

Small Group Work Activity

Executive Summary

CEW #1 • February 19, 2026



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On February 19, more than 25 attendees participated in the first BFPD Planning for a Safer Future community engagement workshop held at Reed-Custer Elementary School. The session provided attendees with an overview of the Braidwood Fire Protection District and its current challenges. To view the presentation, visit braidwoodfire.org.

Following the presentation, participants worked together in six groups to complete the following tasks:

Task #1

Based on your knowledge of our fire district and the information you learned tonight, what four words would you use to describe the Braidwood Fire Protection District today? Then, what four words would you like used to describe them in the future?

Task #2

Based on the information you learned tonight, what are your group's biggest surprise and concern about our fire district?

Task #3

Come to consensus on the top three to five questions or topic areas your group needs more information about before fulfilling the charge from the Board.

The following is a summary of the responses from the groups.

Participants in Workshop #2 expressed a strong sense of respect for the people who serve the Braidwood Fire Protection District and a genuine interest in understanding how the district operates today—and how it can continue to serve the community well into the future.

Across all six groups, participants used words that reflected appreciation for the firefighters and paramedics who respond to emergencies every day. Words such as “dedicated,” “committed,” “professional,” and “responsive” appeared frequently when groups described the district today. One group summed it up simply: *“They show up when people need them.”*

Looking ahead, participants said they would like the district to be known for qualities that build on those strengths. Five of the six groups mentioned aspirations such as “well-funded,” “well-equipped,” or “fully staffed.” Others highlighted words like “prepared,” “sustainable,” and

“modern.” The message was clear: residents want to see the department continue to grow and adapt so it can meet the community’s needs for years to come.

As groups reflected on what they learned during the presentation, many said they were especially interested in understanding more about how the district operates and how emergency services are funded. Four groups discussed the structure of fire district funding and how resources are allocated to support firefighters, equipment, and training. One participant noted they were eager to learn more about *“how funding works and what options exist for the future.”*

Another topic that sparked strong interest was the increasing complexity of fire and emergency medical services. Five groups talked about how the role of firefighters today goes far beyond fighting fires, with medical calls making up a significant portion of responses. Participants said they would like more information about how the district prepares for that demand, including training, staffing levels, and equipment.

Staffing and response capacity also came up in multiple conversations. Four groups expressed interest in learning more about how staffing decisions are made and what it takes to ensure crews are ready to respond when calls come in. As one group put it, *“We want to understand what it takes to keep the department strong.”*

Several groups also expressed curiosity about future planning for the district. Three groups said they would like to better understand how the department evaluates long-term needs, including facilities, equipment replacement, and population growth. Participants emphasized that having clear information will help them thoughtfully consider the choices ahead.

Taken together, the responses from the workshop reflect a community that values its fire district and wants to stay engaged in shaping its future. Residents came to the conversation ready to listen, ask thoughtful questions, and learn more about the factors that influence emergency services in their community.

Summary Points of Consensus

- Participants consistently described the Braidwood Fire Protection District as dedicated, professional, and committed to serving the community.
- Residents are eager to learn more about how fire district funding works and how resources support emergency services.
- Many groups want a clearer understanding of staffing, training, and the growing role of emergency medical response.
- Participants expressed strong interest in how the district plans for long-term sustainability and future service needs.
- Overall, attendees showed a shared desire for clear information that will help them thoughtfully consider the district’s future.