

Conefrey, Maureen (FIR)

From: tpoconnor1@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2015 8:12 AM
To: Conefrey, Maureen (FIR)
Subject: Re: Employee Group publication "one year later"

Maureen,

Please consider this formal notice to include the UEG communication in the minutes. We can transmit electronically if that would make it easier for you.

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 28, 2015, at 8:03 AM, Conefrey, Maureen (FIR) <Maureen.Conefrey@sfgov.org> wrote:

Hello Tom,

I confirmed with the Commissioners that they received a copy of the above magazine. Please note that I do not put in the minutes, publications they receive through this office. These magazines were delivered to me on the day of a Commission meeting with instructions to disseminate to the Commissioners.

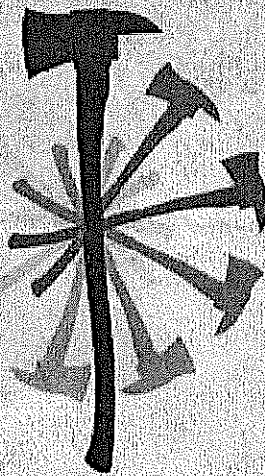
Thanks.

Maureen Conefrey
Fire Commission Secretary
(415) 558-3451

Conefrey, Maureen (FIR)

From: tpoconnor1@gmail.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2015 6:23 PM
To: Conefrey, Maureen (FIR)
Subject: ueg_mainline2015_1005.pdf
Attachments: ueg_mainline2015_1005.pdf; ATT00001.txt

Let me know if this works...thank you



UEG
UNITED EMPLOYEES GROUP

One year later...



UNITED EMPLOYEES GROUP

October 2015

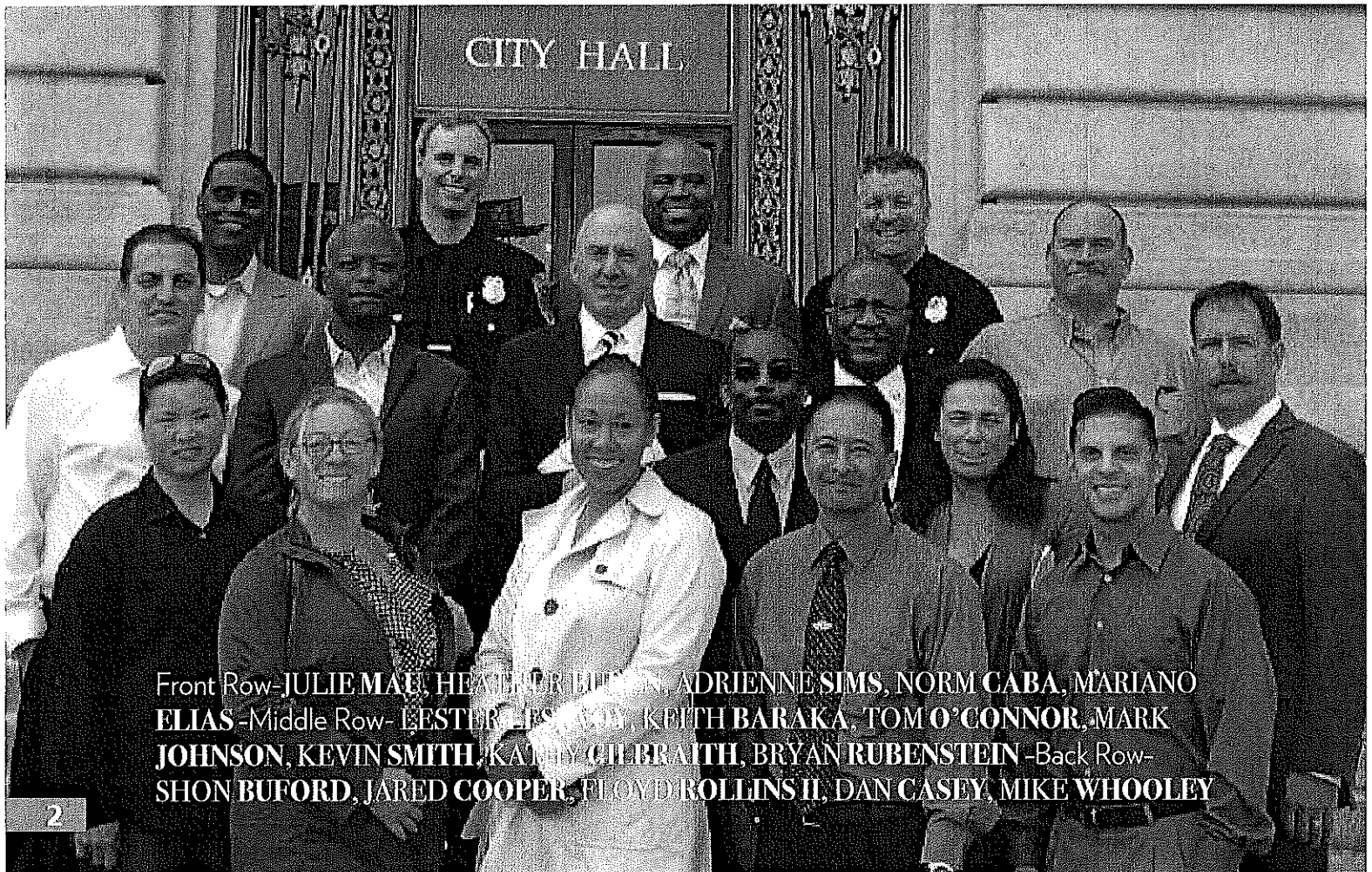


SAN FRANCISCO
FIRE CHIEFS'
ASSOCIATION



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Front Row-JULIE MAE, HEATHER BLUMEN, ADRIENNE SIMS, NORM CABA, MARIANO ELIAS -Middle Row- LESTER LISVADY, KEITH BARAKA, TOM O'CONNOR, MARK JOHNSON, KEVIN SMITH, KAMMY CILBRAITH, BRYAN RUBENSTEIN -Back Row- SHON BUFORD, JARED COOPER, FLOYD ROLLINS II, DAN CASEY, MIKE WHOOLEY



San Francisco Firefighters Local 798

President, Tom O Connor

On Labor Day weekend of 2014, the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) reached a new low point in our 150-year history. After years of discontent regarding decaying firehouses, dangerously old and broken down apparatus, a lack of staffing, and increasingly long response times, the unthinkable happened. A San Francisco resident waited more than 2 hours for an ambulance to arrive for an emergency medical call.

This outrageous incident received widespread media coverage and the public was justifiably upset. Their anger was warranted. Not surprisingly, our SFFD administration was unfazed by this incident and the public outrage. Adding insult to injury, this two-hour response time was written off as an “anomaly” or just another strain on the system by our Fire Chief.

The dedicated Firefighters and Paramedics of the SFFD knew better.

For far too long, the men and women in our local fire stations – those who have dedicated their lives to this department and the people of our city, have known that our response times are simply unacceptable. We are the ones that respond to the emergency calls for service and we are the ones who have to try to explain to grieving local residents why it has taken so long for help to arrive. We know that with structure fires and medical emergencies, every second can mean the difference between life and death. We see the devastation with our own eyes each and every day and we are just as angry as the public that the SFFD is not doing a better job in responding to emergencies in a timely manner.

Shortly after this infamous incident, the Firefighters and Paramedics of the San Francisco Fire Department said **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**

All of the different employee groups of the SFFD convened a meeting and decided to act. This was an unprecedented gathering of every single employee group in our department representing Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, the Women and the UFSW, LGBT, Paramedics, Chief Of-

ficers, EMS Officers, and our labor union all joining together to create the United Employees Group (UEG) of the San Francisco Fire Department.

