

Preparing Company Officers for Promotion to Chief Officer

In Order to Ensure Future Organizational Success

Michael Robertson

Evesham Fire-Rescue, Evesham, New Jersey

Appendices Not Included. Please visit the Learning Resource Center on the Web at <http://www.lrc.dhs.gov/> to learn how to obtain this report in its entirety through Interlibrary Loan.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The problem is that the Evesham Fire-Rescue Department (EFD) has not fully prepared its company officers to assume the role of Deputy Chief. The purpose of this research is to identify the components of a chief officer development program to prepare current and future company officers for promotion to chief officer.

The research project will utilize a descriptive research methodology and will be completed by interviewing retired EFD Deputy Chiefs, the current Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief, and surveying the current company officers about professional development at the EFD. In addition, a survey will be sent to other combination and full career fire departments of similar size in New Jersey. The New Jersey Administrative Code will also be reviewed to determine the state requirements for certification and training of fire officers.

Research questions used to guide the study include determining what the state standards for chief officer in New Jersey, the components of chief officer development programs of other combination and full career departments, the components of successful management development programs in other industries, and what do current and retired fire officers at EFD think should be included in a chief officer development program.

The research indicates that many fire departments in New Jersey, including the Evesham Fire Department, do not have formal professional development programs to prepare career company officers to promote to chief officer. The research also indicates this has and continues to be a problem nationally since it was first identified by the fire service in 1966.

The author's recommendations include using the National Professional Development Matrix from FESHE to develop professional development plans for all officers in the

department. Each fire department must develop a clear mission statement, vision statement and core values. Each of these must be communicated throughout the organization.

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When looking at the future of the fire service nationwide, it must be recognized that there is a tremendous amount of experience exiting the fire service as countless firefighters enter retirement and a new generation enters the workforce (Alyn, 2012, pg. 13). Many of these retirements are being caused by economic impacts at the local and state level including changes to employee pension systems and health care benefits. And while there are many other issues facing today's fire service including shrinking municipal budgets, a decrease in municipal tax revenue, and also increased liability in fire suppression and emergency medical services, the most pressing issue is leadership and the development of future fire officers (Alyn, 2012, p. 14).

The problem is that the Evesham Fire-Rescue Department (EFD) has not fully prepared its company officers to assume the role of Deputy Chief, which is currently the first level chief officer above the rank of Captain. The purpose of this research is to identify the components of a chief officer development program that will prepare current and future company officers for promotion to first level chief officer.

The research project will utilize a descriptive research methodology and will be completed by interviewing retired EFD Deputy Chiefs, interviewing the current EFD Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief, and surveying current EFD company officers about their thoughts on professional development at EFD. I will also review the job description for EFD Deputy Chief to better understand the roles and responsibilities of this position. In addition, a survey will be sent to other combination/full career fire departments of similar size in New Jersey. The New Jersey Administrative Code will also be reviewed to determine the state requirements for certification and training of fire officers.

The research questions that were used to guide this research project included:

1. What are the state standards for chief officer in New Jersey?

2. What are the components of chief officer development programs currently being utilized in other combination and full career departments of similar size in New Jersey?
3. What are the components of successful management development programs in other industries?
4. What are the formal and informal roles of Deputy Chief at the EFD?
5. What do current company officers at the EFD think should be included in a chief officer development program?
6. What training do retired EFD Deputy Chiefs think would have better prepared them for promotion to their position?

Finding the answers to these questions and then making recommendations to improve my department will be the basis for this applied research project.

Background and Significance

The Evesham Fire-Rescue Department is a combination Fire-EMS department with 32 career personnel and approximately 100 volunteer personnel. The career staff includes the Chief of Department, an Assistant Chief, a Deputy Chief, two Captains, four Lieutenants, and 19 Firefighter-EMT/Inspectors. We are also completing a hiring process that will add four additional Firefighter-EMT/Inspectors in November 2014. The volunteer staff includes supervisory ranks of Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief, Captains and Lieutenants, in both the Fire and EMS divisions. The career staff provides primary coverage Monday through Friday during the hours of 0700-1800 (plus one BLS crew working from 0500-1600 on weekdays) and the volunteers provide primary coverage weeknights from 1800-0700 hours, all weekends, and major holidays. The department responds out of three stations strategically located throughout

the community of 48,000 residents living across 30 square miles. The community includes residential, commercial/retail properties and a large area of wildland urban interface. The department also provides fire code enforcement, public education and technical rescue services (Evesham Fire-Rescue - About Us, n.d.).

Our department is anticipating the retirement of its career chief officer staff in the next one to three years. While the three chiefs will not retire at exactly the same time, their departures will all occur in a relatively short period of time. It is also anticipated that one career Captain will also retire in the next six to eighteen months, which is the next level career officer in our department below the rank of Deputy Chief. The loss of our top four senior officers will result in a significant loss of knowledge and experience at the upper end of the fire department in a very short period of time.

My concern is that after this series of anticipated retirements, which includes our chief officer staff and a senior Captain, the remaining company officers may not be fully prepared to assume the roles of Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief and Chief of Department. This is not to say that our remaining company officers, including myself as a Lieutenant, are not *capable* of assuming these chief officer roles, but instead I say that we as an organization may have not lead them down a formal, structured, uniform path of professional development to prepare them to step into the roles of our three chief level officer positions.

The near future loss of our most senior officers could possibly create a “shock wave” through the organization and affect its continued success as a highly respected fire and EMS agency in Burlington County, New Jersey. While this would be a worst-case scenario, at the minimum our department could digress while our company officers “catch up” to their new roles and responsibilities of chief officer. Our future success as an organization will ultimately

depend upon whether or not the remaining company level officers are fully prepared to assume the roles of Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief and Chief of Department.

This research paper is a part of the Executive Development course from the first year of the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The research paper will make use of the information shared in this two week course with great emphasis on the modules about Exercising Leadership, Change Management and also Organizational Culture and Change (U.S. Fire Administration, 2010). The results of the research paper will allow me to address a current problem in my department and provide us with the solutions to resolve this issue, thereby making us a better organization.

The research paper will also support one of the five major strategic goals of the United States Fire Administration (USFA). The research paper will specifically focus on USFA Strategic Goal 3: Improve the fire and emergency services' professional status. As a future chief officer in my department, I have the responsibility to ensure that not only myself, but also future company officers at EFD are guided toward professional development that encourages learning and improvement throughout their career. This is important to ensure the continued success of our organization in the community that we serve.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to locate information that would help me to answer the research questions in this paper. Answers to the research questions are the driving force behind reaching my final recommendations. The sources of information that follow will be current and comprehensive, and will be used to show what other people have said and published about the topics covered in my research questions.

In a recent fire service article, the subject of the American fire service having a leadership pandemic is discussed. The author Anthony Kastros (2014) discusses how many fire departments across our country

do already have good leaders. However, many of these leaders came “out of the box” as good leaders or they went and sought out other good leaders to emulate. Many of them also completed additional leadership training on their own time. The problem Kastros cites is today these exceptional leaders in the fire service are disappearing and becoming extinct. This is compounded by most fire departments lacking any type of in-house, systematic, modern, realistic, effective, continuous and hands-on scenario based leadership training (Kastros, 2014, p. 129). In addition to fireground simulations, leadership training for fire officers must include role-play scenarios that mimic situations the officers will face in the station and out in public. These role-play scenarios should include discussion after about how the officer handled the situation and alternative solutions for the same scenario.

A well known motivational speaker and renowned expert on the subject of leadership is John Maxwell. In his book, *Developing Leaders Around You*, Maxwell discusses the principle that you must grow leaders in order to grow your organization. Maxwell refers to a second principle that the top one percent of all great leaders understands that acquiring and keeping good people should be the leader’s most important job in their organization. In addition, he explains that the very best leaders work to take their people to the next level and develop them, so that they can reach their full potential (Maxwell, 1995, p. 107).

Those who really want to be successful leaders must not only develop leaders around them, but also establish a team of leaders to help the organization grow. A team of leaders that has certain traits will succeed over almost any challenge. These traits include that the leadership team within the organization must care for one another, they must understand what’s important to the organization (core values and mission), the leadership team must communicate with one another to ensure tasks are not duplicated or left undone, and the team members must place their own self-interests below what’s best for the team and the organization (Maxwell, 1995, p. 131).

Maxwell further discusses that potential leaders are either an asset or a liability to the organization. When there is a problem in the organization, a “fire” in his analogy, the leader is often first to arrive. The leader has two buckets in his hands. One bucket contains water, the other bucket contains gasoline. As the overall leader of the organization, the Chief should ask

the question, “Am I training them to use the gasoline or the water?” (Maxwell, 1995, p. 4). This analogy can be applied to any type of business or organization, including the fire service.

