

Consolidation Meeting – November 7, 2006

Present:

Chief Jon Bugher, Clallam County Fire District #2
Chief Dan McKeen, Port Angeles Fire Department
Deputy Chief Mike Oakes, Clallam County Fire District #2
Assistant Chief Ken Dubuc, Port Angeles Fire Department

This meeting was held from 0900 – 1200 at the Port Angeles Senior Center

The discussion started with a change to the proposed pager tones as suggested by Chief Bugher. It was decided that in order to promote simplicity and to stay with the “one Department, three station” model, we would go with a single pager tone for each of the stations. A call on the east side would tone out the east side station only. If additional resources are required, then the central station will be toned. A call on the west side would tone out the west station only. If additional resources are required the central station will be toned. A call to the central station will tone the central station only. If additional resources are required, then either the east or west station will be toned, depending on the proximity to the call. In all cases, if additional resources are required beyond the first two stations toned, then the next station will be toned.

Officers will have the option to have all station tones.

Next, we discussed some housekeeping issues with regard to general membership requirements. CCFD#2 requires a High School diploma or certificate. Although this is a requisite for EMT certification, it was agreed to add this language to the application. PAVFD requires that individuals have the legal right to live and work in the United States. CCFD#2 has the same requirement, however it is not explicitly stated on the application. It was agreed that this language should also be added. PAVFD includes the option to disqualify an applicant based upon misdemeanor convictions. It was agreed that this language should be added since there are certain misdemeanor offenses (for example multiple shoplifting convictions) that would be undesirable.

The subject of participation was discussed. PAVFD has both a drill attendance and a response participation requirement. CCFD#2 does not have a specific response attendance criteria, however members with poor response numbers are identified and counseled by the station Captain. It was agreed that drill participation criteria would be set at 50%, with the added caveat that all members would be required to achieve 100% completion of all mandatory training requirements. It was also agreed to retain the current practice of referring members to the station Captain for poor response numbers. It would also be the responsibility of the station Captain to follow up with members who do not meet mandatory training requirements.

We next discussed job descriptions, particularly with regard to “non-combat firefighters.” It was agreed that the primary benefit to having non-combat firefighters was to provide a position for those personnel in good standing, who have passed probation, who can no longer fulfill the

duties of a firefighter – for whatever reason. It was agreed that each station would provide up to four positions for non-combat personnel. It was also agreed that since these personnel would still be subject to performance at emergency medical scenes, they would need to pass the non-combat physical ability test and meet all of the L&I requirements for an EMT. A job description will be prepared for this position. It was discussed that non-combat personnel would still wear turn-outs on the scene, however they would be readily identified by the use of “bump hats.”

The issue of recruitment of personnel specifically for non-combat positions (EMT only) was discussed. It was decided that this would not be done now, since we did not want to occupy positions that could be filled by personnel who have provided lengthy service to the department. Instead, the option was left open to conduct “EMT only” recruitments depending upon how future general recruitments go.

On a related topic, it was agreed that we would add a section to the volunteer manual that requires a physical exam prior to a return to work from a time-loss injury.

We spoke at length about the subject of some sort of volunteer advisory committee. This was a topic that was brought up some time ago, however at the time we decided that it could probably wait until some time after the first of the year to work it out. It has become apparent that there is going to be a need for some sort of volunteer group that can act as a sounding board for the expected “glitches” that are encountered as the consolidation moves forward. The officers group that has been meeting to date has been effective, however it is clear that a group of that size will be too unwieldy for an efficient decision making process. A smaller group would be better able to work through issues.

The consensus was that the committee would work best if it was made up of six volunteer members. Each station Captain would be on the committee as well as one additional member from each station. The additional member would be selected by all of the personnel assigned to that station. In addition to these six volunteers, one Chief Officer would attend the meetings. It was decided that very specific guidelines would be developed for the voluntary advisory committee. It was also decided that it would be left up to the membership to determine what the committee would call itself. Finally, it was agreed that this committee should be a separate entity from the volunteer hiring board, although members could serve on both.

There was a long discussion about the chain of command. We discussed the research that was conducted with some other departments that have a rank structure within their volunteer and career forces. We contacted six departments. Two of the departments do not have a rank structure within their volunteer organizations. Of the remaining four, all of the departments stated that rank was rank, regardless of whether the officer was a career or volunteer member. Additionally, they went on to state that they were able to accomplish this because they worked together, they trained together and they knew each other. Additionally, all officers, both career and volunteer, had the same advancement requirements.

It was noted that there are a number of very talented, very highly qualified career personnel in the Port Angeles Fire Department who do not currently hold officer rank simply because there are no open officer positions. It was suggested that these career personnel should be considered

career officers and it was suggested that any career individual who has passed the current promotional exam and meets the qualifications to be on the list would be considered a career officer with respect to the chain of command. In order to easily recognize these individuals on the fireground, these career officer-qualified personnel would be identified by distinctive helmet markings.

There was a discussion about the officer selection process within both departments and the qualifications required in order to be selected. It was recognized that there are a number of individuals on both sides who have extensive training history and a wealth of experience. It was also acknowledged that although this is an issue, it is primarily an issue on paper and not on the emergency scene.

The meeting ended with a very brief discussion about uniforms/jackets and ID's. The intent for uniforms would be that they are for wear at public events such as the fair, etc. It was agreed that the suggestions should first come from the group, but that the uniform should be the same for all. There was also a brief discussion about jackets (reflectors) and names on the backs of turn-out coats, with the suggestion that names be applied after an individual passes probation.

Photo ID's were mentioned. CCFD#2 stated that they used to get them from the CCSO. It was suggested that they could be provided by PAPD at no cost.

Jon Bugher

Dan McKeen