The fundamental concern of the newly created United Employees Group was our unanimous belief that our beloved fire department was failing the people of San Francisco.

On Sept 22nd the UEG presented a letter to the Mayor discussing our grave concerns regarding our department. This letter, signed by the leaders of every single employee organization of the SFFD, stated that there is “a grave crisis of confidence...in the leadership and direction of the SFFD.”

Shortly thereafter, the UEG convened a meeting and had a wide-ranging discussion regarding the future of our fire department. At the end of the meeting a “No Confidence” vote was held. In a nearly unanimous vote (only 2 members present dissented), the leaders of the SFFD employee groups made a resounding vote of No Confidence in our department’s administration, led by Fire Chief Joanne Hayes-White. For the first time in the 150-year history of the SFFD, the dedicated men and women of our department expressed that we have No Confidence in our leadership. It was an unprecedented action both in the statement that was made and in the unity of the employee groups who spoke with one voice.

After this No Confidence vote was taken by the leaders of the UEG, our department’s administration immediately went to work to discredit our action. They claimed that this vote was merely the opinion of a small group of disgruntled employees and not reflective of the majority of our rank and file Firefighters.

In response, the UEG took a department-wide vote to counter any misconceptions that were being perpetuated. 860 of our employees participated and more than 80% of them voted that they have No Confidence in the current leadership of the SFFD. This was the largest turnout for any vote ever held by Local 798. Clearly, our members felt passionate about the state of our department.

It is critical to point out that the United Employees Group was formed because we care about our city, our fire department, and the people who we are honored to serve each and every day. We are not fighting over our pay, our benefits, or our retirement. This is not about us. It's about the people of San Francisco who are not getting the service that they deserve because of the failure of our department's leadership.

Now, one year later, it's appropriate to reflect upon the reasons why the UEG was formed and examine where we are as a department and as a newly created organization.

Unfortunately, the fundamental problems that led to the creation of the UEG and our No Confidence vote still exist today. In July, the Civil Grand Jury of the City and County of San Francisco released their independent report on the SFFD. This report confirmed what the UEG has been saying for the past 12 months. Specifically, the Grand Jury Report said that our department suffers from a staffing shortage, our trucks, engines, and ambulances are too old and break down far too frequently, our emergency response times are still unacceptably high, and that we have no strategic plan.

Most recently, the Valley Fire has consumed the local news and it will ultimately be recorded as one of the most devastating fires in the history of California. How did the SFFD help as our neighboring county was literally burning to the ground? We sent an insufficient number of Firefighters and only one SFFD Engine because our Chief unilaterally decided that our department couldn't do more. She didn't ask our Firefighters on the frontlines what we thought or what we were willing to do. Our Chief made excuses while our Firefighters were eager to get in and do whatever we could to help our neighbors and fellow first responders. That's what we are trained to do.

Today, the United Employees Group remains more united and steadfast than ever in our desire to rebuild our fire department for the benefit of the general public and the next generation of firefighters. We have presented our case to the Mayor, the Fire Commission, and the Board of Supervisors. Everyone seems to agree that the SFFD must do better, yet the fundamental problem of the lack of leadership in our department still remains.

As a San Francisco Firefighter for 20 years, I know that I work side by side every single day with the best Firefighters and Paramedics in the country. We love our jobs and we care about our city. That's why we formed the UEG in the first place - to fight for our department.

But for the past few years we have been like a baseball team playing with 8 men in the field and hitting with plastic bats at

the plate. It doesn't matter how many all-stars you have on that team, they are not going to perform at the highest level because they have their hands tied behind their backs. As Firefighters and Paramedics in the SFFD, that's how we feel on this job. Our call load continues to grow, yet our staffing levels have remained stagnant, our equipment is still outdated and broken down, and we have no plan to improve the situation.

The members of our fire department reflect the diversity of San Francisco. Black and White. Asian and Latino. Men and Women. Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Straight. Republicans and Democrats. Pro-union and Anti-union. We have it all. But for the past few years, the common sentiment among the overwhelming super-majority of our Firefighters is our fundamental belief that we need a change in leadership in the SFFD and we need it immediately. The fact that such a broad and diverse group of people have coalesced around this firm belief should give Mayor Lee and our Fire Commission reason to step back and ask themselves, "Can we do better?" The answer of course is yes. We can do better and we need to do better. Much better.

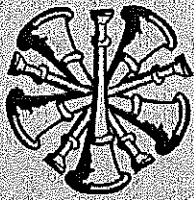
We need leadership in the SFFD that will clearly communicate the needs of our department, not complain and point fingers after the fact.

We need leadership in the SFFD that will work with our Firefighters to develop a strategic plan and ensure that our city is prepared for the next natural or man made disaster.

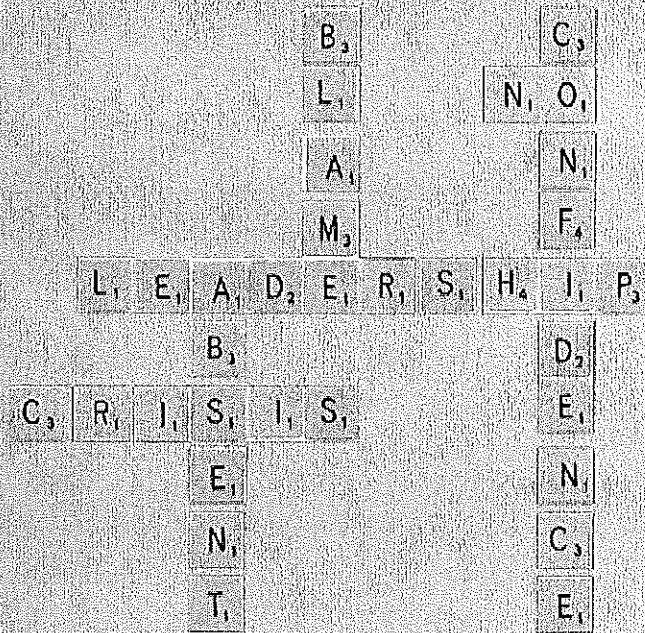
We need leadership in the SFFD that has a vision for the future of our department and is prepared to serve a dynamic, ever-changing city like San Francisco.

One year after our formation, the UEG remains committed to the mission of the San Francisco Fire Department to "protect the lives and property of San Francisco."

We are passionate about our efforts because this fight is not about us. It's about the people that we serve and the Department that we are committed to.



San Francisco Fire Chief's Association
By: Bryan Rubenstein



Reflecting back on the year, my first feeling is of great pride. Pride for the many individuals who spoke out publicly in an effort to better serve our community. Pride for leadership I have seen demonstrated out in the field. Our ACs, BCs, Captains and Lieutenants are showing up and doing what's necessary to prepare their crews for success. I also see our Firefighters and Paramedics stepping up and providing leadership through their excellence every day. I don't see a culture of complaint; I see a family united in the purpose of serving others, under an administration that feels more contemptuous than neglectful. Day after day we respond, a few companies over 40 times a day. Time after time we show up on a stranger's worst day and while we can't "fix" everything we are confronted with we always stop it from getting worse. That is why I look back on this year with a smile and great pride. It is my great honor and pleasure to serve with all of you.

The San Francisco Fire Department has a long, proud and storied history. We have had many Chiefs of Department with as many personal definitions of leadership as there were personal agendas. Last year, for the first time in that history,

there was a vote of No Confidence. The result of that vote is indisputable.

Our Brothers and Sisters voted in greater numbers than voted on wages and working conditions. The message is clear, we feel there needs to be a change in our Department's leadership. More Leadership and better Management to deal with the challenges ahead.

