

Developing a Succession Plan for the Eureka Fire Protection District

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Certification Statement

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ABSTRACT

The problem is the top four chief positions for the Eureka Fire Protection District (EFPD) are eligible to retire within the next six years. The EFPD has not developed a comprehensive succession plan. The purpose of this research is to establish the components of a succession plan that will help with the development of a comprehensive plan for the four chief positions for the EFPD. Research was conducted by interviewing the top four chief officers. The interview questions were developed to engage the chief officers as to the education, experience and certifications required at the time of their promotion as well as what is required for their future successor. The following three research questions were used 1.) What are the components of a succession plan? 2.) Does the EFPD have a succession plan? 3.) How can a succession plan benefit the EFPD?

The research revealed what the EFPD was not unique in lacking a formal succession plan. Included in the research it was found that the District has done little to prepare its employees for positions above the rank of captain. The lack of a comprehensive succession plan has not been developed due to two key factors. One factor is manpower and the second is money. Financial restrictions have caused the District to eliminate midlevel management positions that could have given those individuals the ability to be developed into senior leadership positions. However, this has created a significant gap between the captain position and the top four senior level positions.

Recommendations include the establishment of a strategic planning committee that includes all levels of the organization and key business leaders from the community. In the strategic plan, the committee should create and adopt a formal succession plan; amending current documents to reflect current standards for fire officers and senior leadership positions; consider

providing in-house training in areas of leadership with emphasis on mentoring; and expanding college tuition reimbursement categories. Create a Position Bench Strength Assessment form for each senior leadership position. Suggestions for future research included formal mentoring programs and obstacles to a succession planning.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem is the top four chief positions for the Eureka Fire Protection District (EFPD) are eligible to retire within the next six years. The EFPD has not developed a comprehensive succession plan. The purpose of this research is to establish the components of a succession plan that will help with the development of a comprehensive plan for the four chief positions for the EFPD. Research was conducted by interviewing the top four chief officers. The interview questions were developed to engage the chief officers as to the education, experience and certifications required at the time of their promotion as well as what is required for their future successor. The following three research questions were used 1.) What are the components of a succession plan? 2.) Does the EFPD have a succession plan? 3.) How can a succession plan benefit the EFPD?

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

The Eureka Fire Protection District is a combination department in the metropolitan St Louis (Missouri) area. The district serves over 82 square miles, covering portions of both St Louis and Jefferson Counties, and 6 individual municipalities. The district is governed by a three person elected board. The area covered by our district includes residential, commercial and industrial properties, a major amusement park, a ski resort, several square miles of county and state parks, and a major quarry facility. The district has some 11 miles of interstate highway, two major rail lines, 37 miles of river and a major cross country pipeline.

The district provides fire, advanced life support transport, rescue, and hazmat response. The district operates 3 engine houses and a training center, that house a total of 2 rescue pumpers, 1 rescue tender, 1 engine company, 1 ladder company, 3 brush trucks, 3 ALS

ambulances and 3 marine units. Several specialty units are operated by the district including an equine search and rescue team, an EMS bike team, and a technical rescue team. The district employs 35 full-time paid staff members and has 85 volunteer firefighters. Additionally, the district maintains a fire investigation and inspection unit and engages all members in fire prevention and education efforts. The district operates on a budget of just above 6 million dollars (Eureka Fire Protection District [EFPD], 2014, p. 1). The leadership organizational structure of the EFPD include one fire chief, one assistant chief, two deputy chiefs and one battalion chief. The complete organization chart can be found in Appendix A.

Promotions to the administrative officer positions including the chief, assistant chief and deputy chief are promoted from within the department. Although the department has current policies regarding training and education for newly promoted lieutenants and captains, the department has no model or template for succession planning in the organization, that provide officers the direction in educational efforts as they prepare for further advancement to administrative positions. Concerns about the lack of succession planning comes from the fact that 100% of our senior leadership is eligible for retirement within the next six years (G. Brown, personal communication, October, 2014).

The purpose of this section is to identify whether the EFPD's lack of succession planning was a technical or adaptive problem. The history of the senior leadership positions in the EFPD begins with its transition from a volunteer department to a paid fire district. Selecting the first paid fire chief was a logical choice. George Manetzke Jr, whom was serving as the Fire Chief of the Eureka Volunteer Fire Department at the time, was asked to fill the same role as the paid fire chief. So on January 1, 1971, he became the Fire Chief of the newly formed Eureka Fire Protection District. However, on November 11, 1971, Fire Chief George Manetzke was

tragically killed in the line of duty when he was struck by flying debris from a burning propane truck that exploded (*GSLAFCA Yearbook*, 2010, p. 78).

The Board of Directors now found themselves looking for a person with previous fire service experience that could lead the newly formed district. They looked internally at a volunteer named Nick Sacco. Nick had only become a member of the district 4 months prior when he was hired as the District's 2nd paid fire chief on December 1, 1971. Nick was a former paid firefighter of the Pattonville Bridgeton Terrace Fire District before moving to Eureka to become the Fire Safety Director for Six-Flags (H. Vaucher, personal communication, January, 2015). Nick Sacco's previous experience as a firefighter with a paid fire district gave him the edge over all of the other applicants.

