

FIRE SERVICE MANAGEMENT LETTER

CARLISLE, MA

FEBRUARY 2016

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MANAGEMENT LETTER



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February 18, 2016

Timothy Goddard
Town Administrator
Town of Carlisle
66 Westford Street,
Carlisle, MA 01741

RE: Fire Service Management Letter

Dear Mr. Goddard:

The Town of Carlisle has contracted Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) to develop and present a management letter that provides the community with an overview and perspective on current issues that are emerging within the Fire Department. The goal of our review was to take the pulse of the Department and to identify potential threats that could frustrate the Department's success in the years to come. To accomplish that goal, this management letter is divided into six sections as detailed below:

I. Overview

Based upon national averages, Carlisle should have the following resources to conduct effective fire service operations:

- 2 pumpers
- 1 tender/tanker
- 1 wildland suppression vehicle
- 1 ambulance
- 1 fire station

Considering the service expectation present in the community and the response time of mutual aid units, the study team believes that Carlisle should continue to operate an aerial ladder. Therefore, the Town has provided an appropriate operational fleet that is in excellent condition, and further redundancy of major apparatus should be avoided.

However, the condition of administrative vehicles was below average and the replacement of these vehicles should be considered.

Carlisle's Insurance Service Office Rating is a Class 9. The Insurance Service Office provides each community with a public protection classification rating, ranging from 1 being the best, to 10 which means there is no substantive protection in the community. This rating considers dispatch, fire department capability, and water supply. In Carlisle, there is no public water supply and water is drawn from either static sources, such as ponds or delivered via tanker shuttle. Therefore, a rating classification of 9 is not uncommon.

Although there was some interest in retaining the current tanker when the new unit arrives, the study team does not believe that this is a viable way to enhance the ISO rating as there is no space to store the vehicle inside the station and there are not sufficient personnel to operate an additional unit. If stored outside, the unit would become unreliable and need to be filled when an emergency requires its use, thus negating its benefit over requesting a mutual aid tanker.

Upgrading the ISO rating is in itself a separate study; however, the first step toward that goal is the immediate and automatic activation of mutual aid tankers upon the report of a structure fire. Carlisle does not currently leverage automatic aid to ensure a more rapid water supply. Many communities activate up to five tankers to fill out a first alarm response. The study team believes Carlisle should immediately change its run card to include the activation of mutual aid tankers upon the report of a structure fire, this should be further augmented upon the confirmation of a structure fire. Several communities have requested a new ISO rating once they have automatic aid in place and have the ability to demonstrate a rapid and continuous water supply.

As we reviewed facilities, the team found that the current fire station provides a marginal operational platform that does not meet the needs of the Department. We found that the station lacked sufficient administrative and training space and has become cluttered. Significant effort should be placed on organizing and eliminating unnecessary storage within the station. Over the next few years, the Town should also consider renovating and expanding the station to meet the needs of a modern fire service organization.

We believe that a more functional facility would in and of itself serve as a means to attract and retain members. Many fire departments provide facilities that encourage members to spend some leisure time at the station watching television or cleaning their personal vehicles. This expanded presence is viewed as a tangible benefit by many members and results in a higher level of coverage for the Town.



Carlisle has approximately 10 fully qualified, active, on-call firefighters. This force is complemented by approximately 14 auxiliary firefighters. This is significantly less than other communities of Carlisle's size, who average 26 fully qualified, on-call firefighters. The lack of on-call and volunteer personnel is an issue faced by communities across the country. This scarcity of human resources is driven by the following factors:

- An overall reduction in leisure time;
- Employment obligations and the common need to maintain more than one job;
- The virtual elimination of an employer's understanding and flexibility relating to this form of community service;
- Generational differences and increased family demands;
- Increasing training requirements; and
- The cost of housing in many affluent communities.

