

December 21, 2009

Dear Friends, Fellow Community Members, Firefighters and Board Members:

I am not happy to be writing this, especially at this time of year. The spirit of our community and department can be as enlivening as anywhere I have ever lived. However, we also seem to be prone to anonymous rumor and innuendo like nowhere else I have ever been.

Recently, an interview committee of five persons went through a detailed review of 21 applicants for the position of our first paid chief. The final applications came from all over the United States. The committee members, were two selected from the Department (Patrick Ahern, selected by the acting chief, Brad Danek, and Dave Stajcar selected by me), and Ed Daniels and Tom Hobson, two members selected by me from the community. Finally, I served as Chair of the committee. After a process that included reposting the position to get wider response, review of each of the applications by all 5 of us, selection of and interview of 6 semi-finalists by phone, and in-person interviews of 4 individuals, the committee recommended 2 candidates to the Board, John Kilpatrick and Patrick Reitz.

We have not disclosed the identities of the other applicants, but they certainly have the right to do so if they desire. We recommended two finalists, and that is what we disclosed, and we believed that there would be final interviews with the Board.

In our Board meeting on last Tuesday, after a report by two of the committee members, the board voted to offer John Kilpatrick the position. The vote was not unanimous.

Now, I'd like to refute the untrue rumor. Someone is apparently not happy with either our process or our selection or both, and has decided to spread the untrue that we had predetermined who would get the position. Curious, since John was in the initial group of applicants, and there was no dissent on the committee in the decision to repost the position looking for a wider and more varied response. Curious, also, since the initial idea of the committee was to have three semi-finalists, and the committee made a determination that we had 4 strong candidates we wanted to talk to, rather than three, in order to provide the best options to the Board.

Can whoever is promoting this rumor explain why would we take that time and disruption of our schedules at this time of year to spend the effort reviewing these people, if as rumored, our pre-selected candidate was in the mix from the earliest applications received? Likewise, can someone explain why we had so much trouble coming to a decision if we had decided in advance to offer John the job?

So, now someone, or some group of people has decided that they want to start a whispering campaign. My evidence for that assertion is that no one has asked me about this alleged pre-determination or raised the topic with me since I announced the results publicly last Wednesday. But now that I am aware of it, I am writing this communication to address it.

All this whispering campaign does is to insult 4 people who volunteered their time and effort to undertake an important task for this community. Whoever is behind this campaign owes a sincere

apology, and a debt of gratitude to the 4 other members of the community and department that put in this time and argued and analyzed for hours to come to this recommendation.

As for me, while I am disappointed, I can advise that each of the candidates we talked to by phone and in person was warned about the Type A community we are, and that whatever choice we made would likely raise some hackles. I expected, however, that whatever disagreement occurred would be voiced openly, and not whispered in anonymity. Apparently, I was wrong about that, and thus my disappointment. I realize that by making that statement in this communication, I am tarring all who read this with the brush that should be reserved for those toiling in anonymity to disparage the Interview Committee. I am sorry, but it cannot be helped. I don't think such statements should be allowed to fester unchallenged, and since I don't know who you are, I cannot address my comments to you directly, as I would prefer.

John Kilpatrick is the person the board voted to select as the Chief of our Department effective January 1. I hope that the community and the department get behind him and support him, so that our department and our district can continue to serve this community.

If anyone wants to discuss this with me, you know how to reach me. My list is not exhaustive, so please pass this on to those you know who are interested in our department and community. I am also asking that it be made available to all the firefighters in our department, and placed on the web site as an open letter from the President. Open communication is something we have been striving to achieve, and this is one way I am trying to reach it.

Finally, if someone broaches this topic to you, now you have the information to correct any misstatement made about what we did and how we did it.

Yours truly, Merry Christmas, Happy Channukah, Happy New Year,

T.J Carney
President, Foothills Fire Protection District
Golden, Colorado