During Nick Sacco's term as fire chief, informal training was the norm during the 1970's; so no formal succession plan had been established for his position. Formal education was not encouraged as much as obtaining state certifications. The few paid members that the Fire District had attended college courses on their own with little direction. Financial support was offered by the Fire District, but was limited. Nick would remain the fire chief until 1978 when he resigned due to undisclosed reasons.

With no formal succession plan in place and a vacant fire chief position to fill, the Board of Directors turned to one of their first paid firefighters and lifelong resident Joe Trower (H. Vaucher, personal communication, January, 2015). Joe, age 23, was promoted as the interim fire chief in the spring of 1978. Then on January 1, 1979, Joe became the 3rd paid Fire Chief of the EFPD. During an interview with now, Battalion Chief Trower, when he was asked why he was offered the position, he stated that in his opinion, even though he lacked a formal educational degree, he was loyal, experienced and had the greatest knowledge of the District at the time (J.

Trower, personal communication, January, 2015). As a young fire chief, Joe had to endure several challenges, however the tallest challenge was his demise, that of CHANGE. Chief Trower had several state certifications and had attended some college classes; through his educational experiences, he was looking to change with the times. He wanted to improve the services the fire district provided, but was limited by the resistance of the “old guard”. It is unclear if Chief Trower was given a clear understanding of the direction in which the Board of Directors was looking to move toward. The resistance became too great, so Chief Trower came to a mutual agreement with the Board of Directors to step down as fire chief. During Joe Trower’s years as the fire chief, no succession plan had been established and no format was produced for promotional advancement. However, he was able to start the districts first tuition reimbursement program to assist employees in getting a formal education, before he stepped down as fire chief.

The Board of Directors knew they needed someone with management experience. They set the minimum qualifications for the fire chief position as having 5 years of management experience, but no educational requirements. The Board of Directors reached out to three area fire chiefs to set in their interview board before the Board interviewed them. Kevin Rucker was a Captain with the Ballwin Fire Protection District, while working under the leadership of his father, Charles “Frank” Rucker who was the Fire Chief of the Ballwin Fire District at the time. Kevin had an Associate Degree in Fire Technology to go along with his management experience which gave him the edge over the other candidates. Kevin was named Fire Chief of the EFPD in 1983 (K. Rucker, personal communication, January, 2015).

At the time Kevin Rucker was named Fire Chief, the District only had an assistant chief and a part-time fire marshal above the rank of captain. The Board gave Chief Rucker the latitude

to expand his staff as he deemed necessary. Chief Rucker kept the assistant fire chief position and added two deputy chief positions. The four senior leadership positions also had the additional responsibility to rotate as duty officers. In bigger cities, these would be filled by the role of a battalion chief.

Mike Mc Murray was a full time firefighter with the Manchester Fire District and was the part-time fire marshal for the EFPD. Chief Rucker had asked Joe Trower, assistant chief, to step down to a captain position on shift, which Joe agreed. Mike Mc Murray was offered a full time position as the Assistant Chief / Fire Marshal. Mike was asked because he was doing the job on a part-time basis already and had fire service experience. Mike had no formal education but was certified as a fire investigator and fire inspector by the State of Missouri (K. Rucker, personal communication, January, 2015).

Bruce Weinburg started his career as a part-time firefighter paramedic with the EFPD. Bruce was assisting with the fairly new paramedic program before he left to work for the Brentwood Fire Department. Chief Rucker was in the process of creating two deputy chief positions; one in charge of EMS and the other in charge of training. The promotion process consisted of years of service, interview and role playing dealing with several administrative issues. Since Bruce was assisting with the paramedic program already and had an associate degree, he was hire as the medical officer (B. Weinburg, personal communication, January, 2015). Bruce would resign his position in November of 1987.

Randy Gabel had been Bruce's right hand man. Randy was assigned several EMS responsibilities as a lieutenant. Randy had just completed his Associate Degree from St. Louis Community College before Bruce departed. Randy had been performing a lot of the same duties as Bruce in an informal mentoring manner. The experience and education made for an

opportunity for promotion. Also, the fact that Bruce recommended Randy as his successor. So in 1987, Randy was promoted to EMS officer at the rank of a captain.

Alan Manetzke, the son of former Fire Chief George Manetzke, was a captain at the time Kevin became the fire chief. Chief Rucker came to like Alan's work ethic. Since he had some education, Chief Rucker promoted Alan to deputy chief in charge of training.

During Kevin Rucker's next 5 years as fire chief, no succession plan was established however he did establish promotional requirements. The requirements to be promoted over the rank of captain, one must have an associate degree or extensive years of service in the fire service. These requirements still stand today, however no emphasis has been placed on formal education.

Kevin Rucker was terminated as fire chief for undisclosed reasons in 1991. After his termination, Mike Mc Murray was promoted to fire chief. Chief Mc Murray had significant fire service experience but had no formal education. Shortly after Mike became fire chief, he promoted Greg Brown to deputy chief, then to assistant chief with his responsibilities as the fire marshal. Chief Mc Murray also demoted Alan Manetzke to the rank of a firefighter and promoted Don Tomnitz to the training officer position. The requirements for the position at the time were an associate degree and/or years of service. Don had several state certifications and a paramedic license, but did not have any formal education. Don Tomnitz contributed his promotion to the training officer position to his knowledge base of the position. (D. Tomnitz, personal communication, September, 2014). Don started out at a captain's rank and then promoted to Deputy Chief.