In the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Officer Development Handbook (ODH), Second Edition*, the history of professional development in the fire service is discussed and how this was identified as a problem for our nations fire service as far back as 1966 at the original Wingspread Conference on Fire Service Administration, Education and Research (IAFC *ODH*, 2010). The Wingspread Conference, led by an ad hoc committee of fire service professionals and educators, was first convened to address areas of national significance related to the fire problem in the United States. The conference is held in ten year intervals, with the next one scheduled for 2016 (Wingspread Conference I-V Reports, n.d.). In the very first Wingspread Conference, the following were just a few of the 12 key statements that were concluded:

- Professional status begins with education
- The scope, degree and depth of the educational requirements for efficient functioning of the fire service must be examined.
- Increased mobility at the executive level of the fire service will be important to the achievement of professional status.
- The career development of the fire executive must be systematic and deliberate.

The topic of professional development in the fire service continued to be identified as an unsolved issue contributing to the fire problem in America in every wingspread conference that followed in 1976, 1986, 1996 and most recently in 2006 (Wingspread Conference I-V Reports, n.d.). I have included the statements of national significance from each of these conferences in the appendix (Appendix A1-A5).

In an article from a fire service trade publication, Dr. Harry Carter (2014) writes about the importance of succession planning and positioning your fire department for future success. He discusses the most common ways that fire departments fail themselves and the taxpayers. His list of mistakes includes:

- Failing to accept responsibility
- **Failing to properly develop people**
- Trying to control results, rather than stimulate thinking
- Being a buddy rather than a fire officer
- **Failing to set standards (a long car trip with no map)**
- **Failing to train people to do their job**
- Tolerating incompetence

Three of the seven common mistakes listed above are related to our failure to professionally develop personnel in the organization. Dr. Carter explains that as we approach the year 2020 and our budgets continue to increase, taxpayers and city officials are looking more closely at who we are and what we do. In this political climate, we must develop people who are professionally competent and trained to do their jobs in a manner that is both efficient and cost effective. He emphasizes that it will take a conscious and dedicated effort to develop personnel this way and our ability to do so will be a key factor in our future success as a community-based emergency service organization (Carter, 2014).

Dr. Kimberly Alyn, who was a best-selling author and international fire service speaker prior to her recently having passed away, discusses in her book, *Leadership Lessons*, the importance of creating success with succession planning in the fire service. Dr. Alyn writes,

“Leadership training starts the first day a firefighter enters your department. It doesn’t start the month before they are thinking about promoting” (Alyn, 2012, p. 156).

Every fire department has a responsibility to develop effective leaders to prepare the organization for future promotions throughout the entire chain of command. This responsibility must be shared between management, firefighters and the labor union in the case of departments with career personnel. Management has the responsibility to provide a combination of strong role models, opportunities for mentoring, and training. Firefighters are responsible to hold each accountable to the mission, vision and core values of the fire department. If firefighters sit back and watch as other firefighters violate policies, core values, or the mission, then they are equally responsible for a leadership void in the department. Finally the labor union must hold its members to a high standard of accountability and responsibility (Alyn, 2012). It should be the goal of the union to ensure that a firefighter facing discipline gets a fair process, but it should not be their focus to get a guilty firefighter off the hook when he is actually deserving of punishment.

Dr. Alyn (2012) identifies that once everyone in the department begins to hold themselves and each other accountable to the mission, vision, and core values of the fire department, the result is that you will find a great pool of prospective leaders for succession planning. Of course, your fire department must actually have these three important pieces clearly defined and known by everyone throughout the organization in order to hold each other accountable to them.

Another source for my research, *The Fire Chief’s Handbook, 6th Edition*, includes a collection of individual chapters written by various fire service professionals with topics relevant to being the Fire Chief. There are two chapters of special interest to my research paper, *Chapter 6 - Personnel Administration* and *Chapter 9 - Fire Service Training and Education*. In Chapter 6,

Saunders discusses how there is a considerable difference between leadership skills needed for tactical incident command versus the leadership skills needed to deal with our staff the rest of the day (Saunders, 2003). In most fire departments around the country, the time spent on the fireground is small in comparison to the amount of time spent in station, at training, performing inspections, and the many other tasks that occur during a firefighter's average shift.

In too many fire departments, mid-level fire officers are promoted primarily based upon their ability to take tests and their ability to operate at emergency scenes. But being prepared for a written exam or understanding fireground strategy and tactics doesn't teach new fire officers how to manage and lead their people in the fire station (Saunders, 2003). The chapter continues by identifying different resources for the fire officer to learn about how to become an effective leader and manager of people. The resources include books, academic degree programs, state and local fire schools, conferences and the National Fire Academy.

In Chapter 9 of the *Fire Chief's Handbook, 6th edition*, chapter author Russell J. Strickland discusses what a fire department training program should include, the need for certification based training and evaluations. He concludes with training methodologies and resources for training. Strickland discusses the importance of certification programs to guide the professional development of chief level officers in the fire service (Strickland, 2003).

The chapter includes information about the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD), a national certification program overseen by an independent commission created under a trust agreement between the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the International City/County Management Association. The voluntary program has seven major components to achieve the CFOD including: Experience, Education, Professional Development, Professional

Contributions, Association Membership, Community Involvement and Technical Competencies (Strickland, 2003).

During my research, I reviewed several military leadership books, as our country's military is known for its continuous commitment to development of front line personnel up through its highest ranking leaders. In one of my source books about using Marine Corps leadership to succeed in the business world, there is an entire chapter dedicated to making new leaders. The chapter opens with a profound statement that "All commanders should consider the professional development of their subordinates a principal responsibility of command" (Adamchik, 2006, p. 111). One concept in this chapter is that the Marine Corps considers reading and discussion highly effective tools for developing organizational leaders. The Marine Corps Professional Reading Program was established on the idea that we must make time for reading, with just as much importance as we place on making time for physical training. The original objectives of the reading program remain the same today as when they were first implemented (Adamchik, 2006, p. 115). The objectives of the reading program are:

- Impart Marine values and traits
- Increase knowledge of our profession
- Improve analytical and reasoning skills
- To increase the capacity of using printed media as a means of learning and communication
- To increase knowledge of our nation's institutions and the principles upon which our country and way of life were founded
- To increase knowledge of the world's governments, culture and geography

The idea of having professional reading lists for an organization's leadership personnel is not unique to the Marines. In fact, there are many corporations that having reading programs. Employees on the lower section of the organizational chart may be given a suggested book for reading, then have a lunch and learn session at work where major concepts from the book are discussed. At the higher end of the organizational chart, top-level executives may be required to read certain books as part of their job responsibilities (Adamchik, 2006).

In a quote from Harry S. Truman, "All readers are not leaders, but all leaders are readers" (Harry S. Truman Quotes, n.d., p. 1). I have a coworker who has inspired me during the past two years of supervising him to become more of a reader. This firefighter, who I believe will be a future company officer in our department, has inspired me to make time for reading in each day. This firefighter can be routinely found reading during lunch breaks, before shift starts, after meals, and after completing his assigned daily duties during the work day. Through his inspiration, I have found myself reading more fire service and non-fire service leadership books in the past two years than I have in the past ten years. As a company officer, I also now make it a point to share fire service articles or pieces of fire service leadership books with my crew at the kitchen table in the morning, following our line-up and apparatus checks. This same firefighter provided me with the military leadership books used as part of my literature review.

In the military leadership text, *Non-Commissioned Officer, 8th Edition*, there is a chapter that discusses the importance of self-development. This includes both development of the person as a leader and also yourself as a person. The chapter emphasizes the importance of taking on leadership positions as early as possible in your career and also rotation through other specialized job assignments (Rush, 2006). The chapter stresses the importance of understanding the duties and responsibilities of your rank and the next highest rank that you hope to achieve. As an

example of this, the book provides a chart entitled *The NCO Roadmap to Success* which provides a chart listing some of the officer ranks in the Marine Corps including Sergeant, Staff Sergeant, Sergeant First Class and Master Sergeant. The chart further lists what the job assignments, positions, military schools, education requirements, and promotion process are for each rank (Rush, 2006).

In the fire service leadership book, *First In, Last Out*, Chief John Salka talks about the importance of developing leaders at all levels of the organization. This creates a foundation for what is known as the “leadership pipeline”. A leadership pipeline is a process that can be used in any organization for selecting and developing leaders. He cites that one of the biggest problems facing any organization is “the lack of homegrown talent, or those who have been developed from within” (Salka & Neville, 2004, p. 205). When you develop a leadership pipeline in-house, it helps to assure that future leaders understand the character and mission of the organization, resulting in them being prepared to assume top management positions when they arise and be effective in those positions (Salka & Neville, 2004).

Salka emphasizes that a leadership pipeline doesn’t happen accidentally. It’s the result of using a process for “evaluating your people, identifying potential leaders, developing those leaders and then assessing their eligibility to take on higher positions in the organization” (Salka & Neville, 2004, p. 205). The best way to develop leaders throughout the organization is to figure out what you consider to be essential leadership qualities, then identify which of your people demonstrates those qualities and then guide them into temporary positions of leadership. These temporary positions would include placing them in charge of a workgroup or a new project that impacts the station or even the entire fire department. This allows you to evaluate the person’s leadership skills without actually moving them into a permanent position. When the

project or special assignment is done, they return to their normal position in the organization (Salka & Neville, 2004, Chapter 11).

