

In 2013, following a non-binding referendum (Nov 2012: approved 4,417 to 2,236) in which approximately two-thirds of voters supported consolidation, the Town of East Greenwich began the process of merging with the East Greenwich Fire District. This move required legislative approval and was authorized under Chapter 13-056 of the Rhode Island General Assembly laws, permitting the Town to acquire the District's property, assets, and personnel.

The East Greenwich Fire District officially merged with the Town of East Greenwich in June 2013, transitioning from an independent entity into a municipal department. This move was intended to streamline operations and improve efficiency.

#### **Key Details About the Merger: June 2013**

- The Fire District became a department within the town government. The East Greenwich Fire Department now operates as a town department, with administrative offices and two stations serving the community. The department continues to work on the goal of improving Fire/EMS service delivery.

#### **Benefits of Fire District Merger**

- Streamlined the decision-making process and created a clearer chain of accountability for residents.
- Reduced administrative costs and eliminated duplication in administrative structures — no separate board elections, separate meetings, or district management.
- The Town budget process is more centralized and public, meaning fire service funding is reviewed alongside all other municipal priorities.
- Town-level auditing and reporting standards were applied to fire service finances, improving fiscal transparency.
- Shared purchasing of equipment, fuel, insurance, and supplies.
- Integration with town payroll, HR, IT, and legal services cut administrative overhead.
- Negotiated better rates on contracts and insurance by being part of a larger municipal entity.
- One elected body (Town Council) overseeing both municipal and fire services, rather than having a separate Fire District Board.
  - Before the merger, the Fire District levied its own tax rate, separate from the Town's.
  - Consolidated the dual-tax structure, giving residents a single property tax bill.