In 1996, Mike Mc Murray step down as the fire chief and was given a newly created position titled Chief Fire Marshal. Greg Brown was promoted from assistant chief to fire chief.

The requirements for the fire chief position at the time were years of service and an associate degree, which Greg had both. Also, Greg had already been doing the budget and other administrative responsibilities that could have been considered informal training for the position of fire chief. Since Chief Brown's promotion to fire chief, he has restructured the organization. In 2000, Chief Brown created three battalion chief positions in the organization. The battalion chief positions were filled by a promotional process. The process consisted of a written exam and an interview with the fire chief. The battalion chiefs would manage each of the three shifts, however they would still be a part of an engine company.

Don Tomnitz was promoted to assistant chief with responsibilities of operations chief and training officer for the District. Randy Gabel, formerly the chief EMS officer, was now the deputy chief in charge of Technical Services and Mike Mc Murray is the chief fire marshal. The medical officer position was reassigned to Battalion Chief Scott Mullins. The four senior leadership positions would still rotate as the duty officers to operate as the command staff on the fire ground and handle the day to day operations.

The EFPD reorganized again with the retirement of Mike Mc Murray. The deputy chief fire marshal promotion had no processes. At the time of the vacancy, Scott Mullins was the only one with the qualifications, knowledge and experience for that position. Scott Mullins was promoted to the deputy chief fire marshal from battalion chief of EMS. The EMS officer responsibility was reassigned to shift Captain Steve Mann. A short time later, Battalion Chief Rich Adams was terminated for undisclosed reasons. Chief Brown's decision not to replace the two vacant battalion chief positions was due to budgetary restrictions and the lack of district growth reasons. The only battalion chief left was filled by Joe Trower, former fire chief from 1978-1984. Battalion Chief Trower's responsibilities are vehicle and building maintenance.

The EFPD started to transition into a modern fire district that has more of a global view as an organization. Over the last 18 years that Greg Brown has been fire chief, he has broadened the responsibilities of his senior leadership positions to include emergency management, emergency preparedness, operation of regional training consortiums, informational technology, pension funding, employee benefits, labor management, legislative involvement at all levels of government including taxes, laws and tax increment financing (G. Brown, personal communication, October, 2014).

With the organizational view being more of a global one, the previous promotional processes have become inadequate for today's senior leadership positions. During each interview of the four senior leadership members, there was a general consensus that more emphasis must be placed on professional development and succession planning for the future senior leadership positions. This consensus demonstrates the linkage of the United States Fire Administration's goal to improve the fire and emergency services' professional status. As training and education standards evolve and demand greater academic rigor, the NFA in conjunction with our State, Local and tribal partners, will promote a nationally-accepted competency-based system of professional development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.) What are the components of a succession plan?

Succession planning and management is the processes related to ensuring that organizations have the human capital capacity necessary to achieve their goals and effectively deliver results now and in the future. Planning for future human capital needs through succession

planning is often linked to strategic planning and staff planning (Human Resource Management [HRM], 2015, para. 1).

Succession planning must be included with your overall business strategy. Part of the process involves itemizing the required competencies for successors of key positions. You'll also need to figure out how you can develop these competencies, which are the skills, abilities or knowledge that the replacement person must have so that they can successfully take on their new position. These skills can include the ability to lead diverse personalities and groups or the ability to succeed even under the most difficult situations. You'll need to determine which job is critical and what methods you'll adopt to fill these slots. Your senior managers must be involved in the process as you'll need them to coach their successors. You also need to assess your existing talent pool to see who has the potential for immediate promotions. You can also use your assessments to flush out key competencies that might be missing in selected successors (Davoren, 2015, para. 2)

The fire service works hard at developing the abilities of our underlings to receive the torch and learn to manage emergency incidents, but we frequently fall short in developing their organizational leadership skills so they can lead the department into the future. Effective succession planning in the fire service cannot begin by simply looking at those currently on staff and who will be prepared to advance in rank. Fire chiefs must expand their vision to look not only at the individuals who will succeed them, but who will lead the organization 25 years from now (Haigh, 2010, p. 76).

Prompted by reports from fire service leaders of the increased difficulty identifying firefighters who are both qualified and willing to become tomorrow's leaders, CPS Human Resource Services recently engaged in a comprehensive review of leadership in a fire service.

The two goals of the study were 1) to better understand leadership in a fire service setting and 2) to determine the underlying causes of the anticipated leadership deficit whether rooted in human resource (HR) practices or in the structure of the fire service itself, or perhaps some combination of the two. In addition to this research study, CPS also engaged a group of nationally recognized fire service leaders to discuss and expand upon the study results and to provide guidance for further exploration of this issue (Langan & Feuquay, 2010, p. 42)

Succession planning involves more than lining people up to fill future leadership positions. Succession planning should also involve developing your current firefighters to be amazing leaders, even if they never promote. Mentoring, training and coaching firefighters at every level in the organization in some key leadership areas would be extremely beneficial for the fire service and the firefighters. These areas include making principle-based leadership decisions, operating from the foundation of the department's core values, taking responsibility, demonstrating accountability and setting a role model example in work ethic. When these key areas are focused on, succession planning tends to take care of itself (Alyn, 2010, p. 82).