Specifically, a brief overview of our analysis would support the following:

- The need to develop an enhanced and continuous effort to recruit and retain on-call firefighters.
- The organization should focus on creating a more positive organizational culture.
- The training program should be enhanced.
- The Carlisle Fire Department should immediately implement a formalized program of automatic aid when a structure fire or significant incident is reported.
- Consolidate the current per diem status of the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief into a single full-time position to support the administrative and operational needs of the organization. The Deputy Chief's position should not be abolished, but instead be restructured as an on-call position with no regular per diem hours.

- The “light on” availability system was an exceptional innovation when it was developed. However, this system should be revisited to determine if it still meets the needs of the organization.
- The whistle should be shut down and all paging transferred to radio pagers, e-dispatches cell phone alerting, and the integration of an *lamResponding* system which is an electronic response tracking system.
- The current tanker should be surplus when the new tanker arrives.
- The allegations of intimidation, bullying, and favoritism that were revealed during the course of this engagement should be investigated further by an investigator independent of the Department. A report of this investigation should be delivered to the Town so that appropriate action can be initiated.
- Office space should be established for all officers.
- The fire alarm system should be upgraded to have smoke detection provided with a system that transmits an alarm to a private monitoring service as a method to protect the community’s facility and equipment.
- Portable radios should be provided to all personnel.
- A grant should be pursued to provide an automatic fire sprinkler system for the station to protect personnel and the Town’s investment in an unstaffed facility.
- A camera based security system that covers the exterior of the station and electronic access control should be added to the station.

II. Scope & Methodology

The scope of this project is listed below:

A. Recruitment/retention

1. Review current recruitment/retention efforts for effectiveness



2. Evaluate effectiveness of current incentives/motivations for joining the Carlisle Fire Department
3. Recommend new strategies if indicated

B. Leadership/Succession planning

1. Review current leadership organizational structure
2. Evaluate effectiveness of structure based upon future Departmental needs
3. Recommend succession planning structure for the Carlisle Fire Department

C. Training/Professional development

1. Review current Fire Department training/professional development efforts
2. Evaluate effectiveness of training based upon Departmental needs
3. Recommend training protocols/programs/materials, if indicated

To accomplish this task our team employed the following methodologies:

- Reviewed pertinent data
- Toured the community
- Review fire service facilities and equipment
- Met with the study committee on three occasions
- Interviewed the command staff
- Interviewed any members that wished to participate
- Developed, delivered, and analyzed a survey that was distributed to Fire Department staff

III. Recruitment and Retention of On-call Staff

The Carlisle Fire Department is an all on-call fire service organization. The Department is well respected in the community and has done an exceptional job providing a wide range of services to the community. Currently, the Department is at a crossroads based on a diminishing level of membership and response. It is clear that if unchecked, the Department will not be able to meet the future demands of the Town. Recently Chief Flannery has requested funding to hire per-diem personnel from other communities to provide paid coverage when personnel are not available. We believe there are other solutions; many of these concepts are discussed within this section.

If personnel are needed, any effort to provide paid coverage should be offered to Carlisle Fire Department personnel before being offered to firefighters from other communities. During the course of the study it was made clear through the survey and during several interviews that the membership perceives the personnel practices and aggressive attitude of the Deputy Chief to be a large portion of the issues facing the Department. The study team witnessed this aggression during our interview with the Deputy, during an outburst at a training meeting, and during an unprofessional confrontation with the Deputy Chief in the hallway outside of the training room.

Presently, the Carlisle Fire Department has approximately 10 active, on-call members. This number is insufficient to provide a sufficient service level to the Town. When we spoke to Chief Flannery and asked him how he recruits, he said that he has tried multiple recruitment strategies and indicated that he has recently added several new members. In fact, evidence of the Chief's effort was supported by the addition of three new members at a training meeting we observed.

Over the next five years a significant effort will need to be put forth to recruit and retain on-call personnel. In addition, a clear path to advance from Auxiliary to Firefighter status should be defined in writing. Once qualified, personnel should be promoted to regular firefighter status after receiving adequate training. This should be accomplished in a timely fashion. Although Carlisle is not alone in dealing with a reduction in on-call staff, it is essential that addressing this situation becomes a primary focus of the Chief and a shared mission with the entire Department.

