



Prospect Heights Fire District HOSELINE

SPRING 2025

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Prospect Heights Fire Chief Leaves Lasting Legacy

Prospect Heights Deputy Fire Chief Tim Jones candidly says he never expected to carve out a career as a firefighter. Instead, he always figured he would follow his father into the trades as a carpenter or electrician. But fate stepped in the way — and the city of Prospect Heights is better for it. With his retirement on Friday, it prompted a look back at the many ways in which he served the community.



Back in the late-1970s, Jones became interested in first aid through his involvement with Boy Scouts. That's where he became friends with another Scout, Drew Smith, and together they would participate in the Fire Cadet program offered at Prospect High School. During Jones' junior and senior years he would spend half days at the Mount Prospect fire station, learning from on-duty firefighters, and return to school for the rest of the day.

He — and Smith — were hooked. Together they would go on to spend their entire careers with the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District, seeing it grow from an all-volunteer force to a paid on call-department and ultimately to a full-time, staffed fire protection district.



Prospect Heights Dep. Fire Chief Tim Jones

Message From the Fire Chief Drew Smith



We've had a lot going on at the fire district over the past six months.

We are three years into the five-year goals of the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2022. We have accomplished much and have dealt with unforeseen delays beyond our control. While aggravating, we are on target. Much of that is the result of the \$10 million dollar bond approved by fire district voters in 2023.

As previously reported, we replaced the aerial ladder truck in 2024 and ordered two new ambulances in the summer of 2023. At that time, we expected delivery in early 2026 but now that expectation has been extended by the manufacturer to late 2026. This is an industry-wide issue affecting most of all ambulance manufacturers and nearly all ambulance service providers. We are in regular contact with the dealer to ensure we take delivery as soon as possible.

The firehouse renovations were stalled by stormwater management issues beyond the control of the fire district or the city. Requirements of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) required greater coordination between the city and our civil engineering firm and submission of a permit application to the MWRD. We are anxiously awaiting approval so work can begin. That work includes not only the renovation of the firehouse and the addition of space to accommodate a modern, full-time operation (the original firehouse was built when the PHFD was all-volunteer) but additional parking to be shared by the fire district, police department, and visitors to the public safety campus.

To ensure the headquarter renovation proceeds without delay, we will completely move out of the Camp McDonald Road firehouse and move our vehicles and personnel into the east side firehouse. The firefighters and paramedics will operate from there until the work is completed. To accommodate for a possible delay in response to the far west side of the city, we will receive assistance from our neighboring fire departments when the incident's priority level is high. The fire district's administration staff (chief and deputy chiefs) will also move into temporary facilities on the east side of the city. The PHFD is renting office space for 18 months as the east side firehouse is not large enough to accommodate all the firefighters and the administration staff. Once the renovation is complete the staff will move back into the firehouse.

Since Covid, maintaining adequate staffing has been challenging. There are a series of issues that contributed to this problem. One was wages and those were adjusted last year. Since then, we have advertised and interviewed several applicants to fill several vacancies. We also had more than one firefighter who was on extended leave due to injury.

As mentioned on Page One, September saw the retirement of Deputy Chief Tim Jones who had served the PHFD for 43 years. This loss of institutional knowledge and experience was anticipated and so in late 2024 the board of trustees accepted my succession management plan and promoted the next deputy chief nine months early so we could conduct a transition and mentoring program. That has been completed and was successful. With my retirement in the fall of 2026, it is anticipated that a similar plan will be conducted starting in early 2026.

As you can see, many good things have been happening. It's the result of planning and leadership at all levels. I am proud of the work our members do so you can rest assured we will be there and be ready when you need us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Drew Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Drew Smith, Fire Chief

Prospect Height Fire Chief Leaves a Lasting Legacy (continued from page 1)

Along the way, Jones would go from being a member of the all-volunteer department in 1982, to be promoted to lieutenant in 1989, district chief in 1992, before being promoted to deputy chief in 2000. Ultimately, he began his full time service as deputy chief, in 2001.

For more than 40 years, they have worked side by side, with Smith serving as Fire Chief and Jones as Deputy Fire Chief, until Friday, when Jones retires. Smith plans to follow in his footsteps, retiring one year from now.