An example of a succession planning steps. Step 1, gather and analyze current workforce data. This includes employee names, birth dates, time with the organization and in their specific job, and retirement date. Step 2, identify key positions/competencies and criticality of vacancies. The key positions are those that are essential for the organization to maintain the necessary work outputs. Step 3, Develop a strategy for succession planning. It is important to determine a strategy plan that is measureable in scope so that the strategy team or individual assigned can begin utilizing the tool within a targeted amount of time. Step 4, Evaluate and revise strategies. The organization should visit the plan frequently, at least once a year. The updating and review

should be headed by one person with the support of a strategy team to keep the project on track (*City of McMinnville Succession Plan*, 2010, p. 29).

2.) Does the EFPD have a succession plan?

Promotions to the administrative officer positions including the chief, assistant chief and deputy chief positions are promoted from within the department. Although the department has current policies regarding training and education for newly promoted lieutenants and captains, the department has no model or template for succession planning in the organization, providing officers direction in educational efforts as they prepare for further advancement to administrative positions.

3.) How can a succession plan benefit the EFPD?

Training and education will give us the knowledge and background, but not the experience needed to be truly successful. As leaders, they must create opportunities for our staff to gain the necessary experience to someday replace the senior leadership. This may be the most difficult task for current bosses. They often think it's just easier to do it themselves than take the time to train someone else, or they don't accept anyone else's work because it's not done as well as they would have done it. This is a leadership opportunity that would allow others the chance to learn and make mistakes in a nonthreatening environment while under their mentorship. This is where we can build our future leaders (Hagen, 2014, p. 67).

Succession planning could help the EFPD identify, develop, and retain employees. The goal of succession planning is to develop pools of skilled employees by helping them gain the experience and competencies they need to move into vacant positions. On a basic level a

succession plan will determine a designated back up and a potential successor for select key positions. With more detailed approach, a succession plan will have replacements ready and ensure those candidates have completed the requisite training, mentoring, and development necessary to make transition efficient and mutually beneficial to both the EFPD and qualified employees (*City of McMinnville Succession Plan*, 2010, p. 6).

Change and transition are inevitable in the fire service. Our goal should be to reduce any negative impact or losses when one leaves by preparing the organization for future success. A succession plan should encompass the entire senior leadership staff positions. It should be emphasized that we do not want the EFPD to become stagnate by not preparing for the inevitable loss of our senior leaders.

In summary, succession planning, professional development programs should be outlined in the Strategic Plan for the District. Mentoring, training and coaching firefighters at every level in the organization in some key leadership areas would be extremely beneficial for the EFPD and its employees. The fire service works hard at developing the abilities of our underlings to receive the torch and learn to manage emergency incidents, but we frequently fall short in developing their organizational leadership skills so they can lead the department into the future. The research revealed what the EFPD was not unique in lacking a formal succession plan.

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research is to establish the components of a succession plan that will help with the development of a comprehensive plan for the top four chief positions for the EFPD. A meeting was scheduled with Fire Chief Greg Brown to discuss the procedures for conducting interviews with the four senior leadership positions. During that meeting, it was also

discussed about the cooperation from the Board of Directors of the District in conducting an interview for this project. Chief Brown had given his full support on this APR and that all senior leadership members would be accessible for the purpose of this research. He stated that he would communicate to the Board of Directors as to the request for an interview. It was agreed upon that the list of questions would be given to each person in sufficient time to prepare for the interview. The interview questions were broken down into two categories, position specific and organizational specific.

Positions Specific

1. Why did you want to become a board member / senior leadership member?
2. What were the qualifications or requirements needed for the position at the time you applied?
3. In your opinion, what was the most beneficial factor that contributed in the offering of the position to you?
4. After a year into your position, did you feel like you were prepared for the position as you first thought? Why?
5. Has your position changed over the years? If yes. How?
6. Do you think the qualifications or requirements that were in place when you applied for your position would prepared you for your position today? Why?
7. What qualifications or requirements would you recommend for your position today?
8. To the best of your knowledge, is there a written document or job performance requirements that could be passed on to someone new to your position?
9. What advice would you give to someone aspiring to be considered for a senior leadership in the future?

Organizational Specific

1. What is more beneficial for a person to be considered for a senior leadership role in today's fire service: education, certification or experience? Why?
2. Should this be the basis for future considerations for senior leadership positions? Why?
3. Do you feel our current qualifications for senior leadership positions meet the needs for today's fire service leaders? Why?
4. What is our organization doing to prepare our employees to be considered for senior leadership positions within our organization today?
5. We currently have an acting officer shift officer position to fill when a captain position is vacant due to sick or on vacation. This could be considered as training towards becoming a line officer; would you agree? Is this something that could be done for the senior leadership positions, i.e. the duty officer for example?
6. To your knowledge, does the district have a succession plan in place for its senior leadership positions? If yes, where can it be found?
7. Do you think our organization should be transparent, to its employees, on the considerations for future replacement of its senior leadership positions?
8. In your opinion, is the current organizational structure as efficient in dealing with the challenges they face today as it did 20 years ago?
9. In your opinion, what changes would you like to see in our organizational structure as it prepares for the challenges in the next 20 years?