Recommendation:

Recruitment and Retention of on-call personnel needs to become a primary focus of the Carlisle Fire Department, this program should be an ongoing effort.



Recommendation:

As a foundation to enhanced recruitment and retention efforts, the allegations of intimidation, bullying, and favoritism that were revealed during the course of this engagement should be investigated further by an investigator independent of the Department. A report of this investigation should be delivered to the Town so that appropriate action can be initiated

Recommendation:

Increase the number of on-call firefighters to 18-20 and require that these personnel are properly trained and certified.

Recommendation:

Set the goal of developing 14 active Auxiliary firefighters by January 2017.

Recommendation:

The Fire Chief should be the person responsible for all recruitment and retention activities within the Department. He should be held accountable for results provided that the Town invests and provides the Chief with the tools as detailed in the remainder of this letter.

There are various factors that are prevalent to the reduction in the number of volunteer and on-call firefighters in communities such as Carlisle. Chief among them is that the current demographics do not support the type of person who is attracted to the fire service in the 21st Century – someone with time to dedicate to public service or a young person who wants to make a career of it. We have found that on average for every five on-call firefighters recruited, two will remain active after a period of 48 months has elapsed. The task of recruitment and retention is further complicated by some of the personnel practices unique to Carlisle that are outlined within this document.

Once an individual becomes interested in becoming an on-call firefighter, they must achieve a level of ever increasing specialized skill that is time consuming. Often exit interviews reveal that the training commitment alone is daunting and one of the primary reasons that on-call personnel resign. To become a certified firefighter takes several hundred hours. In addition, add to that over 160 hours to become a state-certified emergency medical technician. Then there are the dozens of hours training annually spent maintaining firefighter and EMT skills and certifications. The average citizen does not want to spend a great deal of personal time dedicated to the fire service, especially when family commitments take priority. In fact, many on-call firefighters in departments that have a career force handling the day-to-day emergencies find it hard to stay motivated if they are not being utilized frequently.

Other reasons are:

- An overall reduction in leisure time;
- Employment obligations and the common need to maintain more than one job;
- The virtual elimination of an employer's understanding and flexibility relating to this form of community service;
- Generational differences and increased family demands;
- Increasing training requirements; and
- The cost of housing in many affluent communities.

It is easy to believe that increasing the number of on-call firefighters can cure staffing problems. Unfortunately in 2016, this is a difficult solution to achieve.

The federal government has a version of the SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Act that pertains strictly to volunteer and on-call firefighters. It provides competitively awarded funds to municipalities to retain and recruit on-call and volunteer firefighters. The grants provide funds for college courses in fire science, for EMT and paramedic training, health insurance, physical fitness, uniforms, and other tax incentives to offer in order to attract candidates to join fire departments.

We believe that the Department should attempt to secure a SAFER grant to recruit and retain on-call members; however, this grant should note the staffing issue that currently exists and indicate that the grant would be an attempt to meet the NFPA 1720 fire response standard for the first time. Development of a force of 20 total on-call firefighters would be advantageous.

Recommendation:

The Town should pursue a SAFER Grant for the recruitment and retention of on-call personnel during 2017.

As most rural and suburban communities across the United States are dealing with the reduction in volunteer and on-call staff, this has become a common issue. Many communities have come to the conclusion that investing in on-call personnel is the best practice and to that end they have pursued some of the following strategies:



- Increasing compensation rates or the minimum hours paid for a response
- Provide a reduction in property tax for on-call service
- Provide on-call firefighters with community-based benefits such as free dump stickers, beach stickers, etc.
- Provide community based awards and recognition
- Provide gift certificates for local restaurants, concerts, or other entertainment

In the public sector, many of these benefits can be controversial. After considering these strategies we have focused on developing innovative strategies for the Town of Carlisle. One example of a unconventional and innovative best practice that we feel would work in Carlisle is to provide a health insurance package for self-employed, year round residents provided they complete training, certification, and provide the Town with a high level of immediate response. As mentioned above, a portion of this cost may be eligible to be incorporated in to a SAFER Grant. Typically this type of program attracts electricians, plumbers, painters, and other trades, as well as self-employed professionals that would be beneficial to the organizations.