Before the motion was made to hold the vote of No Confidence, I, as the President of the San Francisco Fire Chiefs' Association, spoke to every chief officer in the Department and asked that same question, "Do you feel that the Department needs a change in leadership to deal with the challenges we face?" The overwhelming majority answered quickly and emphatically, yes! The very few chiefs I spoke to that do not support the vote of no confidence fell into 3 categories, 1) I disagree with the public nature of this process, 2) I am personally indebted to The Chief and wish to abstain, 3) I support the current administration. That is why I state categorically that the Chief has lost the confidence of her subordinates, especially within the chiefs' ranks.

The Administration says that the vote of No Confidence is simply the Union bullying the Chief in part because she is a woman. Two points here. First, this vote was made at the request of the United Employee Groups. Second, the issues raised by the UEG all relate to management and leadership, not gender. The San Francisco Fire Department has lead the way in integrating women into the fire service. We now have a long and proud history of women serving the community. Anyone who questions this should contact the United Fire Service Women.

Since the conversation of our Administration's shortcomings went public we have seen some improvements.

FACILITIES

Station 48, one of our examples of mismanagement, got the full attention of City Hall and is now housed in a reasonable temporary facility. The Administration was informed about ongoing situation but no action was taken until it was reported in the media. Absent public embarrassment from the media the Chief and her command staff were willing to expose employees not only to multiple health hazards in the work place, but also to the harm that comes from feeling that your boss knows of your hardships but does not care.

STAFFING

The Department's critical understaffing is another example of mismanagement. After years of attrition the Department is being run on mandatory overtime. The situation is serious enough to impact our day-to-day operations, but in the event of a major, long-term event we simply do not have the staffing we will need. Word is we are now approved for a second round of hiring this fiscal year made possible by City Hall, as well as, from grants.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE

Our ambulance response times and the Exclusive Operating Area are another example of mismanagement. The Department has taken delivery of new ambulances and there is the promise of increased staffing, but we are still nowhere near our required 80% response levels. This change only occurred in the face of public scrutiny and embarrassment.

ARSON TASK FORCE

The Administration created unsafe staffing levels at the Arson Task Force, which lead to a backlog of over 300 open fire investigations. Working conditions deteriorated to the point that a number of people requested to be reassigned back to the field. Others turned down appointments to this once prestigious and desirable promotion. **Mismanagement.** It is a safety issue to conduct investigations and interview potential perpetrators alone. In law enforcement there are always two people present during interviews and investigations for the in-

tegrity of the investigation and the safety of the officers. Anyone who has seen a lone investigator attempting to preserve a scene while interviewing multiple responders and witnesses will agree it is an impossible job. Staffing is now improving at the task force.

FINANCE

This year was sure to be a big one for Mutual Aid. In an effort to keep the administration informed, the department's Chief Financial Officer went along to a State Region II meeting scheduled to inform departments around the state of the deadline for submission of a "Portal to Portal" agreement. Once the deployments started we learned that, through no fault of the CFO, the paperwork was never submitted. Without this "Portal to Portal" agreement, the State only compensates The City for those hours spent directly on the Fire Line. No compensation for travel time. No compensation for the hours our crews spend recovering but still an available resource at the incident. One deployment without a "Portal to Portal" agreement will cost The City a fortune. At last count 7 deployments have occurred in the absence of such an agreement.

MUTUAL AID

Our Department, like all the other departments in the state, is a signatory to The Master Mutual Aid Agreement. By that agreement we are committed to assisting our neighbors if we can do so safely. Every year we train companies for such a response, 5 Engines and a Battalion Chief are prepared to respond out of county for a quick deployment- Immediate Need- with the understanding that the resources would be returned as soon as possible, and not committed for over 12 hours. Through continuous planning and training, we are prepared to relieve crews by the end of watch. On several occasions, when our neighbors have had a dire and immediate need for assistance our administration has told us to "Stand by", or "I'll call you back in an hour and a half". We have not sent immediate need resources out of county since the San Bruno pipeline explosion.

FLEET

Apparatus in our fleet are ancient. We have very few relief apparatus, and even less spare equipment. Companies are crying for new rigs to better serve the community, opting to keep relief engines that preform more reliably then their assigned apparatus. The situation is serious enough to impact our day-to-day operations, but in the event of a major, long-term event we simply do not have the apparatus we will need. There are 3 new Engines coming, does anyone think that is enough?

Asiana Flight 214 was a major international incident. Many things went well, tragically not everything did. Responders called for an immediate Major Incident investigation while still at the scene. To this day, after the comprehensive FAA investi-

gation and Congressional Hearings we have not seen an after action report from our Department. It is a failure of leadership to not exploit these opportunities to learn from our successes and failures.

The Chief received a Performance Review in the wake of the vote of No Confidence. The results are confidential but did not call for her dismissal.

appoint a chief with the vision to lead us and enable us to serve effectively and efficiently.

On our Department's web site, as well as, the International Chiefs' Association web site it states, "Chief Hayes-White is considered to be a hands-on, collaborative and team-oriented leader." That statement conflicts with a history of not involving Assistant Chiefs in suppression decisions, a lack of responsive-

"Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

Colin Powell

There was also a Grand Jury inquiry into the management of the Department. The administration has not yet addressed its findings with the field.

I see some good news here and some progress. But I also see management by crisis, small short-term solutions to headlines, not leadership. While there is progress here and there, not all issues brought to light by the UEG have been addressed. One thing that is clear to me is the Department truly has the support of City Hall. Mayor Lee and our Supervisors are all very aware of their responsibility to provide the San Francisco Fire Department with the personnel, training and equipment necessary to safely execute our mission: protecting the lives and property of the people of San Francisco. It is time for them to

ness to reported concerns and the hiring of a consultant from Oakland Fire to create the long overdue Strategic Plan for *our* Department. This administration is anything but collaborative and team oriented.

Let us all remember, a year later, that this has always been about our ability to serve our community. Whoever you are, whatever your rank, if your actions inspire others to do more, then you are a leader. I love coming to work and I continue to look forward to serving our community with you each watch.

Bryan Rubenstein



USFW

By: Heather Buren

Just about 1 year ago UFSW sat down with representatives from all the employee groups in the SFFD which included AFA, BFA, SFPA (paramedic association), Local 798, SFEMSOA (ems chiefs association), SFCA (chiefs association), Los Bomberos (the latino association) and the newly formed ResQ (LGBT association). The meeting was convened to discuss growing operational concerns and general distrust in the SFFD leadership.

A crisis was afoot and very visible in our EMS staffing after a busy summer of "medic to follow" with on scene wait times of up to 1 hour for a transport ambulance. At the time we did not have the personnel or the tools to provide the service to our city that they need and deserve. At length, we discussed the fact that our department was failing in its most basic of missions, to protect the lives and property of the citizens of San Francisco. The discussion moved past EMS onto pending lawsuits, mold at Station 48, mandatory overtime, dilapidated firehouses, low morale, aging fleet of rigs, and personnel needs hitting a critical point. Essentially we examined the outcome of 10+ years of Chief Hayes-White leadership and it was falling short. We were living the harsh reality of a city experiencing rough economic times, with a department that had no strategic plan and leadership that didn't appear to understand the gravity of our concerns.

Something historical and very important happened at that meeting...something progressive and positive...All employee groups and the Union came together, out of a sober concern for those we serve, to form a unified voice asking for change. The United Employee Groups (UEG) was born.

Last fall the UEG met with Mayor Lee. We brought our

concerns to his office and spoke frankly about what we were experiencing in the field and our frustration in how critical needs were not being addressed by our leadership. We spoke with the Fire Commissioners, and even met with Chief Hayes-White and her command staff. Alas, UFSW was asked to join with other employee groups and sign a "vote of no confidence" in the current SFFD command staff. UFSW members were polled. The letter was signed by majority vote, and sent to Mayor Lee.