The results were gathered and the responses were analyzed and reported in the results section of this ARP.

RESULTS

Results reflect that of the interviews of the Fire Chief, Assistant Chief and both Deputy Chiefs. Efforts to conduct an interview with a member of the Board of Directors was exhausted due to several scheduling conflicts. The results from the interview will be started with the position specific questions. The results of each question have been summarized to include all interviewers' answers.

Position Specific

1. Why did you want to become a board member / senior leadership member?

Interviewers varied on their answers from could help with potential opportunities, it was offered to them, felt was the right person for the job to first step towards career goal of being a fire chief.

2. What were the qualifications or requirements needed for the position at the time you applied?

Since the four positions have specific requirements due to their role in the district, it was summarized to include the common factors which were years of service, knowledge base and an associate degree.

3. In your opinion, what was the most beneficial factor that contributed in the offering of the position to you?

Most interviewers acknowledge that they had experience doing some tasks related to the position prior to their promotion. Most of them considered it informal training.

4. After a year into your position, did you feel like you were prepared for the position as you first thought? Why?

Collectively, most felt that they were somewhat prepared, but required on the job training to become more comfortable and efficient in the position.

5. Has your position changed over the years? If yes. How?

All agreed their job responsibilities change significantly over the years. All of the persons interviewed had been in their respective positions over 15 years. So all had to transition into a position that expanded beyond their original responsibility.

6. Do you think the qualifications or requirements that were in place when you applied for your position would prepared you for your position today? Why?

All answered with an overwhelmingly, NO. They all agreed that the dynamics of the fire service has changed so much over the last 15 years, that advanced level college education are becoming the norm for senior leadership positions. They also agreed that significant fire service experience should be required, but none could agree on how much

7. What qualifications or requirements would you recommend for your position today?

Since each specific position requires their own specialty certifications, they all agreed that college education is a must, but they varied on what should be required. Some said an associate degree should be the minimum, but others said bachelor degree and EFO graduate should be a requirement. Another common factor was that their successors should have experience in midlevel management positions. Some even stated that diversity should be emphasized such as in the field of emergency management.

8. To the best of your knowledge, is there a written document or job performance requirements that could be passed on to someone new to your position?

All stated that the policy manual has job descriptions, these can be found in Appendix C, D, E, but other than a continuity of government document, they only had generalities of what

projects they had going. All agreed they had nothing in place in writing that could be given to a successor that breaks down their job performance requirements and responsibilities. As well as what reports the position was responsible for and where to file them for preservation.

9. What advice would you give to someone aspiring to be considered for a senior leadership in the future?

College Education was the number 1 advice, diversify in the different fields of emergency management was a close second. Business degree was recommended due to the fact that the district was a 6 million dollar company while managing a 4 million dollar bond issue.

Organizational Specific

1. What is more beneficial for a person to be considered for a senior leadership role in today's fire service: education, certification or experience? Why?

General consensus was that a person must have an equal balance of all three. A few had expressed that experience and education should be more emphasized than certification for the senior leadership positions. Certifications could be for junior officer positions. Reasons given varied, but all agreed that the transition to a staff officer position would be beneficial for someone that has a balance of education, experience and certification.

2. Should this be the basis for future considerations for senior leadership positions? Why?

Everyone agreed that education, experience and certifications should be the basis for future considerations towards promotion. Reason given were that the fire service has change from just fire & EMS response to a more all hazards response. However, one interviewer stated that in some smaller departments, specific requirements may be required to dilute the

education and certification requirement limited the department to internal promotions instead of seeking out side candidates.

3. Do you feel our current qualifications for senior leadership positions meet the needs for today's fire service leaders? Why?

All agreed that the current qualifications do not meet the needs of today's fire service, as can be see Appendix B. The requirements are too broad, education needs to be more emphasized and experience at the mid-level management position should be a recommended.

4. What is our organization doing to prepare our employees to be considered for senior leadership positions within our organization today?

General consensus is we could be doing more. Some recommended engaging the captains more in district wide decision making giving them the experience needed to succeed at the next level. Another suggestion was to set bench marks for future candidates to achieve before they are able to be promoted. Another suggestion was to start a vetting process for possible future candidates.

5. We currently have an acting officer shift officer position to fill when a captain position is vacant due to sick or vacation time. This could be considered as training towards becoming a line officer; would you agree? Is this something that could be done for the senior leadership positions, the duty officer for an example?

All agreed that this has been needed for some time, however the district is limited culturally and financially. One interviewer suggested that captains be utilized as aids to the fire ground commanders for exposure if manpower allows it.

6. To your knowledge, does the district have a succession plan in place for its senior leadership positions? If yes, where can it be found?

Everyone agreed that the district does not have a succession plan in place.