An example of this best practice has worked successfully in the Town of Holliston, Massachusetts, for several years. Viewed as costly and unconventional, this program has retained a high level of active personnel that provide an immediate response on a 24/7 basis. This strategy to invest in the on-call force avoided the need for career personnel and compared to a smaller neighboring community, produced an overall cost (including health insurance) of 50% of what the neighboring community pays for fire protection. We believe a program of this nature is a good fit for Carlisle and should be considered. During our research a member of the study team visited Chief Michael Cassidy in Holliston and conducted an interview pertaining to this concept. An overview of that interview has been inserted below:

Holliston is a community of approximately 14,500 residents. It has a call firefighting force of 50, with an additional call EMS force of approximately 28 persons. Chief Cassidy is the only full-time employee, other than a few hourly workers who provide dispatch services. All of these folks are eligible to participate in a town's health insurance program. Chief Cassidy reports that turnout at all incidents regularly exceeds NFPA 1720 standards. A recent structure fire that occurred midweek, midday drew a response of 32 call

firefighting personnel to the incident.

All call firefighters are required to become certified as least to the level of firefighter I/II, the roster is currently full to authorized strength and Chief Cassidy reports a waiting list of approximately 15 to 20 persons. He stated that the health insurance benefit, offered to his call firefighters is most definitely the driving factor in his ability to maintain such a robust and adequately trained call firefighting force. Below is a breakdown of some of the numbers:

- *Chief Cassidy stated that approximately 55% of the current membership elects to take the health insurance benefit. Additional compensation is provided to the call firefighter should he or she elect not to participate in the benefit group.*
- *Chief Cassidy stated that most all of the members that participated were self-employed tradesmen. Many of those who elect not to participate are young adults who might still be on a parent's health insurance. Since members can become call firefighters at age 18, and the Department also has a very active Explorer post, which acts as a feeder pool for the Department, a sizable number of the current call force within the 18 to 26-year-old category, and may still participate in their a parent's health insurance program.*
- *All call firefighting personnel must first successfully complete firefighter I/II training, no compensation is provided until after successful completion. If selected for employment, the call firefighter has the option of participating within the Town's health insurance program.*
- *Those that elect to enroll in an HMO program have 60% of their expenses covered by the employer (family or individual plan). Members that prefer a P.P.O. style plan have 50% of that cost paid by the employer.*
- *Holliston call firefighters also enjoy a very generous compensation*

program. Active members receive a base retainer, as well as hourly compensation for time actually spent working at incidents. Recently, the compensation package was expanded to provide a flat fee of \$75 per month for those who regularly attend the bimonthly training sessions.

We Asked Chief Cassidy if the rising cost of healthcare had caused local government officials any concern in providing these benefits to such a sizable number of part-time employees. Chief Cassidy responded in saying that the trade-off was considered minimal in that the community enjoyed a consistent professional response by its call firefighters and EMTs without the cost of a full-time, unionized workgroup.

Obviously, health insurance is expensive and costs seem to escalate on an annual basis. However, landscapers, trades people, stay at home parents, and self-employed professionals that work from home are also confronted with this cost. The ability to join the Town’s insurance in and of itself may reduce their cost. Furthermore, the Town could develop a sliding scale that would pay a percentage of the health insurance cost equal to the level of response provided by the responding firefighter. We have suggested rate cost sharing in the table below:

Table 1- Proposed Health Insurance percentages

Percentage of Training and incident Response	Proposed of Health Care expense paid by the Town
90% or greater participation	60%
70% - 89% participation	50%
50 – 69% participation	40%
33 – 49% participation	20%
Under 33% participation	Eligible to enroll at employees cost

Recommendation:

The Town of Carlisle should consider the development of a program that would provide active responders with the opportunity to obtain health insurance. The Town of Carlisle should pay a graduated percentage of this program based upon the percentage table above.