Smith describes Jones' retirement as bittersweet and a loss to the City of Prospect Heights, yet his impact will continue.

"I have known him since 1979. We have worked together here every weekday since 2001," Smith says. "As a resident of the city spanning four decades, Tim is well-known to many."

He points to his many years of community involvement, outside of the firehouse. He served on the City of Prospect Heights' Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals as well as the Prospect Heights Park District board of commissioners.

For the past 25 years, he has led the annual Secret Santa program for needy families. He also worked with the Police Association to coordinate the annual police and fire golf outing that benefits youth programs in the city.

For his part, Jones takes pride in helping the fire district expand its services, including bringing paramedic service to Prospect Heights, beginning in 1985.

"We knocked on doors to get paramedic services," Jones says. "Prospect Heights was way behind. We couldn't do advance life support until 1985 and would have to call in other departments on a serious call."



At the 1991 groundbreaking for addition to the firehouse, (L-R) Chief Donald Gould, Trustee Robert Bremner, Trustee Thomas O'Donoghue and firefighter Tim Jones.



Jones, second from right, with firefighters in front of a planned burn make way for the current city hall.

In fact, paramedic ambulance service began in Prospect Heights in 1985 — after voters agreed to a tax increase to fund the new paramedic ambulance service — with two volunteer firefighter/paramedics working part-time every day. Jones was one of those first paramedics.

Jones also oversaw the renovation and addition to the firehouse in 1991, after voters approved a \$1 million bond. He also managed the establishment of a temporary firehouse at the city's public works facility after voters approved the consolidation of the fire district to include the city's east and west sides. Jones later managed the construction of the current, permanent firehouse on Wolf Road that was completed in 2023.

One of his biggest strengths, colleagues say, is his financial guidance. Over his four decades of service, Jones worked with four different board presidents and in 1990, he began taking over bookkeeping duties for the board. They relied on Jones, they said, in keeping them mindful of their fiduciary responsibilities to the citizens of Prospect Heights.

"Tim is a problem solver. He can create solutions to problems identified by others," Smith says. "Since 2001, he has served as deputy chief of the district. His contributions will leave a lasting effect."

Firehouse Renovations

Back in April 2023 voters approved a \$10,000,000 bond that included the renovation and expansion of the headquarters firehouse. We promptly got to work selecting an architect and then a construction manager. For most of 2024 and into early 2025 we reviewed concepts, settled on design elements, and finalized the general floor plan and exterior appearance. Then the architects got to work on the details. One point that has resulted in significant delays has been parking and stormwater management requirements.

Through a series of meetings with both city staff, the planning and zoning board of appeals, and the city council, these issues were addressed in a timely manner. Then we needed a design that could be submitted to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) for their approval. While the MWRD doesn't need to approve the parking area plan, they do need to approve the necessary stormwater management plan; if you build a parking lot then you have to manage the stormwater that now will not soak into the ground where the parking lot now sits.

After six months of back-and-forth and the support of the city and its staff, we believe we have a design and are awaiting the essential approval of the MWRD. With that approval our architect will be able to secure our building permits, and our construction manager can guarantee us a price within our budget. Then we will have a timetable and the work may begin.

During construction we will completely move out of the Camp McDonald Road firehouse and have all firefighters and paramedics with their vehicles respond to calls from the Wolf Road firehouse. We anticipate this to last nine to twelve months. Also, during that time, the fire districts administrative staff (fire chief and deputy chief) will conduct business from rented office space. Once we move into that site, we will post the address on our website.

Ambulances

We have had two ambulances on order since the summer of 2023. Delivery was originally scheduled for 2026. We are now told delivery will likely be in the later part of 2026 making our wait more than three years. This type of delay is currently typical of all the major manufacturers. We anxiously await delivery as our three current ambulances were originally purchased in 2006, 2007, and 2009. They have served us well and we have had few mechanical issues, all of which were repaired in a timely manner.