7. Do you think our organization should be transparent, to its employees, on the considerations for future replacement of its senior leadership positions?

All acknowledge the need for transparency gives the opportunity for the district to be more efficient, however it's wrong to be hypocritical. The employees are fast to judge, but are impatient to hear all the facts before making their own opinion known.

8. In your opinion, is the current organizational structure as efficient in dealing with the challenges they face today as it did 20 years ago?

Answers varied on this topic, but most did agreed that they were limited on expanding the organizational structure due to limited finances and personnel. Due to the multiple challenges that are faced today daily activities, personnel, response and public relations, a mid- level staff position could have greatly benefited the organization if the funding were available.

9. In your opinion, what changes would you like to see in our organizational structure as it prepares for the challenges in the next 20 years?

One suggestion was more emphasis should be placed on education, customer service and organizational pride. Another suggestion was to find other funding sources to help with creating mid-level management positions.

DISCUSSION / IMPLICATIONS

The research revealed what the EFPD was not unique in lacking a formal succession plan. Included in the research it was found that the District has done little to prepare its employees for positions above the rank of captain. The lack of a comprehensive succession plan

has not been developed due to two key factors. One factor is manpower and the second is money. The lack of financial income has caused the District to eliminate midlevel management positions that could have given those individuals the ability to be developed into senior leadership positions. However, this has created a significant gap between the captain position and the top four senior level positions.

Smaller districts only have one chief and possibly an assistant chief, and it's nearly impossible to acquire the experience and knowledge that is required for this position while serving as a line chief. As districts grow in size, so does the scope of its activities. Weekly meetings where line and staff officers discuss the projects that they are working on are not enough to provide the sound footing required when transitioning to the next rank. It takes a focused dedication on the part of the fire chief to adequately develop the administrative and line staff in a way that prepares them to be ready to assume the responsibilities of the next chief. As difficult as this is to accomplish in paid-full-time districts, it is exponentially more difficult to accomplish this task in volunteer fire departments (Warren, 2013, p. 4). Standards have been developed to help the fire service by trying to standardize what is needed to become a line or staff officer. One example is NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire officer Professional Qualifications.

The present version of NFPA 1021 establishes requirements for fire officers at four levels of competency. The first level, Fire Officer 1, focuses on the needs of the first line supervisor, clearly indicating the traditional company officer. Fire Officer 2 focuses on the management aspects of the company officer's job and helps prepare individuals to move into staff assignments. At both levels, major sections address requirements in human resource management, administration, community and government relations, inspections and investigation, and emergency service planning and delivery. Levels 3 and 4 of NFPA

1021address requirements for officers beyond station-officer rank, focusing on management and administrative issues at the organizational level (Smoke, 2001, p. 57).

The EFPD has not had the opportunity to develop a succession plan due to the expanding responsibilities of each of the four senior leadership positions. The senior leadership positions are staff positions, however due to the lack of financial support which effects the district's ability to increase the manpower. The technical problem of not having a succession model can be solved by updating the current promotional policy. It is inadequate and out dated for today's fire service. Advanced level education and years of experience in specific positions are key elements found lacking in the current promotional structure. However, years of service and personality have been emphasis during the hiring process. It is implied that by hiring the right people with the personality and work ethic, those individuals could be sent to get the advanced level education and certifications so they would be prepared for future senior leadership positions.

The top four senior leadership officers are eligible to retire within the next 6 years. There has been a lack of transparency of the succession planning process for those positions. The past history of the organization has demonstrated a culture of finding the person with the most experience and knowledge of the specific positions. However in this case the logical choice would be to promote from the next lower rank. But with the next two positions being eligible to retire also, this only leaves two options. Find someone within the organization that best meets the requirements or hire from outside of the organization. The continuity of government will always be present, but the organization as a whole will suffer at the lack of succession planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation from this research that the EFPD establish a strategic planning committee. This committee must be comprised of employees at all levels of the organization as well as key business leaders from the community. By establishing a strategic planning committee, then a strategic plan can be produced and implemented. As a part of the strategic plan, a succession plan could be created.

The following succession plan process is recommended:

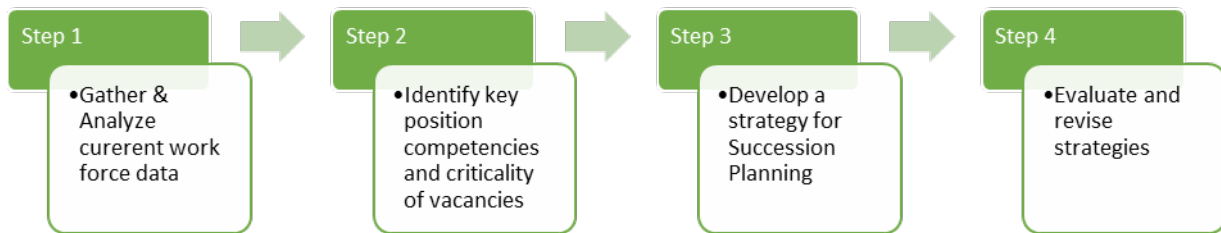
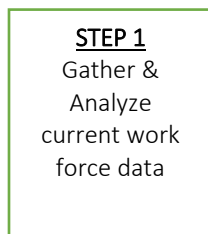
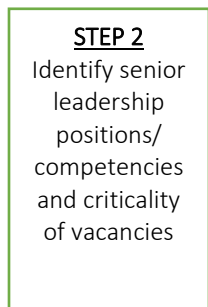


Figure1



This includes employee names, birth dates, time with the organization and in their specific job, and retirement date. Multiple versions of the lists should be created, with and without names.



