

12. Personnel Relations

March 25, 2002

A/C Greg Thompson



“The District has adopted the IFSTA Essentials Firefighter I multi-media program as its standard fire ground training curriculum.”

Goal: *“Provide a personnel management program that emphasizes supportive relationships, values volunteerism, and offers competitive and meaningful rewards for District members.”*

Organizational Values:

- Provide career staff committed to support the volunteer system.
- Provide feedback on achievement levels.
- Provide camaraderie and social activities.
- Provide employee assistance opportunities.
- Maintain a competitive benefits and wage program.

Historical Perspectives:

- The District has operated as a volunteer based organization since its inception in 1953.
- Until the first full-time employee was hired in 1985, all District functions were performed by volunteers; most of the members of the Board also were active volunteer responders.
- A majority of the non-emergency events held by the District in the 1950's and 60's were socially related (with some training on equipment and apparatus provided); multi-fire district social occasions were held throughout the year and well attended.
- The South Bay Firemen's Association elected the Fire Chief annually until 1980.
- Industry wide, recruiting and retaining volunteers has become much more difficult due to changing lifestyles, economics and competing activities.

Current Situation:

- The South Bay Fire Association exists with much reduced involvement (monthly meetings held in conjunction with the District business meeting); events sponsored by the Association include annual picnic, holiday craft fair, holiday needy family support, and participation in the Lakefair parade.
- An annual recognition banquet is held (first sponsored by the Association, then the Board), held regularly since 1974.
- Functions related to volunteer recruitment and retention are assigned to the Assistant Chief for Volunteer Services.
- In February of 2001 the board approved a proposal to move forward on developing a shift based response program in an effort to provide more effective staffing to address the District's Target Levels of Service.
- In February of 2002 a pilot shift based program was approved to be implemented in March of 2002.

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Program Narrative

Future Direction:

- The District will continue to rely primarily on volunteers to provide emergency services to our customers.
- The District will provide a dynamic array of incentives to volunteers including direct monetary stipends, “employee assistance services”, educational-career opportunities, community recognition and others, while holding members accountable to well defined performance objectives.
- Comprehensive communications methods will be developed and used to allow free interaction among the members of the District for sharing of information, seeking input and comment, and streamlining business processes (e.g. implementation of policy and procedures).

Strategies:

- Create and maintain a competitive incentive program.
- Develop and implement a volunteer recognition program. This will include conducting a formal annual banquet and instituting an informal recognition philosophy.
- Encourage management to create a strong partnership with the volunteer firefighter association.
- Develop clear and concise personnel expectations.
- Develop and conduct annual performance reviews.
- Encourage line officers to regularly review individual and team performance, attitude and provide feedback.
- Conduct a salary comparison for career staff every three years or when requested by the Chief, to ensure competitive benefits and wage.
- Track and analyze performance of volunteer programs and make necessary adjustments.
- Study demographic, work and educational trends and determine the recruitment method(s) that will best meet the District needs.
- Develop a staffing plan that is consistent with the District’s Target Levels of Service.
- Staff will continue to work towards managing, organizing, and providing “soft incentives” that builds morale, motivation and increases the enjoyment of volunteering.