Sometimes evaluating your people includes discussing potential leaders with other leaders in the organization – both official and unofficial leaders – who have worked with the leadership candidate in the past. Sometimes their assessment and experiences with the person can help you to compensate for your biases or blind spots when acting as a talent scout.

In order to discuss preparing company officers to promote to first level chief officer, I needed to determine what the state standards are for chief officer in New Jersey. This led me to the N.J. Division of Fire Safety (DFS), Office of Training and Certification. The Division of Fire Safety falls under the umbrella of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which is a state agency created to provide administrative guidance, financial support and technical assistance to local governments, community development organizations, business and individuals to improve the quality of life in New Jersey (NJ Department of Community Affairs - About DCA, n.d.).

The mission of the New Jersey DFS is to serve as the focal point for the state's fire service community and the general public in any matter related to fire safety. This includes development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, as well as public education programs and firefighter training programs. Within the DFS are the Bureau of Fire Code Enforcement and the Bureau of Fire Department Services. The Bureau of Fire Department Services is responsible for firefighter training and education, fire incident reporting, firefighter serious injury and fatality investigations and public education (NJ Department of Community Affairs - Division of Fire Safety, n.d.). The DFS, Office of Training and Certification staff

referred me to the New Jersey Administrative Code for the legal requirements for fire officer training in New Jersey.

The State of New Jersey has regulations, called rules, which implement our state statutes and are the legal basis for operating state programs and services. The New Jersey Administrative Code (NJAC) compiles all the effective rules adopted by State agencies and filed with the Office of Administrative Law. The NJAC is updated regularly in printed loose-leaf format and can be found in any public library in New Jersey. It is also available online at LexisNexis, the publisher licensed by the New Jersey Office of Administrative law (NJ Department of Community Affairs - Current Administrative Rules and Regulations, n.d.).

NJAC Chapter 73 is the Standards for Fire Service Training and Certification in New Jersey. This chapter contains eight subchapters which include 1 - General Provisions, 2 - Educational Programs and Facilities, 3 - Reserved, 4 – Firefighter I and II, 5 – Instructors, 6 – Hazardous Materials/Incident Management Certification, 7 – Fire Police Officer Training, 8 – Fire Officers. Subchapter 8 serves as the main source of information for the first research question (N.J. Standards For Fire Service Training And Certification, Subchapter 8. Fire Officers, February 18, 2003).

Subchapter 8 defines four levels of Fire Officer in New Jersey and the certifications and training required for each level. These four levels parallel the four levels of officer certification in NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications (National Fire Protection Association [NFPA], 2014). Certification for each level in New Jersey requires completing a course of instruction that meets the requirements of each Fire Officer Level I-IV in NFPA 1021. NFPA 1021 defines Fire Officer Level III (Administrative) and Fire Officer Level IV

(Executive) as chief officer certification levels (International Association of Fire Chiefs and National Fire Protection Association [IAFC & NFPA], 2012, p. 5).

New Jersey Fire Officer III certification requires completion of the following four items: N.J. Fire Officer II Certification; Instructor Level 1 as defined in NJAC 5:73-5.2, completion of a course of instruction meeting requirements of NFPA 1021 - Fire Officer III, and then pass a written exam administered by the New Jersey DFS, Office of Training and Certification. New Jersey Fire Officer IV certification requires: N.J. Fire Officer III certification, completing a course of instruction that meets the requirements of NFPA 1021 - Fire Officer IV, and pass a written exam administered by the New Jersey DFS, Office of Training and Certification (N.J. Standards For Fire Service Training And Certification, Subchapter 8. Fire Officers, February 18, 2003). The focus of my research paper is about the preparation of our career Captains to promote to career Deputy Chief, which most closely aligns with the Fire Officer III certification.

Next, I conducted research to find officer development programs locally and nationally to see what the content of these programs were. I was only able to locate one department in my region of south jersey that had a formal, written, Fire Officer Professional Development Program. The Cherry Hill Fire Department (CHFD) in neighboring Camden County, New Jersey, is well-known for its success with developing its leadership personnel, and also for being a recognized leader in Fire and EMS services in New Jersey. Their former Fire Director Patrick Kelly, who was in charge of their department at the beginning of my research, is himself an Executive Fire Officer Program graduate. Director Kelly was very supportive of my research work and offered the full cooperation of his department. In addition to sharing their *Policy Directive No. 1217 – Fire Officer Professional Development Program*, Director Kelly also

allowed me to send a survey to all the chief officers on his staff, which included both Battalion Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs.

The *Cherry Hill Fire Department Policy Directive No. 1217* states that its purpose is to guide the professional development of in-grade fire officers (Cherry Hill Fire Department, 2013). The directive was created in June 2007 and was last updated in November 2013. The directive is broken into two major sections, the first of which is - A) Preparation for Next Higher Rank, which sets minimum criteria to be eligible for promotion between the ranks of Firefighter, Lieutenant, Captain and Battalion Chief.

The other major section is - B) Newly Promoted Fire Officer, which defines initial in-house training for officers upon promotion to their new rank. This section covers all officers from Lieutenant through Fire Chief/Fire Director. This section also lists special assignments that must be completed during their first year in rank, such as development of a Department Operating Guideline, coordinate a station level project, prepare a budget request, or manage a department wide training exercise on an assigned fire service topic. The document states that all officers from Lieutenant to Battalion Chief must serve one year probation in rank and complete all assignments and competencies in order to be sworn into their rank permanently at the end of the probation period (Cherry Hill Fire Department, 2013).

Section B of *CHFD Policy Directive No. 1217* also defines any certifications for Battalion Chiefs, Assistant Fire Chiefs and the Fire Chief or Fire Director that must be obtained prior to or immediately upon promotion, such as New Jersey Incident Command Levels I-III. It also sets increasing requirements for all chief level officers to complete academic degree programs such as an Associate's Degree, Bachelors Degree and enrollment into the NFA Executive Fire Officer Program. The academic requirements specific to each chief level rank

are required after January 1, 2018, which allows current and future chief officer candidates five years from the most recent update of the directive to achieve these academic goals (Cherry Hill Fire Department, 2013). I have included a copy of *CHFD Policy Directive No. 1217* in the appendix (Appendix A-6).

Another professional development guide I was able to locate during my research was from the Prince George County Fire/EMS Department in Maryland. The document entitled *Professional Development/Promotional Procedures Handbook* outlines in matrix form the timeline and minimum qualifications to promote through the fire ranks of Firefighter, Fire Technician, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain, Battalion Chief and Fire Major. The same document also includes progression through the EMS ranks of EMT Basic, EMT Intermediate, EMT Paramedic, Paramedic Lieutenant and Paramedic Captain. Additionally, there are minimum qualifications and training to be eligible to participate on specialized teams/assignments in the fire department such as Technical Rescue, Hazardous Materials Response Team, Marine Division, Special Hazards Inspector, Fire Investigator, Bomb Technician and Equal Employment Opportunity Investigator (Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department [PGFD], 2011).

Another model officer development program that I found was the *Fire Officer Development Training Guide* that was created in 2006 by the Virginia Fire Service Occupational Development Consortium. The document was created by a team of members representing stakeholder groups in the Virginia Fire Service. The goal of the document was to create a standardized professional development plan for fire officers in Virginia. The document follows the four levels of fire officer certification from NFPA 1021 and provides objectives for personal development, training and education for each level. The document also provides a listing of

relevant courses in the Virginia Community College System (Virginia Fire Service Occupational Development Consortium, 2006)

Another outstanding resource that I located under the Education & Development link on the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) website is the *Officer Development Handbook* (ODH). The ODH, now in its second edition, provides a roadmap for current and future fire service leaders toward professional development in the fire service. The latest edition follows the recommendations of the IAFC for career advancement, with great emphasis on leadership competencies through four defined levels of officer development. I purchased this handbook about a year ago and it has been the single most important reference for my research paper, as well as being a guide for my own professional development.

The IAFC ODH goes on to further discuss the national problem of professional development in the fire service in regards to the lack of coordination with Fire Service Training, Education and Certification. The current system has resulted in a generation of firefighters and fire officers with more college credits than they need and no degrees to show for their hard work. These same firefighters and fire officers have enough training, certification and experience to qualify for college level learning, but have no plan for personal development or career map that joins the three areas together. These firefighters and fire officers will often end up with enough certificates of training to cover an entire wall, as well as college transcripts with an overabundance of fire science and general education credits. In addition, they end up with plenty of certifications, but these combined with all their training certificates and college credits many times don't satisfy necessary credentials needed for advancement (*IAFC ODH*, 2010, p. 8).

The IAFC ODH offers a national solution to the problems above. The National Fire Academy (NFA) and Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Program have

collaborated to create the National Professional Development Matrix (NPDM) models for Fire, EMS, and Fire Prevention Officers. The NPDM strives to coordinate training, education and certification into an organized and deliberate path for individuals to conduct their professional development planning (National Professional Development Matrix, n.d.).

