

THE FIRE BOARD'S HUMAN RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITIES

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BEST PRACTICES

- Approach the Fire Chief for information
- Refer concerns from the public to the Fire Chief or bring to the Board as a whole
- Respond to constituent requests in a courteous manner and route through appropriate channels
- Direct clarification of policy-related concerns to the Fire Chief
- Respond to employee requests and concerns by directing the employee to follow the guidelines in the HR Policy Manual
- Avoid circumventing the chain of command

CHAIN OF COMMAND

- Fire departments are para-military and adhere to chain of command
- Fire Board members need to honor this!
- Fire Board has only one employee: The Fire Chief
- Communications between the Fire Board and employees need to flow through the Fire Chief
- Fire Board members should not communicate directly with employees on personnel or operational issues, unless granted permission by the Fire Chief or via District policy

BOARD/FIRE CHIEF RELATIONS

- Good management is most important factor in the success of the District
 - Strong and effective Fire Board and Fire Chief
 - Dedicated and loyal personnel
- Board responsible for establishing policies
- Board should delegate authority to Fire Chief to execute and carry out policies, plans, programs
- Flow of authority for District operations should be from the Fire Board to the Fire Chief

BOARD/FIRE CHIEF RELATIONS

- Mutual understanding and complete cooperation necessary for efficient management of the District
- Fire Board needs to give Fire Chief latitude to exercise judgment and discretion in carrying out the policies set by the Fire Board
- Fire Board has responsibility for employment of the Fire Chief
 - Hiring
 - Salary and benefits
 - Appraisal -- ongoing feedback and annual review

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Fire Board delegates to Fire Chief, who is responsible through his actions and his subordinates' actions to carry out duties and report back to the Fire Board
- Planning
 - Policy formulation and revision
 - Strategic planning – in cooperation with Fire Board
 - Long range operational planning
 - Budget planning
 - Legislation

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Organization
 - Organizational Structure
 - Job Descriptions
 - Selection of Personnel
 - Develop standards, qualifications
 - Handle recruitment, promotion
 - Select, hire, appoint, transfer, promote, discipline personnel as set forth in District HR Policy
 - Training and Development
 - Performance Appraisals
 - Employee Benefits (PTO, insurance, retirement, etc.)

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Organization (continued)
 - Consultants (with exception of audit firm)
 - Identify need
 - Provide recommendations and contracts/agreements to the Fire Board for approval for those consultants whose work affect the functions of the Fire Board
 - Select/appoint other consultants
 - Negotiate contracts/agreements within budget parameters
 - Report to Board periodically on services provided
 - Wage and Salary Administration
 - Board approves the wage scale
 - Fire Chief determines salary adjustment, based on policy and budget

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Operations
 - Overall Administration
 - Fire Chief to direct day-to-day operations and activities
 - Fire Chief to manage District in accordance with Board policies and applicable laws
 - Fire Chief should designate an Acting Chief
 - Fire Chief should provide advice/assistance to Fire Board
 - Financial
 - Fire Board may adopt financial/procurement policies
 - Fire Board should establish Fire Chief's spending authority
 - Fire Chief to make expenditures according to approved budget and procurement policy

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Operations
 - Financial
 - Fire Chief to report monthly on District's financial position
 - Fire Chief to approve accounting systems/procedures needed for sound fiscal management
 - Fire Chief to oversee procurement within approved budget
 - Fire Chief to negotiate contracts as required
 - Fire Chief to recommend insurance coverage to the Fire Board for effective risk management

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Controls/Reporting -- Fire Chief responsible to oversee and report to the Fire Board on:
 - Operations
 - Finances
 - Budget
 - Annual Financial Audit
 - Fire Board responsible to select
 - Fire Chief to obtain services of independent auditor
 - Fire Board and Fire Chief jointly review findings

Delegation of Authority to Chief

- Controls/Reporting
 - Inventory Management
 - Citizen Complaints
 - Reliability/Effectiveness of Service
 - Rates, Charges, Taxes
 - Fire Chief to evaluate costs compared to revenue projections and recommend necessary changes to rates, charges, taxes
 - Internal Audit
 - Reporting requirements should not reflect micro-management

ADOPTING BOARD POLICIES

- Fire Board should adopt either Board Policies or Board By-Laws
- Governance
- Responsibilities
- Code of Conduct
- Meetings/agendas/minutes
- Fire Board/Fire Chief relationships

- Completely different than HR policies, which are applicable to employees/volunteers

ADOPTING HR POLICIES

- Good HR policies are critical
 - For Fire Chief
 - For all employees
- Fire Chief responsible for presenting HR policies to the Fire Board for review and approval
- Fire Board may provide financial support for development and/or review

ADOPTING HR POLICIES

- Employment Practices
- Employee Relations
- Compensation Administration
- Employee Benefits

WHEN DOES THE FIRE BOARD GET INVOLVED IN PERSONNEL ISSUES?

- Only if policy allows for Fire Board involvement
- If it directly involves the Fire Chief
 - Complaint of harassment or discrimination against the Fire Chief
 - Grievance of an action initiated by the Fire Chief
 - Not just because of his ruling on an employee grievance
- If the Fire Chief informs the Fire Board of a specific personnel issue
 - Recognize difference between informing and getting involved