The letter not only demanded Mayor Lee replace the current Command staff, but it set forth a list of objectives the UEG felt was important, some of which I mention here:

1. Develop the framework of a **strategic plan** that establishes specific goals, strategies and projects for the resolution of the Department's many issues as well as setting forth a plan and goals for our future.
2. Develop and implement an **apparatus fleet replacement plan**.
3. Increase the **SFFD Emergency Medical Services System** in order to bring it into compliance with all local and State mandated response times as quickly as possible.
4. Develop a comprehensive **EMS Hiring Plan** to minimize overtime.
5. Work with the City Attorney's office to quickly settle all lawsuits by Department employees and institute new policies and procedural changes that would address the root causes for the lawsuits.

1 YEAR LATER...

MORALE

Pushing past the hurdles of last year, our leadership worked on some critical needs and were able to implement many short term responses to the crisis we faced in the summer of 2014. Communication and positive dialogue with employee groups and the rank and file have improved dramatically. Having many of the prevailing issues addressed (partially in some cases) along with a willingness to accept recommendations from the UEG begins to create a spark of hope. I would be remiss and untruthful if I failed to address the prevailing mistrust of our leadership and a fear that once the spotlight is removed, the momentum will slow. Compounding this situation was the publication of the FACET consulting report (January 2015) and the Grand Jury Report (July 2015), both indicating that the leadership in the SFFD is weak, and often ineffective. What does it take for the seed of change to grow? For morale to improve and trust to be revived? Continued dedication towards professionalism and safety and commitment to communication, hard work, integrity, strong leadership, heart AND a means to create an arena of accountability from SFFD leadership.

SFFD STRATEGIC PLAN

A committee was formed to develop a strategic plan for the SFFD. The collaboration is comprised of the Fire Commission, Local 798 Officers, Department members, retired members, community members and outside experts in the field of Fire and EMS. In order to ensure a thorough canvass and gain further insight into what members would like to have incorporated into that plan, the committee has reached out to the individual employee groups requesting input. This is a first step in establishing goals and finding strategies to meet them.

VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PLAN

The most recent fleet replacement plan was adopted in 2009 by The Fire Commission which essentially states, if funding is requested and not granted, the amount requested is rolled over to the next budget cycle for a cumulative request. If the requests for vehicle replacements are not

being made then it's impossible for money to be granted. We have 5 new trucks arriving by years end and 2 new engines to follow. It's a start, yet playing catchup trying to create a newer, stronger fleet of engines and trucks is slow. We did however receive many new ambulances last fall and an additional 5 ambulances awarded by the FEMA grant. This has alleviated some of the EMS strain and down time due to breakdowns. The old saying "ask for what you want, before you get it" rings true. Our concern lays here, can we trust that the Command Staff is asking?

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The Mayor's Office elected to combine recruitment efforts for all City Departments (in 2014). The responsibilities, position and funding was awarded to the Department of Human Resources. Only 1 recruitment officer is assigned for the entire city. This proved to be unsuccessful and frustrating as our members were being sent to fairs and community events where the attending population was not a good fit for firefighting recruitment. UFSW has been consistently asking the Administration to request funding for 2-3 uniformed positions to assist with Departmental recruitment efforts. Finally one position at the rank of H2 was requested and granted in the last budget cycle (2015). To date, no job announcement has been issued.

STAFFING NEEDS

SFFD was awarded an \$8.2 million grant from FEMA to facilitate additional hiring over the next few years. There are 21 "per diem" Paramedics training on the ambulances, expected to be operational next month and a H-2 class of 57 recruits is expected to graduate in December. Even with all this hiring we consistently experience too many mandatorys, especially in the H3 Firefighter-Paramedic rank. We are not hearing "medic to follow" nearly as often as last summer but the problem is not yet solved. Some immediate needs have been met and we no longer sit with patients for greater than 20 minutes on scene, which is fantastic. The UEG still would like to know what a comprehensive EMS plan for San Francisco looks like?

Looking forward... Our members recently spoke about what was important to them, they spoke to what they believed to be goals for the SFFD, they voiced concerns regarding issues that have been neglected and suggestions to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Develop and *fund a stress unit* that is engaging and preventive and educational. Model it on SFPD unit

Develop a *recruitment strategy and fund a recruitment team*. Again, model after the SFPD team

Implement *Wellness incentive programs* that include cancer risk analysis and personal accountability/best practices to prevention

Increased frequency of the *live fire trainings*

Return to hands on *EMS, continuing education trainings*

Develop and fund a fulltime *grant writer* for our department

Offer *promotional training*, and career tract structure for Station 49 members

Restore light duty positions at dispatch to help create a consistent bridge between fire and dispatch alleviating the knowledge gaps and staffing issues currently plaguing dispatch

Demand funding for a *vehicle replacement plan* that will bring SFFD fleet up to date

Restore the *EMS6 program* to address the malignant repeat caller issue

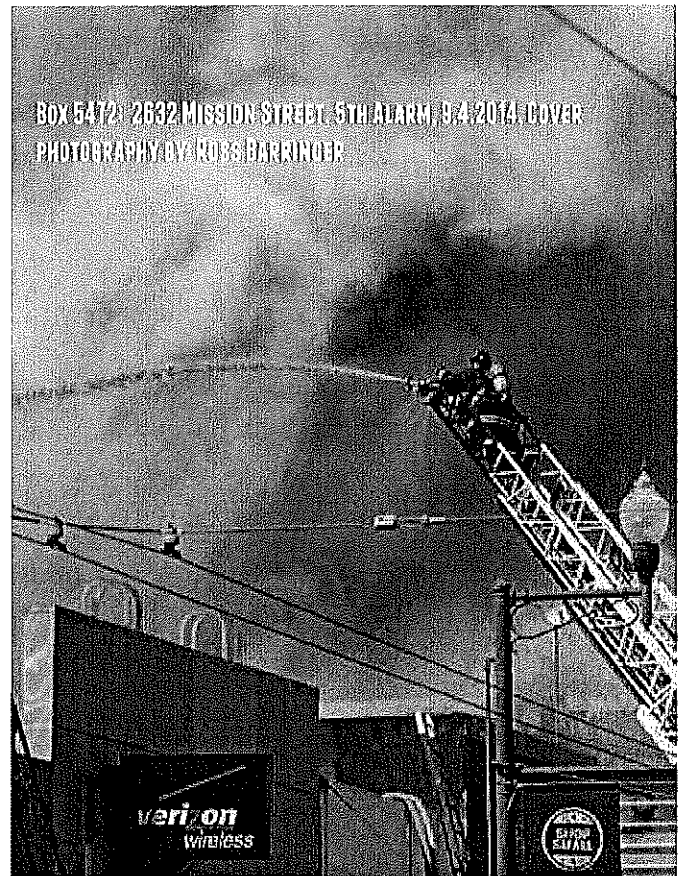
Hire a *public relations firm* to improve our image. Show all we accomplish as this may improve morale and public support

As we move into the 150th year of this amazing department the UFSW, in solidarity with the UEG, is asking the leadership to support our service to this community with a strong strategic plan that dedicates the resources needed to provide the tools, the personnel and the training for continued and lasting success. If the current administration feels unable to meet this demand, please step aside to allow for our department to progress.

