

EAU CLAIRE SUPPLEMENTAL SUBMITTAL

RE: Supplemental Information, Proposed Incorporation of a Portion of Town of Washington as the Village of Washington

Dear Incorporation Review Board:

Intervenors, City of Eau Claire, submit this letter and its attachment to provide the Board with the attached copy of a news article published after the initial written submittal period, and as mentioned during public comment at the February 19, 2026 Board meeting, which provides further evidence weighing against statutory Standards (2)(b) (level of services) and (2)(d) (impact on the metropolitan community).

The article is relevant because it contains statements from the private, volunteer fire department, Township Fire Department, which Petitioners propose to continue relying on for emergency services with no plans to increase staffing, service levels, or capabilities. The article notes that Township Fire Department is already experiencing an increase in call volumes in 2026 “causing concern for the department,” and that the department “is predicting more calls, longer hours, longer response times and more risk for volunteer burnout.” This concern is especially acute for the Town of Washington because it is the “biggest response area . . . with nearly 60 service calls in January,” while being “the department’s lightest staffed station.” Continued reliance on this service model is not sustainable to meet the level of emergency services needed by residents in the area proposed for incorporation.

Further, the imbalance of emergency service needs and staffing in the Town of Washington area directly impacts other metropolitan communities, raising a myriad of safety concerns. Township Fire Department Public Information Officer Graupner states, “Say they [the Town of Washington] have a structure fire they may only have two or three people that can make the call and then we're having to pull in more equipment that would normally respond from our other stations.” Those “other stations” are located in other towns, which results in increased response times, risk for area residents, and risk for other area municipalities when their limited equipment and personnel are diverted to respond to Town of Washington area emergency incidents.

Continued and increased reliance on neighboring communities to meet the emergency service needs of the area proposed for incorporation is not sustainable and would substantially hinder the metropolitan community’s ability to adequately provide life-saving services to area residents.

The written article is attached to this letter, and the news video may be viewed at this link:
https://www.wqow.com/news/its-probably-going-to-be-our-biggest-year-yet-township-fire-anticipates-more-calls-in/article_1a1e50c5-508e-4b00-a3b7-fdf8ffe5fd4b.html

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'It's probably going to be our biggest year yet'; Township Fire anticipates more calls in 2026

Sam Fristed
Feb 7, 2026



Sam Fristed





January was a busy month for the Eau Claire Township Fire and officials believe the calls won't be slowing down. The increased calls could lead to concerns moving forward.

TOWN OF UNION (WQOW) - January was a busy month for the Eau Claire Township Fire and officials believe the calls won't be slowing down. The increased calls could lead to concerns moving forward.

"Every year we've seen an increase in calls," said Public Information Officer Scott Graupner.

In the first month of the new year Eau Claire Township Fire responded to nearly 140 calls. That number is expected to increase.

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Township Fire Month in Review: January 2026

Township Fire	Month	YTD	Emergicare	Month	YTD
Structure Fires	1	1	EMS Calls	93	93
Vehicle Fires	4	4	Vehicle Crashes	9	9
Grass/Brush Fires	0	0	Fire Standby	1	1
Vehicle Crashes	9	9	Phone Crash Detections	0	0
Smoke/CO/Gas Alarms	8	8	Mutual Aid	7	7
Phone Crash Detections	0	0	Other	0	0
Special Rescues	1	1			
Mutual Aid	2	2			
Other	4	4			
TOTAL	29	29		110	110

Township Fire Facebook


"Every day since the first of the year we've had a call," said Graupner. "We're on pace right now for about 100 more EMS calls than we had last year."

It's causing concern for the department.

"Our biggest response time is during the day which is when we have the fewest people available because everybody has a job and not everybody's job let's them go respond to fire calls," explained Graupner.

TOP VIDEOS





At the end of 2025, Township Fire had about 120 volunteers. No full time members are paid. This years outlook is predicting more calls, longer hours, longer response times and more risk for volunteer burnout.

"It's probably going to be our biggest year yet," Graupner said

There are five different township fire stations. They are located in Union, Brunswick, Pleasant Valley, Washington and Seymour. The biggest response area is the Town of Washington with nearly 60 service calls in January. Unfortunately, it's the departments lightest staffed station.

"Say they have a structure fire they may only have two or three people that can make the call and then we're having to pull in more equipment that would normally respond from our other stations," said Graupner.

The department expects the call volume to increase once the weather warms up in the spring. He said Township Fire has healthy staffing numbers right now, but the future is uncertain. There are ways to help.

"There isn't a fire department in the area that isn't hurting for people," Graupner said.

Volunteering to join the department or attending Township Fire Department sponsored events are two ways to show support. You can learn more about those events or getting involved by visiting their Facebook page.

Have a story idea? Let us know [here](#)

Sam Fristed

Daybreak Anchor

Sam Fristed joined the WQOW team in February of 2023. He attended Falls where he graduated with a degree in journalism.