The NPDM for the fire service charts a path from Firefighter I up through Executive Fire Officer, encompassing the levels of Fire Officer I through IV (Appendix A-7). The companion NPDM for EMS provides a path for professional development from Emergency Medical Technician up through EMS Executive, encompassing the supervisory levels of EMS Supervisor, EMS Manager, EMS Chief Officer, and EMS Executive Officer (Appendix A-8). The NPDM for Fire Prevention Officers provides a professional development path in the areas of Inspections, Public Education, Fire Investigations and Plans Review.

Next, I researched management and leadership development programs in other industries. For this research question, I chose to review three industries that have placed great value on management training programs - the hotel industry, rental car industry and home building industry. In addition, I also researched examples of what the U.S. Military and the New Jersey Law Enforcement community are doing to train current and future leaders. I felt that together these five industries and their ability to successfully cultivate managers and leaders were very relevant to the fire service, since we are both a customer service focused industry, as well as being a paramilitary structured emergency response agency.

Marriott is one of the largest hotel chains in the world, with 85 years in the hotel industry and more than 3,700 properties. In discussing their business model, they explain that their culture places a high value on their associates. This is evident when reviewing their core values and heritage. Marriott's first core value is, "We put people first – take care of our associates and

they will take care of the customers. Giving the associates opportunities to grow and succeed is part of the company's DNA" (Marriott International, n.d.). Their website has information on Career Paths in the Marriott Corporation and how they offer opportunities for associates to inspire, mentor, and achieve. Ask yourself this question, "Does the fire service demonstrate this same level of enthusiasm and value professional development of our management and future leaders?" Well if not, then maybe we should.

For college graduates, Marriott has a management trainee program called *The Voyage Global Leadership Program*. This 12-18 month program seeks out the best and brightest college graduates to learn about the global scale of Marriott hotel operations. The program gives management trainees direct exposure into the operations of an individual hotel and also allows for discipline specific training directed to the interests of each management candidate. Specific disciplines include Food & Beverage Operations, Culinary, Revenue Management, Accounting & Finance, Rooms Operations, Human Resources, Engineering, Event Management, and Sales & Marketing (Marriott International, n.d.).

Another recognized leader in the hospitality industry is Hilton Worldwide. Hilton Worldwide includes ten hotel brands, in 92 countries, with over 4,100 hotels. Hilton Worldwide also has one of the largest hotel management companies in their industry. Hilton Management Services (HMS), which has over 665 managed properties with more than 100,000 employees, emphasizes recruiting talent and retaining its team members. Using a proven team of learning and developmental personnel, Hilton Worldwide strives to provide the highest level of service for the guests of their clients by offering continuous training and development of their employees, including their hotel management staff. The HMS management and leadership

training program includes the topics of Employee Relations, Collective Bargaining Agreements, Recruiting, Training and Employment Law (Hilton Worldwide, n.d.).

In the residential building industry, Toll Brothers prides them to be “America’s Luxury Home Builder”. The company was established in 1967 and its primary businesses are luxury home building, master-planned community development, golf course, and golf club development and general land development. They also operate related businesses in Architecture, Engineering, Mortgage, Title Insurance, Landscape Design, Component Assembly, and Manufacturing. The company operates in 50 markets in 19 states and has its corporate headquarters in Horsham, Pennsylvania (Toll Brothers Career Center, n.d.).

Toll Brothers has a program for college graduates with a focus on “Training Our Next Generation of Leaders”. The Toll Brothers *Assistant Project Management Training Program (APM)* is listed as their most intensive training program and the starting point for most of their company’s project managers. Trainees spend 12-16 months learning about all facets of real estate development through five major categories: Construction, Sales & Marketing, Finance & Reporting, Land Development, and the most important category of Management, Motivational, & Leadership Skills.

The Toll Brothers company website states that graduates of the program become managers of multi-million dollar projects and can then look forward to tremendous opportunities for growth. Toll Brothers also discusses career paths within the company and provides a list of the progression in job assignments for each career path. The career paths listed include Project Management, Construction Management, Land Acquisition, Land Development, Engineering, Architecture, Sales, and other Subsidiaries (Toll Brothers Career Center, n.d.).

In 1957, a concept of bringing the rental car to the customer from locations around the state of Florida was the idea of a rental car branch manager. This later became the foundation on what Enterprise Rent-A-Car is known for today. Enterprise founder Jack Taylor built the company to a worldwide leader in car leasing using the simple idea of focusing all the company's resources on two things: satisfaction of the customer and the success of their employees. By concentrating on these two things, he said everything else would take care of itself. And still today, Enterprise is known worldwide for its management training and personnel development programs. Even when you read through their list of core values, each value has a direct link back to customer satisfaction and the success of their employees. Their core values include Brand, Honesty, Service, Fun, Hard Work, Listening, Community, and Inclusion (Enterprise Rent-A-Car Careers, n.d.).

Reviewing more of Enterprise Rent-A-Car Careers Site, they provide prospective employees a wealth of information about their management training program, which includes the topics of Customer Service, Finance, Marketing, and Logistics (Enterprise Rent-A-Car Careers, n.d.). Additionally, Enterprise offers its management trainees a formal career path, which includes steps to management trainee, management assistant, assistant manager, branch manager, area manager, and then also related careers in a car sales, fleet management, recruitment, commercial truck, and business rental sales.

With over 12,000 promotions annually, Enterprise's policy of promoting from within shows the value of preparing people in the company for promotion at all levels. This promote from within policy is very common in fire departments, usually up until the rank of Chief of Department, in which case they may hire from outside the organization. Shouldn't we really be

preparing our fire department staff to promote at all levels, so that we don't have to hire a Chief from outside the organization?

The U.S. Military is known for its development of personnel through its intense leadership and officer development training programs. They offer both Basic Level and Ongoing Training for soldiers. For example, when you first join the Army, you attend Basic Combat Training (BCT). Over ten weeks in the BCT course, you learn how to transition from being an everyday citizen to a soldier. Emphasis is placed on the seven core Army values and how to succeed together as a team. I equate this to our Basic Firefighter or Firefighter 1 courses. From there you enroll in your Advanced Individual Training (AIT) where you learn the skills to perform in your specific Army job. I equate this to our Engine Company, Truck Company, and Rescue Company courses and certification programs (Go Army - Army Careers, n.d.).

Soldiers who want to make a career of the Army are directed into either Leadership Training to prepare them for promotion or into Specialized Schools. Leadership Training includes courses such as Warrior Leader Course, Advanced Leader Course, First Sergeants Academy, and Command Sergeants Major Academy. I would equate this to our Fire Officer I, II, and III certification programs. Specialized Schools include Air Assault School, Special Forces Training, Airborne School, and Jumpmaster School. I would equate this to Technical Rescue Teams like Urban Search and Rescue Teams, Hazardous Materials Teams, Rope Rescue, and Confined Space Rescue. The Army provides many, many types of training opportunities for professional development and also provides clear career paths for their soldiers (Go Army - Army Careers, n.d.).

Another branch of the military with a strong focus on developing its members for leadership positions is the Navy. The Navy has the Officer Training Command (OTC), whose

primary mission is to train civilians, enlisted, and newly commissioned personnel to be Naval Officers. The OTC is located in Newport, Rhode Island and is tasked with preparing officer candidates physically, morally, and mentally (Naval Officer Training Command Home Page, 2014).

One of five different officer accession programs offered at the OTC is the Officer Candidate School (OCS). The OCS is a 12 week course for those considering a career as a commissioned naval officer. The focus of the program is develop the candidates with officer qualities to help them succeed as Junior Officers. Skills emphasized in the training program include discipline, attention to detail, building esprit de corps, time management and physical fitness (Naval Officer Training Command Home Page, 2014).

Another of the five training programs at the OTC is Officer Development School (ODS). ODS teaches the newly commissioned officer about military structure, traditions and customs, the legal system, and finally military etiquette. The five week program also covers Naval Leadership, Naval Administration, Sea Power, Military Law, Military Indoctrination, Naval Warfare, and Damage Control. Completion of this course also includes physical fitness training called Physical Readiness Tests (Naval Officer Training Command Home Page, 2014).

For years, the law enforcement community nationwide has routinely been awarded millions of dollars more in federal grant money than the fire service. This has always been attributed to law enforcement doing a much better job with data collection and justification for funding to obtain more officers, better weapons and armored vehicles, as well as specialized training. You may even find that the law enforcement community does a better job at providing professional development for their future leaders than the fire service does. One possible reason

for this is that law enforcement is more closely aligned with the military in its mission, structure, and deployment than is the fire service, which is considered more para-military in nature.

In my research about New Jersey Law Enforcement leadership training, I found information about the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP). Its primary mission is the challenge of developing future law enforcement leaders. One of the main links on their homepage is their Professional Development Division. Within this division, they offer a Command & Leadership Academy, New Police Chiefs Orientation Program, the Police Executive Institute, Annual Training Conference, Front Line Supervisors Programs, a Senior Leadership Seminar, and a five day program called the Normandy-Portsmouth “D-Day” Leadership Experience. I was truly amazed at the wide array of courses they offer to development law enforcement officers at all ranks (New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014).

