

From: Jen and Jacob SLIEMERS
Subject: Fire Chief Feedback
Date: Friday, August 28, 2009, 8:03 PM

Dear FFPD Board & Structure Committee,

I would like to share part one of a proposal that I'm working on for our 2010 Fire Chief situation. In this email I will address "the process" part. I'm still sorting through ideas for part two which is "the details".

Let me first say that just because none of the eligible volunteers accepted nominations for fire chief doesn't mean that they aren't concerned and interested in participating in the fate of the department. The position of fire chief is an immense undertaking filled with major responsibility, liability and time commitment. Volunteers ARE absolutely concerned and expect to be included in the process of choosing the next leader. The eligible volunteers didn't accept nominations for a variety of reasons which I won't get into in this email. This being said, it seems prudent to look to an outside source for leadership.

Key points for "The Process"

1- In order to have buy-in/support from the volunteers (the meat of the department/ the ones who are on the front line) you MUST include them in the entire process. (a) **hiring committee** which should be comprised of volunteers from throughout the District in addition to Board members. I highly recommend that you include volunteers from Idledale, Rainbow Hills, Riva Chase and out-of-district, for example. Out-of-district members are a major part of our workforce due to lack of interest/lack of availability from in-district residents. (b) **surveys** to volunteers and residents (Survey Monkey, Zoomerang, etc.). Number one customer- residents we serve and number two customer- firefighters that commit hundreds of hours of their personal time to care for residents. (c) **evaluation** of the fire chief should occur 6 months from start date and again one year from start date. This evaluation should be done by the volunteers, Board and the residents.

2- There is no reason to spend time reinventing the wheel. There are numerous examples of similar fire departments that we can look to as models. In doing this, it's critical to pay attention to lessons learned by these departments. It's troubling to read the notes from the Inter Canyon summary that state, "Elk Creek disaster when went to Paid Chief. Evergreen didn't work well with Paid Chief either. Platte Canyon's Paid Chief didn't work well." Those of us on the front line know that these departments were in turmoil for years. I absolutely support Acting Chief Danek's request to the structure committee (which so far has been ignored) to interview Ed Daniels (former FFR chief) and Don Angell (current Fairmount chief). These two men have had extremely positive and significant impacts on improving local fire departments.

The process of transitioning to a paid chief (part or full) will be a MAJOR culture change and paradigm shift. This step should not be rushed into and the FFPD Board and Structure Committee need to open their minds and truly listen to feedback from volunteers and the community.

Lastly, for the record, the officers expected to see Director Smith at a recent officer meeting has he indicated but he was a no-show. This should not be misconstrued as the officers not having feedback. Many of us were prepared to give it at that meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jen Sliemers
FFR Personnel Lieutenant