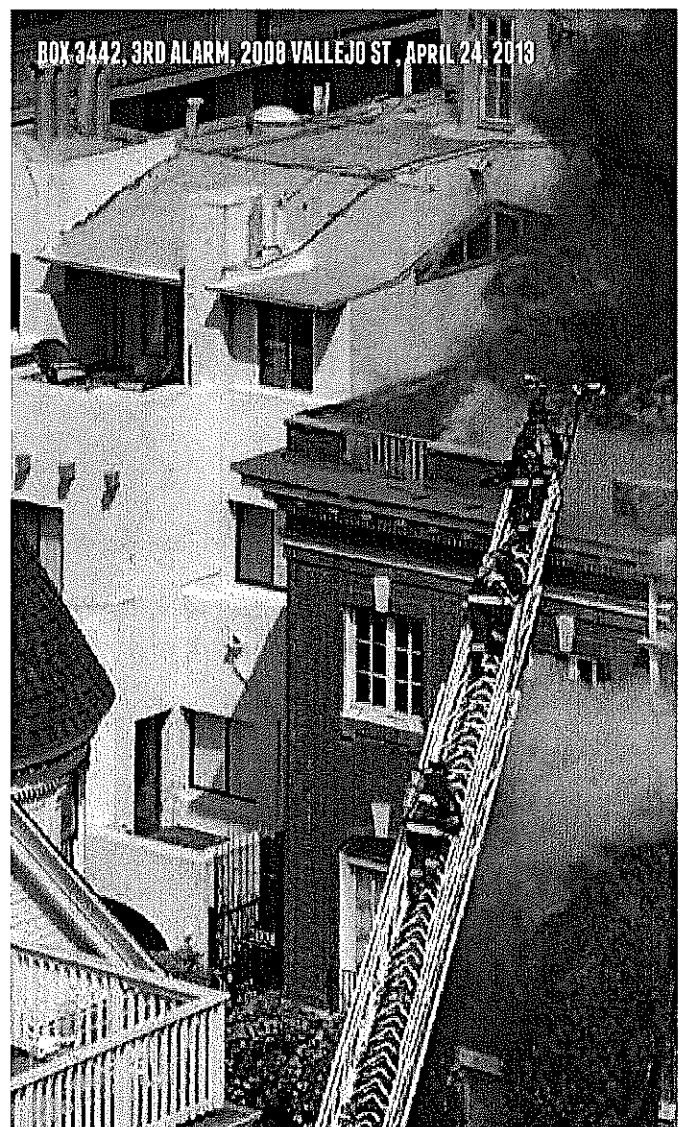
Warmly,

Heather Buren
UFSW President

BOX 5472, 2832 MISSION STREET, 5TH ALARM, 9-4-2013 COVER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROSS BARRINGER



BOX 3442, 3RD ALARM, 2008 VALLEJO ST, APRIL 24, 2013





UEG Meeting with the Mayor By: Kevin Smith, President

How can we more effectively serve the people of San Francisco? How do we develop a quality Department? How can we improve our organization because the status quo cannot be sustained? The resolutions of these questions were what brought the United Employees Group together just over a year ago. There is an unbreakable bond among firefighters that transcends race, gender, rank, or affiliation. Historically that bond has been tested and strained, but coming together to deal with these critical issues and forming the United Employees Group, is a great triumph for our Department and for unity and diversity.

During our first meeting, it was clear that some of us were a little reluctant to voice our opinions, and rightfully so. For too long we have been told not to trust each other. For too long we have been told that we do not want the same things. We have even been told we are enemies. For too long we believed it, but it was never true. We finally came to the conclusion we needed to work together to accomplish our goals. So we listened to each other and overcame these (so called) intractable problems. We respected each other's positions. We found out that we all wanted the same thing and that together we are stronger.

I am proud that the San Francisco Black Firefighters played a role as one of the founders of this historic coalition. Diverse groups with a common desire to do what is best for the citizens and the members of the Department. I would like to acknowledge Local 798, the Asian Firefighters Association, Los Bomberos, the United Fire Service Women, SFResQ, the San Francisco Paramedic Firefighters Association, the SF EMS Officers Association, and the Chiefs Association for their foresight and leadership in developing this coalition.

Working together, discussing issues, finding common solutions, and participating in the work required to accomplish our goals is the roadmap to success in resolving these questions.

As we move forward, we will continue to meet and work together. There may be times when we disagree, but united we can work out any differences, and united we can solve any problem. As a diverse group, all perspectives have a seat at the table.

The "United Employees Group" is formed to provide us with a broader perspective of what our concerns may be and how to address the concerns of all. It is our hope that the future leaders of these employee groups and the Local embrace what has been created. It is our hope that what has been started with the United Employees Group will only grow stronger and that the Department will be better for it because we face critical needs:

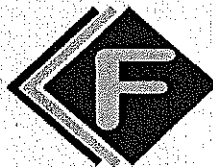
- A comprehensive Department wide training program
- Valid promotional examinations
- Developing and supporting a strong management infrastructure that will result in effective leadership.

This is the United Employees Group.

In December of 2014, Local 798 and the UEG commissioned a consulting group to do an analysis of the SFFD. FACETS consulting is a group of public safety professionals dedicated to improving the Fire Service nationwide. You can read their findings below. We chose not to release the report until after the Fire Commission completed their employee review of the Chief. Unfortunately, the Commission did not release their report.

January 19, 2015

Thomas O'Connor
President
San Francisco Fire Fighters
1139 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94103



FACETS
CONSULTING

Dear President O'Connor:

Thank you for the opportunity to conduct a high level management and operational review of the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD). We received excellent hospitality and cooperation from the members of your Executive Board, from the leadership of the other employee groups that we met with, and from every member of the SFFD that we met.

The purpose of our review was to gather information about the current management and operational practices of the SFFD and suggest issues that might be considered as part of an evaluation of the performance of the Chief of the Fire Department. We understand that a review of the Chief's performance is currently being undertaken by the Fire Commission.

We focused our review on factual issues within the SFFD and not on any subjective opinions on issues or the personalities of anyone involved in the management of the SFFD. As we met with SFFD members, each person provided their perspective on the current status of the SFFD. We have limited our findings to issues that were expressed by several individuals to avoid any personal agenda or single view of an issue. During our meetings, many SFFD members expressed their personal admiration and affection for Chief Hayes-White and their disappointment with the atmosphere that has existed within the SFFD for the past several years.

This assessment of SFFD management and operations is not intended as a comprehensive look at the SFFD. That type of review would require a significantly higher level of effort. This assessment, rather, is intended to provide the view and impressions of three experienced fire service executives regarding the current atmosphere, management, and operations of the SFFD.

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Our Process

This project began with the selection of a highly experienced group of fire service executives from across the United States. The group was composed of Assistant Chief Mary Cameli of the Mesa, Arizona, Fire and Medical Department, Fire Chief Charles Hood of the San Antonio, Texas, Fire Department and Fire Commissioner (retired) Michael Lombardo of the Buffalo, New York, Fire Department.

This group had no preconceived opinions of the SFFD or the current management of the department. Indeed, the SFFD enjoys a very positive reputation in the fire service as a system that delivers a high level of service to the community. Each of these executives is well-informed on current fire service management practices and the economic environment that local governments have faced in recent years.

The members of the team come from very diverse backgrounds, in terms of the demographics and service demands of the communities they serve, the labor management atmosphere that exists in their communities, the fire protection and emergency medical challenges that exist in their communities, the services provided by their organizations, and the financial strength of the communities served.

Prior to our arrival in San Francisco, members of the team reviewed a number of documents and on-line information about the SFFD including the department's web site and materials available at the Fire Commission's web site. The group also reviewed recent news coverage of the SFFD, the SFFD Annual Report for FY2012-2013, the SFFD budget for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, correspondence between SFFD employee groups and Mayor Lee, and the Performance Audit of Emergency Medical Services Resources at the San Francisco Fire Department report prepared by the San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst.

During our three day visit to San Francisco, we had the opportunity to meet with dozens of members of the SFFD. These SFFD members included representatives of SFFD membership and affinity organizations, fire fighters, EMT's, paramedics, and fire officers. We do not list the names of the SFFD members who we spoke with in this report since a number of the people we met with discussed concerns over downstream consequences if it was known that they met with our consulting team.