I quickly began a search of companion associations in New Jersey’s fire service. I was able to locate the New Jersey State Fire Chiefs Association and the New Jersey State Volunteer Fire Chiefs Association. Neither one offered anything on their association website about development of future fire service leaders. I also located a website for the New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association, which was a little better in referencing that they work to “Advance Professional Fire Management and address areas of Safety, Education and Training for the firefighters and citizens of the state” (New Jersey Deputy Chiefs Association, n.d., p. 1). Further review of this website left me once again unable to find any specific chief officer development courses or programs that they offer. I do know that this association does routinely sponsor fire service seminars around the state on topics related to fireground tactics, incident command, and

leadership. However, I was unable to find anything that showed their association hosting any type of professional development academy (New Jersey Deputy Fire Chiefs Association, n.d.).

At the national level, I referred to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), the mostly widely recognized professional networking group among the fire service worldwide. In existence since 1873, the IAFC has provided a forum for fire service leaders to exchange ideas, develop professionally, and uncover the newest trends in products and services available to first responders. The IAFC represents chief and company officers serving in fire departments that are volunteer, career, combination, industrial, and military (International Association of Fire Chiefs, n.d.). I was already familiar with the IAFC, because I previously served as a volunteer deputy fire chief in New Jersey and I am currently a company officer affiliate member of the IAFC. My current role a company officer makes me eligible for this level of membership in the IAFC. Regular membership in the IAFC is afforded to an fire chief, chief officer, or fire marshal with 2-5 bugles (International Association of Fire Chiefs, n.d.).

Reviewing the IAFC website, they have a comprehensive section dedicated to Education & Development of fire service leaders at all levels. There are links to toolboxes for the Company Officer, New Chief, and Veteran Chief. Each of these leads to a link on Officer Development and a host of opportunities for professional development including symposiums, conferences, and leadership academies. In addition, the same link officers a list of training materials, textbooks, and manuals on topics including professional development, fire service consolidations, human resource management, as well as recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

Procedures

The procedures section of the research paper discusses the steps taken to arrive at the final results of the study. It will define what was done, when it was done, who did it, and who was involved. The procedures section will allow another member of the fire service to replicate the research if they have a similar challenge in their department related to my research topic.

This process started while I was still at the National Fire Academy (NFA) for the Executive Development course in March 2014. During that time, I visited the Learning Resource Center on campus and utilized the electronic catalog to find sources for research, which included textbooks, journal articles, and other EFO research papers. The LRC staff at the NFA campus was very helpful during the times that I visited the LRC to locate sources. Once I returned home, I continued to review other sources including military and business management textbooks, fire service textbooks, journal articles, and websites.

When I returned from the course, the first research question I wanted to answer was, “What are the state standards for chief officer in New Jersey?” This led me to an internet search of our state government website, more specifically our state Division of Fire Safety, Training and Education section. Research on this section would then lead me to our state statutes annotated online for more information. The search of these two sources is covered in greater detail in the literature review section of this paper.

The next question to address was, “What are the components of chief officer development programs in other career and combination departments of similar size to EFD?” I created an online survey tool using the website *surveymonkey.com*. The survey I created is included in the appendix of this research paper (Appendix A-9). The survey was needed to collect information from other departments and answer this research question. I decided to

survey other New Jersey fire departments that had approximately 100 or fewer career firefighters, and also having career chief officers below the rank of Chief of Department (i.e. – Battalion Chief, Assistant Chief, and Deputy Chief). I also included a few departments locally that I knew had Captains with daily responsibilities closely aligned with the rank of a Battalion Chief. I also chose to include in the survey two local Chiefs of Department, who were both appointed to their positions in the past two years and were both in their middle thirties. I felt that their answers to my survey questions about professional development in their departments would be relevant.

To find my pool of departments to survey, I went to the website for the New Jersey based labor union which I am a member of, the New Jersey Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association (NJFMBA). On their website is a listing of all the fire departments in New Jersey that have membership in the NJFMBA (New Jersey State Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association, n.d.). I clicked on each department's web link to view their fire department website and determine which fire departments fit my survey criteria. I was also then able to locate the name and email address of their Chief of Department.

I then sent each Chief a request by email identifying myself as a student in the EFO Program and asked permission to survey his chief officer staff to obtain information for my research project. A copy of my email sent to the Chiefs is included in the appendix (Appendix A-10). If I did not receive any response from a Chief after one week, I would send a second request by email. With the exception of a few Chiefs that did not reply to me, the overwhelming majority of Chiefs that I contacted provided me names and email addresses for their chief officer staff.

I then sent an email to each chief officer that I was provided contact information for and once again identified myself as a student in the EFO program conducting original research about what other departments are doing to prepare their company officers for promotion to chief officer. I asked each of them to take a short anonymous online survey, for which I provided them a link to in the email. A sample of this email sent to my survey group is also included in the appendix (Appendix A-11). There were fifty-two chief officer respondents to my online survey.

The next research question was, “What are the components of management training programs for successful companies in other industries?” For this I conducted an internet search on the subjects of management and leadership training programs. This led to me research the hotel industry, rental car industry, residential building industry, New Jersey Law Enforcement, and finally two of our U.S. Military branches. This is covered in greater detail in the literature review section of this paper.

To answer the research question, “What are the formal and informal roles of Deputy Chief at the EFD”, I surveyed our current Deputy Chief, the rank above him (Assistant Chief) and the rank immediately below him (two Captains). Only the Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief responded to my question. I also obtained the job description for our current Deputy Chief and also Battalion Chief, which currently does not exist in our career staff, but may in the future. The job descriptions helped to the formal roles of the Deputy Chief. The informal roles were other duties, roles, and responsibilities that the Deputy Chief does that are not necessarily assigned by job description. These are discussed later in the results section of the research paper.

Next, I wanted to answer the research question, “What do current company officers at EFD think should be included in a chief officer development program?” Again, I created an

online survey tool using the website *surveymonkey.com* that I sent to the current Captains and Lieutenants on our career staff at EFD. The survey again allowed them to answer questions anonymously and return the results to me directly. The survey included questions about their perspective of professional development currently at EFD. A copy of this survey is included in the appendix of this research paper (Appendix A-12)

The final research question I wanted to answer was, “What training do retired EFD Deputy Chiefs think would have better prepared them for promotion to their position?” For this I created a list of interview questions and met with our two retired Deputy Chiefs. I also decided to interview our retired Captain, because I felt that he would have good information with regards to his professional development at EFD. I also felt that he was capable of being promoted to Deputy Chief if he had not retired. I also interviewed the current Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief to get their perspective of their professional development while advancing in their careers at EFD. I have included the interview form in the appendix of this research paper (Appendix A-13).

Some limitations to my procedures are discussed further in the following paragraphs. One limitation to my survey of outside departments was that I chose not to interview any Chief of Departments in my survey (with the exception of the two local Fire Chiefs mentioned above), only the chief officers below them. My thought was that most of the Chiefs would be in the later stages of their fire service career and I wanted to hear more from chief officer ranks that still had time remaining in their career to do more professional develop and promote further. Another limitation of my survey instrument was that I limited my survey group to career and combination fire departments from New Jersey, and also a few referred to me from Connecticut, with approximately 100 or less career personnel.

Another limitation of my survey instruments were that because my online surveys allowed participants to respond anonymously to the survey questions, it did not allow me to follow up with anyone individually to get more information. For example, out of fifty-two responses to a question about chief officer development programs, only seven respondents said that their department had a formal program like this. However, because the responses were all anonymous, I was unable to follow up with these seven people to see what their fire department's chief officer development program included. I chose to use surveys that did not identify the respondent, because I felt that people taking the survey would be more honest in their responses about their fire departments professional development program, or lack of one, if they knew that their responses were anonymous and would not be tied back to them directly.

A final limitation was that in my first survey instrument sent to other fire departments of similar size, I included a response option of "neutral" for each question. I also chose to use a category for agree and disagree that paired them with the term "strongly". Once I reviewed the results of this survey, I decided not to use them in my second survey instrument sent to EFD company officers, because I wanted more definitive answers to my questions and less generality that came from using "neutral" and also "agree/disagree" versus "strongly agree/strongly disagree".

Results

The results section includes findings from the original research that I conducted and the resulting data collected. My second research question looked for information regarding other fire departments of similar size and make-up to EFD and what do their chief officer development programs include. I contacted other similar sized career and combination (career/volunteer) departments in New Jersey and Connecticut and then conducted a survey with their career chief

officers below the rank of Chief of Department. My survey instrument and how I conducted the survey are discussed in further detail under the Procedures section of this paper.

One of the survey questions asked participants if their department had a Chief Officer Development Program. Out of 52 people who responded, only seven or 13.5% said their department had a training program like this. When I contacted many of the mutual aid departments in my area with career personnel, with the exception of one department, they all said they did not have a formal chief officer development program.

