

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



By Brittan Bolin  
IAFPD Lobbyist

## IAFPD Finalizing 2023 Legislative Agenda

Each fall, IAFPD puts together the association's legislative agenda for the upcoming spring session. While many organizations observe a similar timeline, members of the Illinois Fire Service Association attempt to finalize their legislative wish list prior to the annual summit, typically held in October or November.

This year, IAFPD is looking at four pieces of potential legislation. One of those is carried forward from previous sessions; language to provide that fire protection districts have dedicated representation on the Illinois Firefighters' Pension Investment Fund Board. This bill has undergone multiple revisions, and this year's version will focus on providing a representative of a fire protection district rather than language that would allow for at least one of the three employer seats to be held by a representative of a fire district. This change reflects discussions held in the House of Representatives this past spring regarding the current version of the legislation, House Bill 5171. It is not unusual for an issue to take several attempts prior to successful passage, and IAFPD remains committed to getting fire protection districts a seat at the IFPIF table.

Two proposals relate to purchasing for fire protection districts. IAFPD will introduce legislation to raise the bidding threshold in 70 ILCS 705/11k from the current \$20,000 to \$30,000. This will mirror legislation passed during the spring 2022 legislative session raising the bidding threshold for townships from \$20K to \$30K (PA 102-728). Another piece of legislation will amend provisions regarding the sale of property by fire protection districts in 70 ILCS 705/10a to remove the requirement

for a MAI certified appraisal. Fire protection districts have reported it has become difficult to find appraisers who meet the MAI standard, complicating and delaying sale of property. At this writing IAFPD is treating these as two separate bills, but it is possible they may be combined into a single piece of legislation.

IAFPD is also pursuing legislation to ensure that fire protection districts who inadvertently fail to file their tax exemption affidavit do not end up with a large tax bill. We intend to file legislation to amend the Illinois Property Tax Code to provide that in cases where the owner of beneficial interest of any property that is exempt fails to file an affidavit confirming their exempt status with the chief county assessment officer by January 31, the assessor will send the owner notice that they have not filed the required affidavit before sending a tax bill for the property. Notice will be sent by certified mail and provide districts with a certain number of days to respond to the notice and file the required affidavit. Since the properties owned by districts are typically large structures such as fire stations, paying the associated property taxes could have a negative financial impact on districts.

In preparing for the upcoming 103<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, we would welcome any feedback from members about these bills, particularly information that demonstrates how these bills could assist fire protection districts. Having the ability to cite actual instances where a fire protection district would be affected are important in demonstrating need to the members of the General Assembly. If these initiatives will help your district, please take a moment to contact me or

any member of the Legislative Committee. As always, we ask that you check your email for any action alerts or requests for feedback from the Association regarding legislative issues.

2023 will hopefully see a return of face-to-face advocacy at the Capitol. Working as a team, IAFPD can continue to make positive changes for fire protection districts within the Illinois General Assembly. Please be mindful of your role on the team, and how important you are to our success. ■

### NEW EDITION AVAILABLE!

The 2022 Edition of the **Text of Laws Relating to Illinois Fire Protection Districts and State Fire Marshal** is available.

An IAFPD exclusive resource, this book is a compilation of state laws which most directly apply to fire protection districts and the Illinois fire service in general. It contains the Fire Protection District Act, Open Meetings, Freedom of Information Act, Municipal code, Vehicle code and numerous other Acts as amended through Public Act 100-576 of the 100th General Assembly.

**Each member receives one FREE copy. Members who were not able to pick up their copy at the IAFPD Conference can have it mailed to the primary address on record.**