In addition to our personal and telephone interviews, we received a great deal of written information from SFFD members. All of this information was reviewed by consulting team members as a part of the development of this report.

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We were unable to meet with the Fire Chief or the executive staff of the SFFD. We understand that you extended an invitation for the Fire Chief and the executive staff to meet with our team but that the offer was not accepted. We also understand that you extended an invitation to the members of the Fire Commission to meet with our team but that Commission members were advised not to meet with our team by City staff.

We were disappointed to learn that the Fire Chief issued a directive during the first day of our visit barring any on-duty SFFD member from meeting with our team and barring any visits by our team to SFFD facilities. We feel that this was a missed opportunity for the team to meet additional SFFD members and view SFFD facilities.

I did receive a phone message from Chief Hayes-White during our visit with an offer to speak and provide context to what we had learned during our visit. I later received a followup message from Chief Hayes-White kindly and respectfully declining to be interviewed.

Within a few days of our visit to San Francisco, city staff contacted the workplace of at least one member of our team regarding our work. The reason for the contact was not clear.

General Findings

San Francisco fire fighters and fire officers are dedicated to the citizens of San Francisco and to the mission of the San Francisco Fire Department. We found a great deal of frustration expressed by SFFD members with the current management and organization of the Department. We also found SFFD members that are ready for changes that will improve the level of service provided to their customers and the working environment for emergency medical service providers and fire fighters.

We were very impressed at the diversity of the SFFD at every level from command and company officers to the fire fighter ranks, to the makeup of the executive board of your local, and to the number of active SFFD member affinity groups. In our meetings with the leadership of SFFD membership and affinity groups, we found them to be well-informed and concerned with the quality of SFFD services.

We found it remarkable that eight employee groups, that traditionally have markedly distinct views on SFFD issues and priorities, would join together for a unified request for change in a September 22, 2014, letter to Mayor Lee.

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We also found it remarkable that several senior SFFD managers have taken voluntary demotions to lower ranks. These seemingly capable managers expressed frustration with a lack of leadership, strategic vision, and progress within the SFFD as reasons that they chose this drastic alternative.

The SFFD is a very active fire and emergency medical delivery system. Engine 1 and Engine 3 have traded places at the top of the Firehouse Magazine annual run survey as the most active engine company in North America for over a decade.

Findings Related to the Management of the San Francisco Fire Department

The San Francisco Fire Department Fire Commission has been directed by Mayor Edwin M. Lee to conduct a performance assessment of Fire Chief Joann Hayes-White. While the Fire Chief of a large organization such as the SFFD cannot personally complete every task, the work of the department, and the responsibility for assuring that the department is well-managed, ultimately rests with the Chief of the Department.

The following issues may be considered by the Fire Commission as a part of their performance review of the Chief of Department:

Overall Environment

The most significant finding, and the one that impacts every other finding in this report, is the "us versus them" atmosphere or environment that exists between the Fire Chief and the executive staff and the affinity and membership organizations within the SFFD on many issues. There are a number of examples of this approach including the high volume and depth of formal correspondence between the Fire Chief and employee organizations on mundane issues and the lack of consultation and cooperation on issues that impact fire fighters, paramedics, and EMT's and the services that they provide. Respect and cooperation is a two-way street but the Fire Chief and the SFFD executive staff must set the tone and provide an opportunity for open and respectful communication.

In a recent email message to all SFFD members, Chief Hayes-White wrote: "Over the years, my leadership has been challenged by Labor on many levels, as is expected in this relationship." This endorsement of the adversarial tone of these interactions is not reflective of efforts on the part of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

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These two organizations have jointly sponsored the Labor Management Initiative (LMI) for a number of years. From the LMI web site – “In today's environment, there's no room for ongoing conflict between organized labor and management. Such situations impact service delivery and morale and can impede fire department successes.”

The Fire Chief and members of the executive staff do conduct regularly scheduled meetings with Local 798 and with many of the other membership organizations. These meetings are viewed as generally ineffective by the leadership of these groups. We were told about the perception that the only thing that changes on the agenda for these meetings from month to month is the date of the meeting.

The flow of information to rank and file fire fighters and emergency medical workers seems very limited. The Fire Chief has an open door policy but the perception from the SFFD members that we spoke with was that this was a policy in name only. We were told by several SFFD members that the quality and amount of information that they receive about SFFD issues is much higher at Local 798 meetings than anything that they receive formally from the SFFD. Recent attempts by the Fire Chief to conduct “town hall” meetings will help to improve information flow but this effort must be sustained and not seen by SFFD members as a reaction to other recent developments.

The discipline process appears to be overly litigious and drawn out. In other fire departments with discipline process difficulties, this generally emanates from a lack of trust between the membership of a fire department and fire department management.

We heard of several very minor discipline issues that could easily have been handled at a low level that became higher level disputes. In an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, these types of issues can be avoided entirely or disposed of at a lower level. From the correspondence that we reviewed, a great deal of the Fire Chief's and executive staff's time is consumed in this process.

SFFD members, who willingly risk their lives to provide emergency medical and fire fighting services to the community, expressed a sense of fear about speaking out on issues in the SFFD. Several of these members expressed concerns that speaking out could lead to reduced promotional opportunities, especially in positions above the rank of Assistant Chief that are chosen at the pleasure of the Fire Chief, and in other less visible ways, such as station and unit assignments. As you know, fire fighters and emergency medical responders are natural team players that place a high value on the community that they serve and their assignment to a specific unit or fire station.

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It is our understanding that the recent town hall meetings conducted by the Fire Chief were recorded by the SFFD. In the current atmosphere, the recording of an open communication session such as this can have a chilling effect on views expressed by SFFD members for fear of future consequences.

Many fire departments recognize that one of the keys to external customer service – the services provided by fire fighters, EMT's, and paramedics on the street – is internal fire department customer service. Several large urban fire departments, including the Houston and Phoenix fire departments have developed written guides for internal fire department communications that emphasize collaboration, respect, and open communication.

In summary, the current environment in the SFFD does not allow for effective communication between department management, SFFD affinity and membership organizations, and SFFD EMT's, paramedics, fire fighters, and fire officers. This environment is largely dependent on the tone set by the Fire Chief and the executive staff. Recent communications developments, while at least partially helpful, will need to be sustained to be viewed as credible and helpful.

Lack of Planning

The San Francisco Fire Department suffers from a lack of planning in a number of areas. Planning is one of the most basic functions of management.

First, and perhaps most obvious, the SFFD does not have a strategic plan for fire and emergency medical service operations. This is remarkable for a large fire department such as the SFFD. Strategic plans provide high level direction to all fire department members about the priorities of the department and also communicate these priorities and plans to the larger government and the community.

The presence of a strategic plan would have been especially important in the last several years in San Francisco. The department and the city have operated in an atmosphere of limited financial resources for at least the last five years. Cuts within the SFFD budget were made along with cuts to many San Francisco government services. Without a strategic plan or the analysis that would accompany the planning process, issues that might or should have been foreseen were missed. This situation is compounded by a lack of collaboration between SFFD management and the membership of the SFFD.

The lack of planning on the SFFD has manifested itself in a number of specific areas.

Staffing

Due to a lack of hiring in the last several years, the SFFD is understaffed. As employee attrition occurs in a fire and emergency medical service, the service is faced with three choices – hire a replacement employee, pay overtime to staff the vacancy, or reduce the level of service provided by the organization. This is unlike almost any other service provided by a local government. As fire fighter, paramedic, and EMT attrition has occurred, the SFFD has been forced, due to a lack of continual hiring, to mandate overtime on the fire and medical workforce.

