1925 - 1945

Edward E. Wischer
1945 - 1959



In this recruitment picture, MFD employees pose outside of the Milwaukee Art Museum. Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.

Edward B. McCabe
1959 - 1961

James R. Moher
1961 - 1970

William Stamm
1970 - 1986

Richard Seelen
1986 - 1989

August Erdmann
1989 - 1996

Lawrence Gardner
1996 - 2003

William Wentlandt
2003 - 2007

Douglas Holton
2007 - 2009

Mark Rohlfig
2010 - present



*Michael Tobin swears in Mark Rohlfig as Milwaukee's new Fire Chief, as Maureen Rohlfig looks on.
Photo courtesy Kristin Kappelman.*



*The Fire Department's fire boat, the Trident.
Photo courtesy Milwaukee Fire Department.*



Fire and Police Commission
City Hall, Room 706A
200 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Phone: (414) 286-5000
Fax: (414) 286-5050
Email: fpc@milwaukee.gov

<http://www.milwaukee.gov/fpc>