Cardiac Monitor Defibrillators



Each of our three ambulances and three fire trucks carries a Zoll X-Series cardiac monitor defibrillators. These allow us to read electrocardiograms, deliver electrical shock to restart stopped hearts, monitor with precision the level of oxygen in blood and record blood pressure without being invasive (no needles), and monitor carbon dioxide levels in exhaled air (this allows us to know many things about your breathing and metabolism). These devices are now 12 years old and we plan to replace them in the next 12 months. We are waiting on the firehouse project to start and the ambulances to arrive before we commit to this project. Each costs around \$45,000 and so six of them in a significant expense which we are prepared for as part of our budget and the 2023 bond sale.

Community Connect Safety Program

As you may have heard, we have been working with technology partner First Due to release a new public safety program for Prospect Heights. The program is called Community Connect and it allows the residents and businesses in Prospect Heights to share valuable life safety information with our department. Residents/Businesses can provide details about their home, family, children, pets, medical/functional needs and more, so that when First Responders are dispatched to an emergency at that residence, they have the most information possible before arriving on scene.

This is an incredible program for our community and will allow us to keep Prospect Heights much safer, but in order to run a successful program we need the involvement and engagement of all residents, families, businesses and homeowners.

You can find more information about Prospect Heights Community Connect here: www.phfire.com and click on the Community Connect button.

The program is called Community Connect and it allows you to share life safety information about your home, family, pets, and more with Prospect Heights Fire Protection District so that if First Responders are ever dispatched to an emergency at your home or business, they have the most information as possible before arriving on scene. To register your household, go to our website, www.phfire.com and click the button Community Connect.

Sharing information such as the below can be incredibly helpful for First Responders to know if they are dispatched to your home. Having this information inputted beforehand will allow them to customize their approach before they arrive on scene so they can best meet the specific needs of your home, business and family:

- Occupant & Contact Info
- Home Access/Details and Utilities
- Gate Code
- Pool/Basement
- Gas/Water Shut Off
- Medical & Functional Needs
- Where medicine is located
- How a person in the home reacts in a stressful situation
- If someone has mobility needs and will need assistance evacuating
- Pets
- Name of pet

- If the pet(s) have a hiding place
- If the pet(s) are dangerous or will attack strangers

Register for Community Connect Program

Protects Your Home:



Protects Your Business:



Community Connect is a secure platform and the information you provide will only be used by the Prospect Heights Fire Protection District at the time of dispatch for the purpose of better serving you during emergency situations. All logins and passwords are protected with bank-level encryption and security. If you're comfortable logging into your online bank, you'll be comfortable logging into Community Connect.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns or need further information. We are confident we will see a large increase in sign-ups and the word about the program will continue to spread throughout Prospect Heights, which will continue to engage our entire community and help us improve the safety in our community. Thank you for your involvement and engagement in this program.

Prospect Heights Community Connect

- 1 Create an Account**
Sign in for free and get started doing your part. It just takes your email, phone number and address.
- 2 Enter the Info that Matters Most**
Enter valuable information that can help us assist more effectively during an emergency.
- 3 Help your First Responders When Seconds Count**
That's it. Just keep us updated when things change overtime so we can always be prepared.

Go to: WWW.PHFIRE.COM Click on the Community Connect Button



Prospect Heights Fire District

10 East Camp McDonald Road
Prospect Heights, IL 60070

Non-Emergency Phone: 847-253-8060

Fax: 847-253-4759

Email: phfd@phfire.com

Visit Our Website:
WWW.PHFIRE.COM

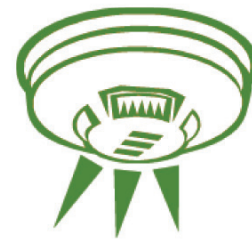
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**KEEP YOUR FRIENDS
SAFE FROM HARM...**

**SEND EACH ONE A
SMOKE ALARM!**



BE SURE YOU

- Natural trees should be cut at a 45° angle at the base and placed in water.
- Place tree away from sources of heat.
- Use only non-flammable decorations.
- Use only lighting evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).
- Inspect lights for frayed wire or other defects before use.
- Do not leave lights on unattended.
- Keep natural tree stands filled with water at All times.
- When tree becomes dry, discard it promptly.

- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home, outside sleeping areas, and inside bedrooms.
- Test all smoke alarms in your homes once a month.
- Replace all smoke alarm batteries at least annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan.



FEMA



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