So much overtime is needed to staff emergency response services that workers are mandated to work extra shifts. This model is unsustainable. We heard from fire fighters, EMT's, and paramedics that the amount of overtime that is being worked is exhausting the workforce. Fatigue has been shown to reduce the performance and decision-making capabilities of workers in a number of occupations.

In other fire departments that have excessively relied on overtime, fire fighters that work extra hours become the focus of local news stories that portray the fire department, the local government, and the fire fighters themselves in a negative light due to high gross earnings. In other communities, press coverage of these situations rarely explains that the root cause of excessive overtime is a lack of hiring to accommodate attrition. In some cases, staffing with overtime is more expensive than hiring new employees.

We understand that the budget for the City and County of San Francisco and the SFFD have been constrained in the past several years. A proper planning process in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust would have allowed the Fire Chief and the SFFD's affinity and membership groups to jointly explain the need for continual hiring as a part of the budget process and might have avoided the current situation.

Emergency Medical Services

The SFFD uses an emergency medical service deployment model that includes SFFD ambulances staffed by EMT's and paramedics and engine companies staffed by one fire fighter paramedic as a part of the crew. This model is intended to provide a paramedic at the side of an ill customer more rapidly than systems that staff paramedics on ambulances only. The SFFD also relies on private sector ambulances to provide service to supplement the services provided by SFFD members.

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There are currently a number of SFFD engine companies that do not provide paramedic-level service due to a shortage of fire fighter paramedics. This situation could have been foreseen as a part of a planning process.

The shortage of fire fighter paramedics has been at least partially as a result of fire fighter paramedic promotions to higher rank and attrition due to retirements and other causes. Planning would have allowed the SFFD to understand this process and to take steps to mitigate these changes, even in the face of reduced hiring and attrition. The result is a lower level of service to SFFD customers and delays in the arrival of a paramedic at the side of an ill customer.

The SFFD also suffers from a chronic shortage of in-service ambulances. The results of this shortage have been well-documented in the press and in a report prepared by San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst. I understand that these problems persist with the need for mutual aid ambulances to respond to a number of emergency medical incidents as recently as January 12th.

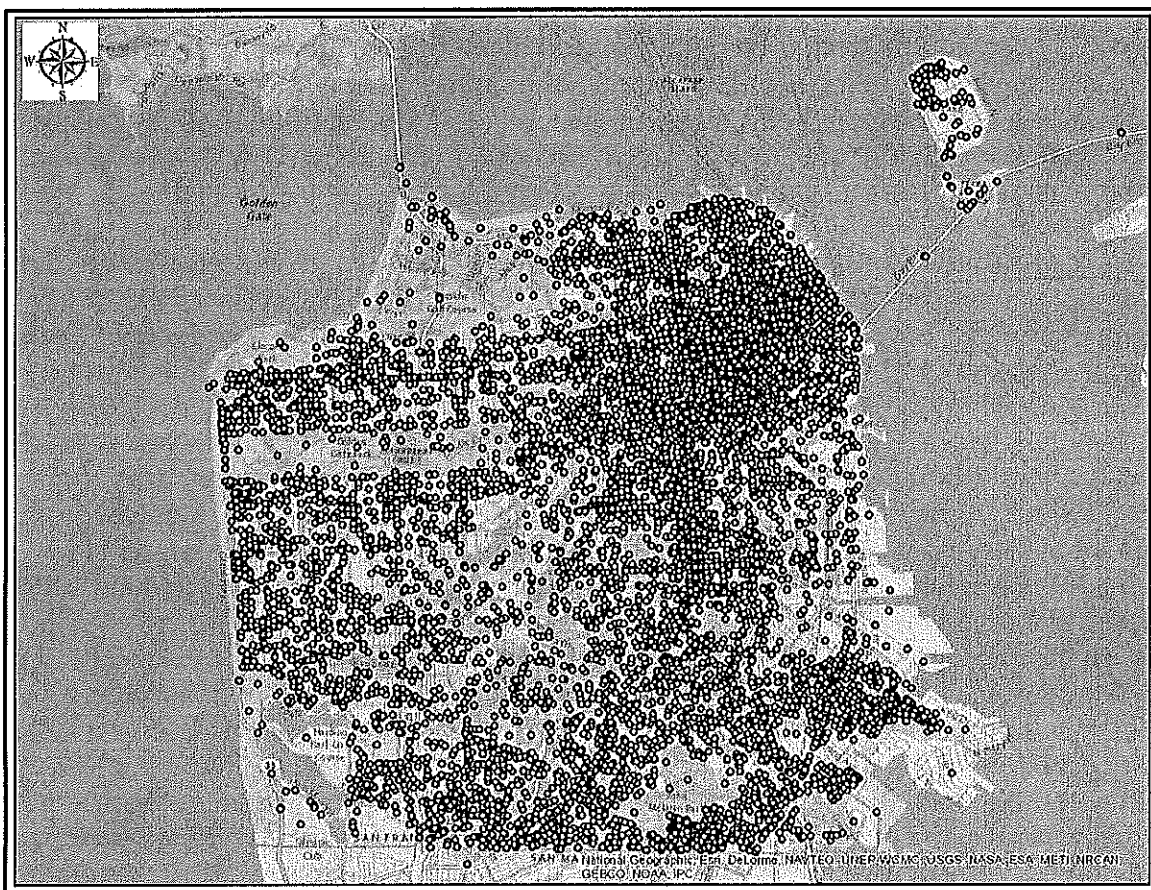
We were provided with a report of ambulance responses in San Francisco where the response time for the ambulance exceeded 20 minutes after the arrival of the SFFD engine company. From January 1, 2014 through the end of the period covered by this report – September 25, 2014 – there were 2,576 incidents where response time was greater than 20 minutes, including three incidents where the ambulance response time was over two hours. On July 27, 2014, there were 43 incidents where the ambulance response time exceeded 20 minutes. These incidents occurred on every day of this period except for two, both Sundays. Many of these incidents were for less severe injuries but in at least 110 cases, the customer's condition was serious enough to require the ambulance to respond in an emergency mode (lights/siren) from the scene to the hospital.

It is important to remember that in each of these incidents, fire fighters assigned to engines, ladder trucks, or rescues stood by at the side of the customer. While it is right and important that the customer was not abandoned, the excessive time spent waiting for the arrival of an ambulance causes other customer services issues, such as extended response times to other emergencies. When fire units are committed to these incidents, subsequent emergency incidents in the same area draw in SFFD resources from further away, causing a cascading negative effect on response times elsewhere.

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Long ambulance response times occur with a higher frequency in Supervisorial District 3 (Supervisor Julie Christensen) and Supervisorial District 6 (Supervisor Jane Kim). The map below, prepared by the International Association of Fire Fighters Geographic Information System (IAFF-GIS) staff is based on computer dispatch information provided by the SFFD.

Extended response times for ambulances occurred all over the City. The map below depicts ambulance responses over 12 minutes from January 1, 2014 through December 1, 2014.



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Planning would have allowed the SFFD to recognize the impacts of increased emergency medical activity and respond with an appropriate level of resources. This system failure results in ambulances that are over utilized, increases ambulance response times over mandated levels, and limits the SFFD's ability to recover costs through user fees.

An analysis of emergency medical incident data provided by the SFFD was conducted by IAFF-GIS staff. The time period covered by the data was from January 1, 2012, through December 1, 2014. The number of emergency medical incidents initially classified by dispatchers as "Priority 3" and "Priority E", the most urgent types of medical emergency incidents, dropped from 55 percent in 2012 to 43.3 percent in 2014. The reason for this apparent change in incident prioritization is unknown.

In some cities, the ambulance service produces revenue in excess of direct operating expense – the customers that use the service pay for the service. The SFFD has been forced to utilize private sector ambulances and miss the opportunity for revenue associated with this utilization.