The senior leadership positions are those that are essential for the organization and should include job performance requirements. The strategic planning team should focus on competencies of the position rather than individual titles.

Evaluate needs of today opposed to those of the future. The economy.

technology, changing community needs, legislation, and trends are all factors

that should be taken in consideration. High potential employees should be identified and

documented during the annual review process. This data should be incorporated into the

strategic succession plan. Succession plans can utilize competencies as opposed to job positions

and descriptions as they tend to require less updating and often reflect a more accurate measure of the essential services a unit, team or position offers.

STEP 3

Develop a
strategy for
Succession
Planning

It is important to determine a strategy plan that is measureable in scope so that the strategy team or individual assigned can begin utilizing the tool within a targeted amount of time. A gap analysis should be performed so that the gap can be properly identified and measured. Performance gap analysis

helps a district identify how far it has come toward reaching its goals and how far it still needs to go to attain them, with the objective of developing a concrete strategy to close any existing gap.

In determining your scope, consider what our district's short term and long term needs are.

Consider future service needs of the district. What is the employee structure that will likely need to be in place in 5, 10, 15 years to keep service levels going?

STEP 4

Evaluate and
revise
strategies

The organization should visit the plan frequently, at least once a year. The updating and review should be headed by one person with the support of a strategic team to keep the project on track. It is imperative to keep the statistics updated and pull new reports each year. Also, an employee survey should be

used as a cross reference with the succession plan to keep up with retirements and vacancies are planned for properly.

The Board of Directors and strategic leadership team should create a Position Bench Strength Assessment form. This form indicates key positions and the current retirement status of the senior leadership positions. The form could be set up similar to the one found in Appendix F.

During the research, it was found that the EFPD's promotional model was inadequate and obsolete for today's fire service leaders. The promotional model should reflect an equal balance

of experience, certification and education. This model could be used as a guide to establish a professional development program that would benefit both the EFPD and its employees.

Below is a sample of a possible model:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Years of Service</i>	<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Certifications</i>
<i>Lieutenant</i>	3	MUFRTI Company Officer Program	FO1
<i>Captain</i>	5	Associate Degree	FO2, FSI1, CPSE-FO
<i>Deputy Chief</i>	10	Bachelor Degree	FO2, FSI2, CPSE-CFO
<i>Assistant Chief</i>	15	Bachelor Degree	FO2, FSI2, CPSE-CTO
<i>Fire Chief</i>	20	Master Degree or Bachelor Degree w/ NFA-EFOP	FO2, FSI2, NFA-EFO

Abbreviation Key:

FSI1- Fire Service Instructor 1

FSI2-Fire Service Instructor 2

FO1- Fire Officer 1

FO2- Fire Officer 2

CPSE-FO- Center for Public Safety Excellence- Fire Officer

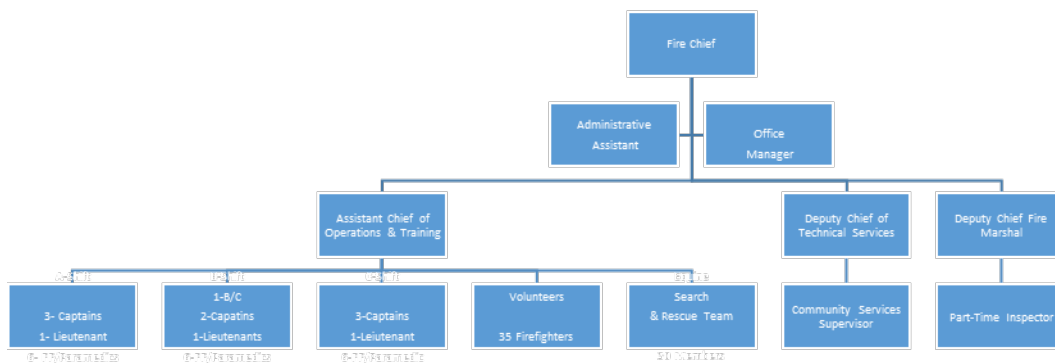
CPSE-CFO-Center for Public Safety Excellence- Chief Fire Officer

CPSE-CTO- Center for Public Safety Excellence- Chief Training Officer

NFA-EFO- National Fire Academy- Executive Fire Officer Program

Appendix A

2014 Organization Chart



APPENDIX B

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CHAPTER IV: HIRING & PROMOTION**SECTION 2: PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

- 2.01 All new employees shall serve a probationary period of two (2) years.
- 2.02 Probation may be extended.
- 2.03 During a probationary period, if the employer feels that the employee is not capable of handling the job, discharge will be affected without negative references.