Recommendation:

The Town of Carlisle should recognize that the only way to develop a more active and properly staffed Fire Department in the absence of hiring a force of career firefighters



is to determine what would motivate potential responders, and craft a program of investment that meets these extrinsic and intrinsic needs.

Recommendation:

The Town of Carlisle should convene a focus group to determine what concepts and recruitment and retention strategies are feasible and most attractive to potential candidates.

Recommendation:

Enhance communication with Department personnel by providing e-mail addresses and a newsletter that should be distributed every other month. This project should be delegated to a firefighter who is compensated for his/her time.

Recommendation:

Develop a series of team-based activities that build involvement in the organization.

Recommendation:

Increase the level of communication with the community relative to the need for on-call firefighters. Examples of this strategy should include periodic open houses, placement of a temporary sign board at various locations in the community, community mailings, newspaper coverage, development of a social media presence, radio, and media advertisement. The proposed SAFER Grant could be utilized to cover many of these expenses.

Recommendation:

Seek assistance from the Massachusetts Call and Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFA) relative to enhancing recruitment efforts in Carlisle.

Recommendation:

Create a social media presence by assigning this opportunity to a member of the Department.

IV. Leadership and Succession Planning

Presently, the command staff consists of the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, who both work a limited per diem schedule. The Chief presented as a passionate advocate who truly cared for the Town, Department, and the membership. On the other hand, the Deputy Chief demonstrated an aggressive and confrontational attitude that the study team believes is inconsistent with the goal of enhanced recruitment and retention. In fact, based on several comments made during the interviews that we conducted with all

members that wished to participate, it was apparent that the majority of members are fearful of the Deputy, as they believe his confrontational and vindictive style is a form of bullying.

Currently, the Chief feels that his authority has been undermined, as he does not have a seat with the current Fire/Rescue Committee that has been established to facilitate this study. The Chief states that in fact, no one has come to him and made it a point to tell the study team that he wants to work with his people.

Looking forward, the administrative and operational needs of the Department indicate that the current per diem schedule of the Chief and Deputy Chief should be consolidated into a single fulltime position. Qualifications of the next Chief should be as follows:

- At least ten years of experience as a firefighter in a combination fire department.
- At least 5 years of experience as a fire officer in a combination fire service organization.
- Extensive on-call and or volunteer experience.
- Certification as a Massachusetts certified EMT – Basic.
- Credentialed as a Massachusetts Chief Fire Officer.
- Completion of Chief Fire Officer Training through either the Massachusetts Fire Academy or the National Fire Academy (Executive Fire Officer Program).
- Certified as Firefighter I/II, Fire Officer I and II, Fire Instructor I.
- Completion of NIMS Training to the level of ICS 400.
- Completion of an Associate's degree in fire science or a related field, Bachelor's preferred.

Currently, the Town has adopted Massachusetts's General Law, Chapter 48, Section 42. This is commonly called the strong chief law, as the chief is appointed for an indefinite period and is the hiring authority. The Town could adopt Massachusetts General Law Chapter 48, Section 42A, which places the hiring authority with the Board of Selectmen.



Although this may sound appealing as a means to control some of the issues plaguing the Department, our team believes this would lead to additional problems in the long term.

We believe that MGL Chapter 48, Section 42, is appropriate as it limits political influence that would encourage a path around the chain of command. That being said, it is critical that the next Chief have the confidence of the Board of Selectmen, and we would recommend that the Chief work under a time limited contract. The contract should be extended based on positive evaluations by the Board, and failure to extend should be specified to result in a dramatic compensation decrease.

In an effort to assist Chief Flannery, a member of the Board of Selectmen should be identified to serve as a liaison to the Department and work with the Chief. This should include meeting with the Chief on a weekly basis, which would also frustrate the creation of an alternate path around the chain of command.

The Chief should form a Membership/Management committee. This committee is designed to enhance communication, construct more positive relationships, and provide a mechanism for members to have an active voice within the organization. This committee should meet monthly and consist of members from each rank. A professional mentor should facilitate the first six meetings of this committee.