Another interesting response to my survey questions was when asked if they felt their department had adequately prepared them for promotion to their current rank, only twelve respondents or 23% said they agreed. When asked if their department understood the value of succession planning in preparing their department for upper management retirements, 23 respondents or 44% said they disagreed and another ten respondents or 19% were neutral. When given a list of nineteen topics that could be included in a chief officer development program, the top five topics that were selected were:

- 1) Dealing with Municipal Government Officials – 94%;
- 2) Finance/Budgeting – 90%;
- 3) Written & Oral Communications – 88%;
- 4) Dealing with Difficult Employees / Human Relations – tied at 86% each
- 5) Applying for Grants and Alternative Funding Sources / Emergency Management & Disaster Planning – tied at 84% each

When asked if their department were to create a Chief Officer Development Program, would they actively participate in the program, 47 respondents or 90% said yes they would.

When asked if they thought it was important to provide professional development for both career

and volunteer chief officers in a combination fire department, 44 respondents or 85% said they agreed.

My findings to my third research question, about what were other industries doing to development future leaders, found similarities in their management training programs. The U.S. Army and U.S. Navy both provide opportunities for officer development which are visible, easy to locate, and show what the career paths are for a future Army or Naval Officer. At Enterprise Rental Car, the mantra was to take care of their employees and everything else would take care of itself. They also provided written career paths for different tracks to promotion within their company.

In the hotel industry, Marriott's first core value is to put people first, by taking care of their employees they will take care of the customers. Giving the employees opportunities for advancement within the company is again linked back directly to their core values. Marriott Corporation also provides written career paths showing the steps and training needed to advance in different parts of the company. Similarly, Hilton Hotels emphasizes offering continuous training development throughout an employee's career, not just entry-level training.

In the custom home building industry, Toll Brothers recognizes the importance of professional development by naming their management training program, *Training Our Next Generation of Leaders*. Their professional development model puts new managers in charge of multi-million dollar real estate development projects. Toll Brothers also provides written career paths to follow so that their employees know where they are headed in the future and what steps they need to take to achieve their goals for advancement.

For the fourth research question concerning formal and informal roles of the Deputy Chief rank at EFD, I asked by sending an email to the current career EFD Deputy Chief, the

Assistant Chief above him, and the two Captains below him what they perceived these to be. The two captains did not respond to my multiple requests, which I believe was an accidental oversight.

The results were that Deputy Chief perceived his formal roles to be those included in his job description, but also to never forget where he came from as a firefighter and be an honest leader. The Deputy Chief perceived his informal roles as being an organization cheerleader, always marketing the department and its resources, while also applauding great efforts of our personnel. The Deputy further responded that his informal roles included being a mentor and trainer to others, be professional and never stop both learning and teaching, and finally to be realistic about what the department is and isn't, understanding our department and community specific challenges and issues. Meaning that what we *are* is a suburban Philadelphia, combination, fire-rescue department. We are *not* a metropolitan city fire department, nor do we have the same issues or challenges that they do, and they don't have ours.

The results to the fourth research question from the Assistant Chief were that his formal roles were the daily responsibilities of responding to incidents, personnel scheduling and administration, as well as training. The Assistant Chief perceived that his informal roles revolve around that the job is a lifestyle and not just a position. The higher up you move in the organization, the more phone calls you get at all times of the day and night. Many times these calls are personal in nature and members need guidance with problems. Sometimes the member is just looking for advice, but this can also put the chief officer in a difficult position if he has to discipline the member for what he just shared.

In order to answer research question number five, I needed to survey current company officers at EFD about their thoughts on professional development. Two EFD Captains and three

EFD Lieutenants participated in their online survey of ten questions. When asked if the next rank above them were to become vacant next week, had our department adequately prepared them to promote into the next rank, three respondents agreed and two disagreed. When asked if the fire department had helped to prepare them to promote into their current rank, three responded as disagree and two responded as being neutral. One survey question asked our company officers to rank the following six topics in order of importance for development of future chief officers. While it was agreed that all six topics were important, the results of being asked to rank them were:

- 1) Written & Oral Communications
- 2) Incident Scene Strategy and Tactics
- 3) Budgeting and Finance
- 4) Labor-Management Relations
- 5) Employee Discipline
- 6) Career-Volunteer Employee Relations

In another survey question, EFD company officers were asked does department recognize the value of succession planning in preparing the organization for future chief officer level retirements, unanimously the response was disagree. When asked who was responsible to prepare officers to promote to the next rank – the officer, the fire department, or a combination of both, four out of five respondents said a combination of both, while one respondent said it was solely the officer's responsibility. When asked if our department currently has a chief officer development program, unanimously the response was disagree. The follow up question was that if the EFD were to create a Chief Officer Development Program would they participate in it, the response was a unanimous agree.

When asked if it was important to provide professional development plans for both career and volunteer officers in the EFD, all five company officers responded that they agreed. When given a list of 18 topics that could be included in a chief officer development program, the following topics were all picked unanimously as should be included. They are in no particular order: Finance & Budgeting, Strategy & Tactics for Multi-Alarm Incidents, Emergency Management/Disaster Planning, Human Relations, Written & Oral Communications, and Dealing with Local Municipal Government Officials. The remaining thirteen topics in the survey question were all selected between one and four times as “should be included” in a chief officer development program.

For research question number six about what training would have better prepared them for promotion to their final rank as a chief officer, I interviewed two retired EFD Deputy Chiefs and a retired EFD Captain. I then decided to use the same interview tool and interview the current EFD Deputy Chief and Assistant Chief. Their individual responses were tremendously helpful to my research and more importantly understanding the history of the Evesham Fire Department and its growth as a combination career-volunteer organization.

Discussion

The purpose of the applied research project was to determine if the Evesham Fire Department has fully prepared its career company officers for promotion to chief officer. In the discussion section, I will review and analyze the results of my research, including what others have said about my topic, things I have discovered through my original research and what the impacts are for my own organization.

All of the literature I reviewed confirmed the importance of professional development in order for any organization to be successful. Since February 18, 2003, the laws of New Jersey

mandate professional development by requiring certification and training for fire officers (N.J. Standards For Fire Service Training And Certification, Subchapter 8. Fire Officers, February 18, 2003). The New Jersey statute for Fire Service Training and Certification, Subchapter 8 – Fire Officers, follows the nationally recognized levels of Fire Officer I through Fire Officer IV as taken from NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications.

I also discovered through the literature review that an organization's continued success is also directly impacted by the ability to cultivate new leaders to replace departing leaders. The fire service has identified every ten years since the original Wingspread Conference in 1966 that professional development of fire officers continues to be an area of national significance to the fire problem in the United States (*IAFC ODH*, 2010). I also found that acquiring and keeping good people should be the most important job of the organizational leader. And those who really want to be successful leaders not only must develop those around them, but they must also cultivate a team of leaders to help the organization grow (Maxwell, 1995).

With regards to succession planning and the future success of the organization, Dr. Harry Carter discussed in his article how failing to properly develop people and failing to train people to do their job top his list of ways that fire departments fail to position themselves for future success. Carter tells us how our future success as a community based organization is dependent upon a dedicated and conscious effort to develop our personnel to lead the organization (Carter, 2014).

Every fire department has a responsibility to develop effective leaders to prepare the organization for future promotions. And this responsibility is a shared one – between management, firefighters and the labor union (Alyn, 2012, p. 156). It is also further emphasized how critical it is to have a clear organizational mission, vision, and core values that members of

the organization can use to guide their daily decisions (Alyn, 2012, p. 159). The research also shows that an organization that understands the importance of succession planning is ahead of other fire departments in preparing for the future. It's important for the organization growth to engage future leaders with meaningful and challenging assignments to test their ability for advancement (Weymouth, 2011, p. 37).

With regard to developing our personnel to be future leaders, the fire service has spent the majority of our time focusing on leadership training for fireground strategy and tactics, as well as incident command training. The fire service must also recognize that this isn't enough, because most of our time is spent away from the emergency incident scene and in fire stations dealing with people. Human resource training, dealing with difficult employees, administering discipline, and providing leadership in the firehouse are all topics that must be included in a professional development program (Saunders, 2003, p. 229).

Professional development must become part of the organization's culture as means for continuous improvement (IAFC & NFPA, 2012, p. 48). For any organization to remain strong and vibrant, it must continuously improve. This is a basic management concept. Each person must develop both personally and professionally. It's important for each person to establish career goals, be involved in the community and volunteering, and conduct a personal audit of your knowledge, skills and abilities. Once you have done these things, then you can work toward developing a professional development plan that combines training, education, and certification (*IAFC ODH*, 2010, p. 8).

Through my research of military books I learned that professional development of subordinates is a primary responsibility of commanders (Adamchik, 2006, p. 111). One way to develop our subordinates is to provide reading lists of both fire service and non-fire service

books on leadership, human relations, and personal development. The military also shows the importance of providing guidance on career paths and direction for how to prepare to promotion to the next rank, as well as ranks further on.

The military encourages personal development by having their members take on leadership positions early in their career and rotate through other specialized job assignments (Rush, 2006, p. 126). The subject of job rotation as one component of professional development is also discussed in the textbook used by New Jersey for its Fire Officer III course (IAFC & NFPA, 2012). While job rotation as a positive means for professional development is discussed in several sources from my literature review, this has been a source of frustration for some personnel in my own department.

