

September 3, 2009

Submitted to Structure committee

Conversation with Ed Daniels, Retired Foothills Fire Chief

I wanted to summarize my discussion with Ed Daniels regarding possible changes in the structure for the District. I felt it was worthwhile to let everyone know that Ed and I discussed some basic ideas in June. At that time Ed recommended that I contact Chief Jones to obtain more information regarding any leadership changes being considered. I did not provide a summary at that time as it was premature to the formal structure committee discussions. Since my previous discussion, and to address comments by Foothills Officer Jen Sliemers under separate cover, I felt it was worthwhile to again speak with Ed Daniels “formally” regarding his opinions on the matter.

Ed Daniels has provided a thorough proposal and recommendation for the Board to consider under separate cover. Ed has also completed research regarding leadership for fire organizations and I recommend everyone with an opinion on the matter should review his proposal as it provides his recommendation and position, though perhaps reluctantly, to hire a paid Chief. During our discussion Ed has also volunteered to help with the community group I am building for the District.

I have great respect for Ed having worked under his command for several years at Foothills Fire. According to Ed hiring a paid Chief can reduce or eliminate many of the challenges the District has faced for many years. It will be paramount to hire someone that is accountable to the community, volunteers, and the District Board to be successful. In the interim search process, Ed felt that someone should be appointed by the Board to lead the department with one of the sole purposes to find a candidate that would ultimately replace them. This process can give the District more time to select the right candidate for the long term. In the meantime, other solutions may be developed as well.

In addition, it should be required that the paid staff and volunteers be accountable and meet various requirements of the District. The Chief would also need to meet these requirements. Currently a lot of emotion clouds the discussions and it is important that individuals work to a solution in the best interest of stakeholders rather than arguing politics at every opportunity. At some point a Chief will be required to be in place. It will be difficult and maybe impossible to find a single person that everyone will be happy with. It will be a requirement that the paid Chief meet various performance requirements at specific intervals. This way the various stakeholders can have a say in the performance of the individual and keep improving the District.

Once these issues are resolved volunteers can focus more on operations, the community can get back to the business of enjoying the neighborhood, and the District Board can work on the easier tasks of establishing District policy and budget.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patrick Smith  
FFPD Board Secretary