V. Training and Professional Development

Training is currently conducted in-house and the Department has limited external involvement. Lesson driven training sessions should be conducted twice per month. All training should be recorded in a database. Participation in external training programs through the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy, as well as other recognized programs, should be encouraged, supported, and compensated.

One critical component noted was the fact that the Incident Command System is not utilized. For a number of reasons, paramount of which would be firefighter safety, this system should be used at all incidents. In order to accomplish this extensive training on the principles of incident command, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) should be delivered.

The entire training program should be organized and directed by a designated Training Officer, certified to the level of Fire Instructor II. However, all officers should be involved with training within the Department and as such, should be certified to the level of Fire Instructor I.



The Carlisle Fire Department has a competent cadre of dedicated and enthusiastic officers that could be better utilized to assist the leadership of the Department. As such, opportunities should be provided for adequate professional development for these officers. This would include obtaining certification to various levels of professional competency and the ability to attend and participate in numerous courses, seminars, and programs specifically designed to provide and encourage professional development.

One aspect that has been noted is the lack of a documented and standardized program to move an individual from the Basic or Probationary level (Auxiliary) to a regular firefighter status. A way to accomplish this would be to require that an Auxiliary member enroll and satisfactorily complete and obtain certification from the Massachusetts Call/Volunteer training program, which leads to certification at the level of Firefighter I/II. This training and certification should be completed within one year of hiring. This would not only accomplish a standardized and recognized level of training, but would also serve to demonstrate a member's commitment to the Department. In addition, as training as a Motor Pump Operator is a critical component as well, completion of the Emergency Vehicle Operator program, such as that available through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), would also be advantageous. In addition, other driver training programs may be beneficial.

Recommendation:

Conduct two lesson driven training sessions per month. All of the training lessons should be derived using formal, standardized lesson plans. To adequately accomplish this, an annual training schedule should be developed on a collaborative basis with the personnel of the Department and especially relative to the officers of the Department. Records of this training should be retained in a database.

Recommendation:

The Carlisle Fire Department should continually assess the training programs provided to insure that these programs adequately address and meet the needs of the Department.

Recommendation:

All personnel should be evaluated on an annual basis relative to their basic skills proficiency.

Recommendation:

Participation in training programs offered regionally, through the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and the National Fire Academy, should also be encouraged and supported.



Recommendation:

The Chief should join the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts, and should consider joining the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the New England Association of Fire Chiefs as well. The Chief should attend local, regional, and state meetings

Recommendation:

The training officer should join and participate with a statewide group of training officers in a professional organization known as MIFDI (Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Drill Instructors). This group would not only provide insight and guidance as to various training programs and concepts, but would also provide an opportunity for professional networking.

Recommendation:

The Carlisle Fire Department should consider sending some of the officers to National Fire Academy programs. A beneficial program to consider would be the Volunteer Incentive Program. Also specifically recommended for the Training Officer would be completion of the Management of Training Programs course at the National Fire Academy.

Recommendation:

NIMS training should be delivered to all members of the Department. Firefighters should be trained to the basic level of ICS 100-700, Officers to the ICS 300 level, and the Chief should be trained to the ICS 400 level.

Recommendation:

All officers in the Department should achieve professional certification to the appropriate level for their rank. That would be Lieutenant - Fire Officer I; Captain - Fire Officer II; Deputy Fire Chief - Fire Officer III; and Fire Chief - Fire Officer IV.

VI. Employee Survey

A survey which was open to the members of the Department was conducted in November and December of 2015. This survey was designed to illicit honest input from as many personnel as possible. There were 18 responses to the survey, with 14 of them being complete, while 4 responses did not answer all questions. Twelve of the respondents indicated they were firefighters and 4 were Auxiliary Members. A copy of the survey that includes a listing of comments has been included with this letter as Appendix A.