Our department does practice this concept by sporadically reassigning our company officers between Training, Prevention and Operations. This has been done with the intention of allowing officers to understand and experience all parts of the organization, an organization they may one day be a chief officer in. However, sometimes a company officer will view reassignment to Prevention for example as a punishment, because they are stronger in another area of the department like Operations. The rotation of officers has also sometimes frustrated firefighters in our department, who perceive this as once a company officer has strengths in particular area or becomes really good at a job assignment, it's taken away from them with a periodic job rotation (i.e. – Training Officer gets reassigned to Prevention).

I was one of the company officers who were very frustrated by my first job rotation to our Prevention Bureau some years ago. Looking back now, it was a great experience, afforded me the opportunity to attend training in cause and origin investigation, and also allowed me to get a better knowledge of the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code. This has helped me in my current

assignment as a Lieutenant in Operations, because our Operations personnel supplement our fire inspectors assigned to the Prevention Bureau by also conducting fire inspections in our first due area. Today I recognize that job rotation is an effective tool for professional development for future chief officers.

Many of the sources in my literature review discussed the benefits of mentoring as a means of professional development. Not only does the protégé benefit from the relationship, but also the mentor benefits from it (IAFC & NFPA, 2012, p. 121). Mentoring programs are the best way to prepare new officers and also compensate for the years of experience lost when senior members retire and probationary firefighters replace them (Viscuso, 2013, p. 119). Mentoring programs can be multi-purpose for any organization. They can be used to educate and prepare newly hired personnel, instill values and improve the attitude of mentees, preserve the history of your fire department, encourage all members to help in developing the organizational team, increase the confidence level of those in the mentoring program, and finally increase morale by involving other people that might otherwise just sit on the sideline and not participate (Viscuso, 2013, p. 120).

Mentoring is not a new concept and can be traced back to the middle ages, when young boys worked alongside of masters in a particular craft or trade. The skills they gained along the way allowed them to eventually become journeymen and then finally become masters (*IAFC ODH*, 2010, p. 6). As the leader of an organization, you must first realize that you alone do not determine the success of the department. The collective efforts of everyone on the team, including middle managers and front line personnel, determine organizational success. That being said, you can multiply your effectiveness by instituting a quality mentoring program (Viscuso, 2014, p. 83).

My department actually has a mentoring program for new hires on the career staff and also new members of our volunteer staff. In both systems, new members are assigned a mentor, who becomes their “go to” person for any questions they have during their recruit period. The new member is given a recruit manual with important information about the organization including a historical overview, organizational chart, and checklists of things they must complete during their recruit period. Our recruit manual for volunteer personnel is over 80 pages and is more comprehensive than our career recruit manual. This is because in most cases when someone joins our department as a fire or EMS volunteer, they usually have no emergency services background. In a few cases, a volunteer member will move into town and have experience with a prior Fire or EMS agency. All of our career hires on the other hand must already be certified as both Firefighters and EMTs, and have two years experience in order to be eligible to participate in our hiring process.

In both career and volunteer sections of our organization, the mentor stays assigned to work with the new member until they complete their recruit period and promote up to full Firefighter or EMT status. While we have had many years of success with this recruit mentoring process, we have not applied it to development of company officers and chief officers. I believe we could easily adapt this model for new hires and use it as a professional development tool for current and future officers.

Looking at the results from my internal and external surveys, as well as my interviews with current and retired chief officers from EFD, I have found that our department is no different than most departments in New Jersey when it comes to professional development. We are lacking in a formal structured professional development plan for our officers. While our department does afford our members considerable training opportunities in comparison to other

departments locally of similar size, we still may not be doing the best we possibly can to ensure that company officers are prepared to be future chief officers in the Evesham Fire Department. The department does place value on advanced education, as evident by our requirement of 60 college credits to be eligible for career employment at EFD. Additionally, career and volunteer personnel are both eligible for college tuition reimbursement, after meeting minimum requirements for passing grade levels and also participation/activity levels for the volunteer members of the department.

During my more than fifteen years with EFD, I have been afforded the opportunity to attend national training conferences and two-week courses at the National Fire Academy. The EFD has approved and paid for almost any outside seminar or training session that I requested to attend on my off time. In the past five years, we have also spent significant funds from our training budget to bring nationally recognized fire service instructors in to our department, so that all our members could receive advanced training. Overall, I believe that the EFD is supportive of its members who desire to attend additional training opportunities beyond those offered in-house at our department.

The research I have done for this paper requires me to consider the implications of the study results on my own organization. Up until now, our promotion process from company officer up to our first level chief officer (Deputy Chief) has historically been an interview process with no other written exam or assessment center. This was sufficient because of the infrequency of promotions and the limited number of eligible officers, due to the relatively smaller size of our organization. Our promotions at the chief level also have been limited, because our current chief officer staff has been in their positions for longer periods of time.

For example, our Chief of Department has held this rank since 1989. Our Assistant Chief, who is currently second in command of the department, has been in his position since 2003. Our current Deputy Chief, who is next in our command structure, has held this position since 2005. The first department Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal was in that position for 13 years until his retirement in 2005. Another Deputy Chief, who has also since retired, was in his final rank for seven years. We also had a Captain retire after more than 20 years in his final rank.

Fortunately for our department, I believe that our current Assistant Chief has been well groomed, prepared, and educated to become our next Chief of Department. I feel equally as confident that our current Deputy Chief has the proper experience, education, and training to become our next second in command of the organization and future Chief of Department. This is a testament to our current Chief who has worked closely with our Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief during their time as chief officers.

Both our Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief have over 24 years total service time with the EFD and could both conceivably retire within the next 10 months to 2 years. Their retirement dates will most certainly be affected by the current political climate in New Jersey and our Governor's current mission to reduce the pensions, health benefits, and retirement payouts of public employees in New Jersey. This is being done with specific emphasis being placed on telling the residents of our state that firefighters, police officers, and teachers are overpaid and that our retirement and health benefits are too generous.

Twenty-five years ago when our fire department was very small with only two fire stations, no EMS services as part of its mission, and only a handful of career personnel, our first Chief was promoted from within at a point early in his career at EFD. As a result, he has remained in this leadership position for many years, as the fire department has grown

exponentially in size, call volume, and number of career and volunteer personnel. The career position of Deputy Chief was also filled early in our organization's history as a combination fire department, when we only had a handful of career firefighters.

The lack of turnover at the top of our organization has had the indirect result of limiting the advancement of the middle of the organization for our Lieutenants and Captains. Reviewing our job descriptions for Deputy Chief and Battalion Chief, we now have company officers that don't meet the time-in-grade requirements to promote to Deputy Chief or Battalion Chief. For example, our job descriptions for Deputy Chief and Battalion Chief (has a job description but the rank is not currently assigned to our career staff) both require a minimum of three years service time as a Captain at EFD, with five years as a preferred qualification.

Our two Captains on the career staff (one of which can retire at any time now) have been in their current rank for less than three years. This also leaves four Lieutenants who also have no time-in-grade as Captains. This results in the possibility of having three chief officers who could retire from the organization in a short span of time and only have one Captain eligible to promote to Deputy Chief, which is only the first-step or junior level chief officer in our department. While I did not review our job descriptions for Assistant Chief or Chief, I would expect that they both also require time-in-grade at the Deputy Chief level in order to promote to either rank. In some fire departments that are currently experiencing retirements of chief officers, this same situation could result in:

- A. chief officer ranks being eliminated or left vacant and not back filled with promotions;

- B. using lower ranking officers to do the assignments previously done for many years by the higher rank (i.e. – Captains doing the jobs previously done by Deputy Chiefs);
- C. hiring from outside of the fire department to fill vacant chief officer positions.

In some fire departments, lack of advancement opportunities can be a reason for an employee to leave for other fire departments, where they perceive there are greater opportunities for advancement. When career employees leave the department, the department incurs a significant loss of time and money that was spent on hiring, outfitting, providing benefits for and training the employee during their employment term with us. In my 15 plus years at EFD, our department has experienced some career firefighters leaving for other opportunities, but no career officers have ever left to this point.

All three chief officers are experienced fire ground officers and incident commanders. Our Chief and Assistant Chief are both graduates of the Executive Fire Officer Program and have Masters Degrees in Public Safety Administration. Our Deputy Chief has a Bachelors Degree in fire science. All three participate in ongoing education and training respective to their duties and responsibilities for their rank. While these three chief officers have served our agency well, we are about to experience the impacts of their near future retirements from the department. This combined with the near future loss of a veteran Captain at the operational level, will undoubtedly have a noticeable impact on a combination department of our size.

Recommendations

The Evesham Fire Department has been recognized as a leader in Burlington County, New Jersey for its ability to deliver a variety of services to the residents and visitors of Evesham Township, using a blend of career and volunteer personnel. These services include handling Fire

and EMS responses, fire code enforcement, public education, and technical rescue services. In a period of less than 35 years, the EFD has grown substantially and now serves the largest community in Burlington County, New Jersey; with over 48,000 residents spread over 30 square miles.

