

**From:** John Kilpatrick  
**Sent:** Friday, September 04, 2009 7:35 AM  
**Subject:** For Julianne Re: Structure Committee

Julianne,

After much thought and conversations with members of FFR I have several comments that I would like to submit to the structure committee for its consideration of whether or not to have a full-time paid Chief of the department.

1. Success or failure of a paid chief will depend almost entirely on the individual selected.
2. The selection committee for a paid chief should consist of the Board President, one other board member (no board members should be permitted to apply for the position to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest), two members selected at large from the membership, by the board president (neither of whom is applying for the position), and one adult district resident selected by the board president from the community (who is not currently associated with the fire department but preferably someone who has at a past time been a member of the department or a member of the board).
3. Consider employing the full-time chief on a continuously renewable two-year contract which could be terminated at the end of any two year period without cause. This would facilitate a new board replacing the chief without undue disruption if the board felt that was necessary.
4. Provide an established procedure for the membership to take a vote of no confidence on the chief at any time for appropriate action by the board. Such a vote should require no confidence votes from a majority of the full active membership to be valid but balloting could be extended over a one to two week period to ensure full exposure to the membership.
5. The board should not place any restrictions on whether the chief responds to none, some, or all of the emergency calls. The chief's reasons for responding to any call may be many. An old saying in the fire service goes, "There are two rules which must be followed. Rule 1. The chief is always right. Rule 2. In those rare cases where you believe that the chief is wrong, refer to Rule 1." The board should not meddle in operations to the extent of trying to influence how many calls the chief responds on. That being said, it will still be the chief's responsibility to fully complete or ensure completion of all administrative tasks for the department in a timely and appropriate manner.
6. I personally believe that the full-time paid chief option is the better option for the department for the following reasons. Applicants can be more thoroughly vetted for the full-time position vs. a stipend position for a volunteer. A full-time chief will bring a stronger, more effective effort to the position than a stipend volunteer. There will be much better continuity year-to-year or term-to-term than with a stipend volunteer. The anticipated stipend for a volunteer is insufficient for any volunteer to leave his full-time paid position or to place a high priority on the needs of the fire department for an extended period of time. The position easily requires the attention of a full-time employee effort even with administrative assistant support as determined by the chief.

Focused positions of Deputy Chief and/or Assistant Chief can probably be filled with volunteer members as long as there is not an automatic succession requirement to chief of department should that top position become open through retirement, resignation, termination or death.

7. Hopefully, the applicant selected as chief should never choose to take the position that he works for either the board or the members to the exclusion of the other. This was one of the major flaws with the District Administrator position as staffed by Rob Sontag.

Thanks for listening to me rattle on in this email. If you have any questions about any of my comments I can be reached at [REDACTED] or by return email.

Respectfully,  
John T. Kilpatrick