SECTION 3: PROMOTION

Promotion to the next higher rank may be sought only after meeting the following time requirements:

- 3.01 The policy of the Fire District prefers, and every effort will be made to promote to higher rank from lower ranks already within the Staff; nevertheless, this will be on the condition that adequately qualified personnel are available within the Staff.
- 3.02 To be eligible for promotional examination, the candidate shall have Firefighter I and II. To be eligible for the position of Captain and above, the candidate shall also have a minimum of an Associate's Degree in Fire Protection or extended years of Fire Service Experience as approved by the Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Fire Chief. The following number of years shall be required to be eligible:

	With a Degree	Without a Degree
Lieutenant	3 years	3 years Fire Service
Captain	4 years	6 years Fire Service
Deputy Chief	8 years	12 years Fire Service
Assistant Chief	1 years	15 years Fire Service
Fire Chief		

- 3.03 The Fire Chief shall recommend for promotion any member of the Staff as he may deem appropriate. The Fire Chief shall promptly inform the Board of Directors of his recommendations at the next meeting of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall confirm or deny said promotion.

APPENDIX C**CHAPTER II: LINE DIVISION****SECTION 1: CHIEF OF THE FIRE DISTRICT**

- 1.01 The Chief of the Fire District shall be responsible for the administration and control of all functions of the Fire District.

THE FIRE CHIEF SHALL:

- 1.02 have full knowledge of the meaning and intent of the Statutes of Missouri, the Charter of the Eureka Fire Protection District and its ordinances, where they pertain to the efficient function of the Fire District.
- 1.03 be responsible for the proper management, discipline and training of all personnel.
- 1.04 approve the tools, appliances and equipment of the Fire District and their manner of care and use.
- 1.05 have the power and authority to organize, direct and control the various subdivisions of the Fire District.
- 1.06 adopt suitable measures to put into effect the Policy, Rules and Regulations and Procedures necessary for the efficient operations of the Fire District
- 1.07 periodically attend scheduled staff meetings with his subordinate Officers, for the purpose of advising them on training practices, policy matters, working conditions, and other related subjects.
- 1.08 prescribe the specifications and manner of wearing the uniform and protective clothing of the Fire District.
- 1.09 have the authority in the assignment of personnel and will place each individual subordinate member consistent with the best interest of the Fire District.
- 1.10 annually submit a yearly budget to the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for approval.
- 1.11 attend such meetings as needed to keep abreast of the affairs of the Fire District, and shall attend scheduled Board Meetings, and shall report vital information to the Board of Directors.
- 1.12 be on call for emergency response, at all times, except when on vacation, sick leave, or special occasion.
- 1.13 supplement, amend or revoke rules by notifying Fire District personnel through written notices.

APPENDIX D

CHAPTER II: LINE DIVISION

SECTION 2: ASSISTANT CHIEF

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF SHALL:

- 2.01 be second in command and in the absence of the Chief I exercise the powers of the Chief.
- 2.02 assist in formulation of policies and general plans.
- 2.03 coordinate and review the work of all subordinate personnel in the Fire Prevention Bureau.
- 2.04 review the work of all subordinate officers.
- 2.05 investigate policy violations, and recommend disciplinary action.
- 2.06 attend staff meetings and board meetings and report vital information to the Board.
- 2.07 serve as representative of the Fire Chief in meetings with other governmental and civic organizations and the general public.
- 2.08 serve as the Duty Officer on a rotating basis.
- 2.09 be assigned specific areas of responsibilities in addition to his regular duties.

APPENDIX E

CHAPTER II: LINE DIVISION

SECTION 3A: DEPUTY CHIEF / TRAINING OFFICER

THE DEPUTY CHIEF SHALL:

- 3.01A be third in command and in the absence of superior officers, exercise the powers of the Fire Chief.
- 3.02A assist in formulation of policies and general plans.
- 3.03A coordinate and review the training of the district personnel.
- 3.04A serve as liaison to Central County 911 Emergency.
- 3.05A serve as the duty officer on a rotating basis.
- 3.06A be assigned specific areas of responsibilities in addition to his regular duties.

SECTION 3B DEPUTY CHIEF / MEDICAL SUPERVISOR

THE DEPUTY CHIEF SHALL:

- 3.01B be third in command and in the absence of superior officers, exercise the powers of the Chief.
- 3.02B assist in formulation of policies and general plans.
- 3.03B coordinate and review the Emergency Medical Service of the District.
- 3.04B serve as the Duty Officer on a rotating basis.
- 3.05B maintain records to assure Paramedic and EMT licenses are current.
- 3.06B coordinate and review medical training of the district personnel.
- 3.07B coordinate and review work compensation claims.
- 3.08B review and recommend health insurance for the district personnel.
- 3.09B supervise and help coordinate EMS public education programs.
- 3.10B be assigned specific areas of responsibilities in addition to his regular duties.

APPENDIX F**Position Bench Strength Assessment**

Date:

Position Title: Deputy Chief in charge of Technical Services

Job Classification:

Reports to:

Employees Ready Now:

Employees Ready within 1 year:

Employees Ready within 3-5 years:

Action Plan: The Deputy Chief has a high vacancy risk rating. The plan is to consider in house candidates first and identify high potential candidates who may have interest and KSAs to transfer into this position.

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