The department is facing a critical time in its history, with the anticipated loss of the four most senior members of its career staff in a very short span of time. The study shows the importance of professional development and creating a leadership pipeline within in the organization to ensure continued success. The department must recognize the need to adopt a model of continuous improvement to ensure its future success.

As a result of the findings in this applied research paper, the author makes the following recommendations:

1. The EFD must begin to take a more active role in preparing its current company officer staff for roles as chief officers. This includes meeting with company officers to review the job description of the next two ranks above them and determine what needs to be done to prepare them for these roles. This should also include current chief officers sharing anticipated retirement dates, for the purpose of transition planning for the remaining officers. This could possibly be done with all career officers gathering in a day trip or weekend retreat format at a location away from the EFD.
2. The EFD should re-evaluate its current mission statement to see if it is still relevant and appropriate as written. In addition, the EFD must clearly define what its core values and its vision are, and make them clearly known to all members of

the organization. Included in our core values should be a commitment to professional development of future leaders in the department.

3. Any review or update of the mission statement, organization vision and core values should include representation from all segments of the department. This will ensure support for these important tools for organizational decision making.
4. The EFD should assign the role of Professional Development Officer (PDO) to an existing supervisor on the career staff. This position should be separate from the Department Training Officer, as this new position will have significant and time consuming responsibilities. This officer will be responsible to create model professional development plans for each supervisory rank in the EFD. These plans should be aligned with the EFD job descriptions for each rank. These professional development plans would follow the National Professional Development Matrix as established by FESCHE and also adopt the guidelines in the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Officer Development Handbook.
5. Once model plans have been completed for each supervisor rank, the PDO would be tasked with meeting individual with career officers and volunteer officers to explain the professional development model and provide guidance for each supervisor of what they need to do to prepare for promotion to their next rank. The PDO would meet with each supervisor at some predetermined interval (six months, annually, every three years, etc).
6. The EFD should purchase and issue copies of the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, current edition, to all current career and volunteer officers. Personnel

receiving the book would be given an assignment that would require them to read the book in order to complete.

7. The EFD should establish a Relationship by Objectives workgroup between labor and management to discuss the benefits of formalizing a professional development plan for career personnel. The workgroup should identify the obstacles to formalizing this type of program including who can participate in outside training programs with regard to staffing levels and what costs the EFD is contractually obligated to pay for.
8. The EFD should establish minimum criteria for career firefighters to serve as an “acting officer” in the temporary absence of a career company officer. The criteria would define minimum time employed by the department, as well as training and certification needed to be an acting officer. In addition, acting officers must complete an EFD course of instruction covering a review of critical EFD Standard Operating Procedures, the roles and responsibilities of the first-due company officer at an incident scene, as well as in-station duties of the company officer. This course would be developed jointly by the Professional Development Officer and the Department Training Officer.
9. The EFD should create an application process for career and volunteer company officers to be accepted into a formal Chief Officer Development Program. The application process would formalize the member’s intention to pursue future chief officer leadership opportunities in the department and identify future key leaders. The application process would also establish a partnership between the member and the EFD, defining the roles and responsibilities of each party. Upon

acceptance into the program, the applicant would be required to complete or update their professional development plan. The EFD should purchase and issue the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, current edition, to each member accepted into the program.

10. The EFD should create an application process for firefighters to be accepted into a Company Officer Development Program. The application process would formalize the member's intention to pursue future leadership opportunities in the department and establish a partnership between the member and the department, defining the roles and responsibilities of each party. Upon acceptance into the program, the applicant would be required to complete a professional development plan. The EFD should purchase and issue the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, current edition, to each member accepted into the program. The member will be given an assignment that would require them to read the handbook in order to complete it.
11. The EFD should establish a mentoring program as part of its professional development plans. Each level of the organization, career and volunteer, should have the responsibility to mentor those in ranks directly below them, including Lieutenants mentoring firefighters. The mentoring program should be established in writing and define objectives of the program and benchmarks for learning to promote to the next rank. The program may also include partnerships with other fire departments in New Jersey to exchange officers for the purpose of mentoring.
12. The EFD should establish a Duty Chief program for volunteer officers, requiring all volunteer officers at the rank of Captain and above to rotate as the "on call" or

Duty Chief during the volunteer staffed hours, seven days a week. Volunteer Captains would initially ride along with existing volunteer chief officers during normal duty crew hours, before then being allowed to act as the Duty Chief.

Existing volunteer chief officers would also participate in the program. The Duty Chief would utilize a command car during their assigned shift of 4, 8, or 12 hours as defined by the program. Requirements and minimum standards to participate in the program regarding experience, education, and certifications would be defined jointly by the career Deputy Chief of Operations and the volunteer chief officers. This program would be used to develop future chief officers from within the volunteer company officer ranks.

13. The EFD should develop a reading list of both fire service and non-fire service books and target them toward each rank in the organization. This established reading list should be periodically updated and may also be used in future promotional processes for each rank.
14. The EFD should pay for its career and volunteer company officers to be members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, Company Officer Section. The research showed that membership in networking groups is a key component to professional development. The IAFC website and monthly newsletters are great resources of information for today's fire service leaders to keep abreast of the challenges in our industry. EFD already pays for annual membership in the IAFC for its career and volunteer chief officers.
15. The EFD should require its volunteer and career chief officers to attend a minimum number of meetings and serve on committees for the Burlington County

Fire Chiefs Association. I am a member of this organization as a past volunteer Deputy Chief in our county and I attend meetings on a regular basis. With the exception of our Chief of Department, who has served as a past president and has served on many committees, our department has no regular representation at this association's meetings. Our county fire chiefs association is a very strong professional networking group of volunteer and career, past and present, chief level officers. This organization can only remain successful with continued participation from the leaders of fire departments across our county. The research also showed that membership in networking groups is a key component to professional development.

16. The EFD should host future leadership retreats locally or out of state for both career and volunteer officers. These could be done in a one-day or weekend format, similar to those that I participated in as a part of the campus residence hall staff when I attended college.

Following these recommendations will ensure that company officers are fully prepared to assume the role of chief officer as positions open up due to a variety of reasons including retirements, unexpected injuries, job relocation for volunteer officers, or career officers leaving for outside advancement opportunities. Some of the recommendations above can be implemented in shorter time frames than others can; however, they are all important steps to ensuring the future success of the Evesham Fire Department in the community that we serve. It is my hope that the recommendations of this research paper will benefit officer development in both the career and volunteer divisions of the EFD.

The challenge of preparing career company officers for advancement to career chief officer is certainly not unique to the Evesham Fire Department. It is being experienced daily by fire departments all around the country, including volunteer, career and combination departments alike. If you are a Chief or any level of chief officer, I strongly encourage you to step back and take a look at your command structure and then evaluate what the next one, three, five, and ten years looks like in your organization. Is your organization ready for anticipated retirements or people in key positions leaving unexpectedly? If your answer is no, then you probably need to update or implement a professional development plan for your leadership team.

Professional development is a process that must be embraced early on and done continuously throughout a person's fire service career. It can't begin a few months before a promotion process occurs. Professional development is also a key element of succession planning. The biggest mistake a company officer can make is not to prepare for promotion to chief officer.

For future readers of this research paper, I recommend that you take some time to first research what your state requirements are for fire officer or determine if your state even has any requirements. Then seek out and read the 2006 Wingspread Conference report and learn about the items of national significance impacting our fire service. Visit the International Association of Fire Chiefs website and purchase their Officer Development Handbook – it will be the best twenty dollars you ever spent. Attend classes at the National Fire Academy. At the very least, attend your state weekend program there. For the cost of a meal plan, you'll receive some of the best education and networking you will ever experience in your fire service career. Travel back to Emmitsburg, Maryland each year in October and participate in Memorial Weekend. It will give you a somber and chilling perspective of the seriousness of our calling to serve others.

Attending this weekend for the past seven years has changed my life. Find a mentor and create a professional development plan for you and then create one for your department. I have been fortunate to have a few outstanding personal and fire service mentors in my life.

In closing, I'd like to thank my Chief of Department, Thaddeus Lowden, for allowing me to participate in the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. It has been a great experience so far and I intend to make the organization, my family, and my friends proud by graduating from the program in the future. I'd like to further acknowledge Chief Lowden's many personal and professional accomplishments during his long tenure as our Chief.

Critical knowledge gained from my research would not have been possible without the cooperation extended to me by other Fire Chiefs from around New Jersey and Connecticut, and also their chief officer staffs who participated in my online survey. I hope the results of my research paper help to improve each of your organizations, as well as my own.

A special thanks to our EFD retired officers, my Assistant Chief and Deputy Chief, and my fellow company officers for their cooperation and input. Finally, I would like to thank all of the firefighters, a.k.a. "the blue shirts", at the Evesham Fire Department who work with me every day. I have no doubt that they all have the capability of being future leaders at the EFD. Our people are the real reason that the organization and I continue to be successful, as well as continuously provide a high level of service to the community every day. I stand as your boss, proud to wear the EFD patch on my shoulder, and I salute each of you. I hope this research paper inspires each of you to commit yourself to a life of personal and professional development.

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