When we conduct a survey of this nature, we expect to hear that morale is not optimal, communication could improve, and that at least some faction does not like the Chief. The response to this survey was troubling in that it indicated a high degree of concern with the leadership style and practices of the Deputy Chief.

Overall, a perception exists within the Department that the Deputy Chief is inconsistent and favors certain individuals. We have never seen a survey of this type be as focused on an individual. Specific cause for concern can be found in many of the responses that indicate the Department membership as a whole is concerned with favoritism, bullying, and that almost half have felt threatened or intimidated by supervisors.

Recommendation:

The Town should further investigate the concerns brought forward through this survey.

A summary of pertinent survey results are detailed below:

- 72% of respondents believe that the fire facility is adequate, although there were several comments relative to excessive storage and sanitary conditions.
- The vast majority of respondents do not believe that the Department is well managed. There were comments relative to the aggression and vindictiveness of the Deputy Chief.
- 65% of the respondents do not believe that there is a common understanding of goals and/or vision within the organization.
- A majority of respondents believe that expectations are made clear.
- 64% of respondents believe that they are adequately trained.
- 95% of respondents believe that the fleet of apparatus is adequate and well maintained.
- More than 85% of respondents derive personal and professional satisfaction from being a member of the Department, and virtually all are proud to be a member of the Department.
- 47% of respondents indicated that they occasionally felt threatened or intimidated by a superior officer. Many of the comments associated with

this question were directly attributed to the Deputy Chief. 75% of these threats were not reported as members felt that no action would be taken.

- Most respondents do not believe that input is either welcomed or utilized.
- 88% of respondents believe that residents value the services offered by the Department.
- 88% of respondents believe that safety procedures are adequate.
- A majority of respondents do not believe that Department Administration works well with the Town.
- Over 70% of respondents believe that officers work well together on the incident scene, while there was unanimous agreement that firefighters work well together.
- 65% of respondents believe that the level of fire protection provided is adequate, while 88% believe the level of Emergency Medical Services is adequate.
- When asked about changing something to improve the Department, of the 15 comments written, 7 directly or indirectly mentioned the Deputy Chief, while 5 referred to the Chief. It should be noted that this is not a normal response.
- The majority of respondents believe that morale is low. It should be noted that this is a typical response. 87% do not believe that the Department Administration helps with the spirit in the organization.
- 30% of respondents would not recommend the Department to a friend or neighbor.
- 60% of respondents believe that the level of compensation is important, while 20% do not. 36% believe that an increase in compensation would improve availability, while 43% do not believe that would have an impact.
- 87% of respondents believe that the Department is well regarded, while 67% believe the Department should be more visible.

- 40% of respondents do not feel they could not increase their availability.
- The majority of respondents do not believe that administration will support them.
- 58% do not believe that the Department Administration supports individual initiative. The majority of respondents do not believe that administration is receptive to their concerns.
- 47% of respondents do not believe that feedback from management is constructive.
- 62% of respondents do not believe that current recruitment efforts are adequate.
- 50% do not believe that the incident command system is utilized at all incidents.

Based on this feedback we offer the following recommendations:

Recommendation:

The Chief and members of the Department should jointly develop a mission and vision statement.

Recommendation:

A committee should be established to review and update a useable set of Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).

Recommendation:

Two SOGs should be reviewed at each training meeting.

Recommendation:

The Chief should engage and aggressively address the reported issues relative to the actions and behavior of the Deputy Chief. A policy of zero tolerance should be established and enforced for threats, bullying, favoritism, and intimidation.

Recommendation:

The entire Department should be engaged and involved in an enhanced and ongoing recruitment effort.

Recommendation:

The current light on availability system should be revisited and evaluated to determine if it meets the needs of the organization.

Recommendation:

Every effort should be made to develop a consistent procedure for advancement from Auxiliary to Firefighter. Promotion should not be subject to favoritism.

Recommendation:

Formal incident command should be utilized at all incidents.

Respectfully submitted,

MUNICIPAL RESOURCES, INC.

By: Brian P. Duggan
Brian P. Duggan
Senior Public Safety Advisor (gho)