As mentioned earlier, the lack of ambulance resources, combined with the inflexibility of SFFD procedures, has other downstream impacts. Due to the shortage of ambulances, fire companies are compelled to stand by at the scene of medical emergencies for extended periods until an ambulance arrives. The fire companies are prohibited from seeking alternative means to transport a customer by SFFD regulations. This system failure keeps fire companies from providing service to other emergencies and can have a cascading negative impact on response times.

In an atmosphere of collaborative planning, this situation could have been predicted and resources and options could have been developed in advance to provide customer service in these cases. In other parts of the fire service, fire fighters are permitted to transport minor medical customers on their apparatus or release some customers for care in an urgent care center or with their physician.

The SFFD ambulance service delivery model, where all ambulances are deployed and supported from a single location seems sub-optimal. Valuable in-service time is wasted while crews commute from their base to their post and we were told that the dispatch system is incapable of dispatching ambulances from their actual current location. In many, if not most, large fire-based emergency medical systems, ambulances are based and supported in multiple locations and the dispatch system is capable of dispatching resources for response based on their actual location at the time of the emergency. These SFFD system attributes have a negative impact on response times and customer service.

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Cooperative planning could recognize these system limitations and assist in the development of alternatives that would improve the level of service to SFFD customers.

The Affordable Care Act

A major component of the services delivered by the SFFD are emergency medical services, including the provision of advanced life support by SFFD members assigned to ambulances and engines and the provision of emergency ambulance transportation. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is expected to make a number of incremental but significant changes to the provision of out-of-hospital medical care in the next several years. It is our understanding that very little discussion of the impact of the ACA on SFFD emergency medical services has occurred.

Fleet Preparedness

We were told that the SFFD fleet barely supports daily operations and that the fleet is not prepared for any significant additional demands such as a regional wildland deployment or a major local emergency. It is our understanding that the availability of fire engines, fire ladder trucks, rescue trucks, and ambulances negatively impacts daily operations and may not be capable of providing surge capacity for a major man-made or natural disaster.

Fire department emergency response fleets must consist of a sufficient number of engines, ladder trucks, rescue trucks, and ambulances to support daily operations at every assigned unit, the fleet needs to support normal vehicle out of service time for maintenance and repair (providing a reserve or ready vehicle to act in place of each unit's assigned vehicle), and have the capacity to support the initial demands of a major local emergency. Many fire departments establish reserve to active apparatus ratios – X ready reserve engines for every X front line engines, Y ready reserve ladder trucks for every Y front line ladder companies, and Z ready reserve ambulances for every Z front line ambulances. It is our impression that no such plan exists in the SFFD and that the condition of the current SFFD fleet is inadequate.

Many local governments deferred the replacement of vehicles during the recent economic downturn and we understand that some fleet replacement activities are currently in the works. A proper and collaborative planning process over the last several years could have identified these critical needs and SFFD management, membership organizations, and affinity organizations could have participated in developing a solution for these issues and advocated for necessary funding.

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Disaster Preparedness

It is our understanding that the SFFD has developed and published a disaster operations plan but that the plan has not been practiced or tested in a full-scale or table-top exercise that involves SFFD commanders assigned to field operations on all shifts. This situation is remarkable, especially in a community with an unfortunate history of natural disasters.

Especially in San Francisco, this type of plan should be in place, the plan should be current, and the plan should be regularly exercised with the involvement of those that will command SFFD emergency operations in the event of a disaster.

Additional Issues

SFFD members discussed several other areas of concern that reflect upon the SFFD's preparedness and management. These areas included a lack of updated rules and regulations, lack of succession planning, lack of company and command officer training and development, lack of a formal after action analysis process, and missed opportunities for grant funding.

Rules and Regulations

As you know, fire departments are rules-based organizations where organizational expectations for how certain situations are handled are put in writing. To be effective, rules and regulations need to be current and all fire department members need to be trained on their application. Current, valid rules and regulations are important for the efficient functioning of administrative functions as well as for situations that impact customer service and fire fighter safety. It is our understanding that SFFD regulations have not been significantly updated in over a decade, and that a revised set of rules and regulations has been developed but not yet approved for distribution by the Fire Chief or executive staff. A collaborative process to develop and provide training on rules and regulations will help assure their integration into SFFD operations.

Succession Planning

Succession planning in a fire department is important to assure that the organization is well-prepared for the regular retirement and attrition of senior members of the department. Fire fighters and junior fire officers need to be provided with skills and information that will make them effective commanders and administrators in the future. In a large organization such as the SFFD, proper succession planning cannot be left to chance.

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A collaborative effort to develop this plan between executive members of the department and the rank and file membership of the department would yield a plan that can be understood and supported by all members of the SFFD.

Lack of Officer Development

We were told about the lack of continuing education training for company and command officers in the SFFD. For example, we understand that a comprehensive company officer training program was delivered after the mass promotion of company officers after a long period of no company officer promotions but that this program has not been continued.

Lack of Routine Incident Analysis

The SFFD prepared a comprehensive report in the wake of the deaths of Lieutenant Vincent Perez and Fire Fighter Paramedic Anthony Valerio in 2011. We understand from SFFD members that other significant incidents do not undergo any formal after action analysis or that such an analysis is not performed in a timely manner. Formal analysis of significant incidents and less formal after action analysis of more routine incidents creates a learning environment that improves customer service and fire fighter safety.

Missed Grant Funding Opportunities

We understand that the SFFD has missed several opportunities for grant funding and has not participated in UASI funding to the extent that might be expected for the largest jurisdiction in a metropolitan area. The listing of funded UASI projects in the San Francisco region for 2015 did not contain any SFFD projects.

Perception of Organizational Inertia

Although more difficult to quantify, we also heard member's concerns over the SFFD's seemingly reactive management approach, the lack of progress on issues that are being managed by SFFD executives, and the disconnection of the SFFD executive staff from the people that deliver service in the street.

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One specific example was mentioned by several SFFD members that we met with. As you know, occupational cancer is an extremely important issue to fire fighters nationwide. The San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation and its Executive Director, Tony Stephani, are preeminent advocates for the prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer in fire fighters. Tony is a retired SFFD member.

Currently, it is believed that exposure to smoke and other products of combustion that fire fighters encounter after the fire is extinguished, during overhaul, contribute to the incidence of cancer in fire fighters. We were told that an overhaul policy that would provide additional protection to SFFD fire fighters has been drafted but has been held in the Fire Chief's executive offices for an extended period of time. The SFFD members that we spoke with cited this as an example of the organizational inertia, seeming lack of interest by the executive staff, and lack of concern for fire fighters that currently exists in the SFFD.

Conclusion

The San Francisco Fire Department is made up of a highly diverse group of extremely dedicated fire fighters, paramedics, and EMT's. Individually and through their membership and affinity organizations, they have expressed their concerns about the current leadership and direction of the department.

Our visit was not intended to be an all-encompassing review of the services provided by the SFFD or of the management of the organization. Rather, we have identified issues that are related to the management of the SFFD that might be considerations in the evaluation of the SFFD's management performance.

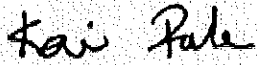
As stated earlier in this report, the "us versus them" atmosphere that pervades the interaction between the Fire Chief and the executive staff and the membership and affinity organizations in the SFFD is troublesome. It is incumbent on the leadership of the SFFD to set a tone that considers and values the skills and positions of every SFFD member, both individually and through their elected leaders.

Short and long range planning utilizing the talents and experience of SFFD members from all membership and affinity groups will aid the department in providing the most effective, efficient, and safe services. Cooperative planning is in the best interest of everyone, including the citizens of San Francisco. Cooperative planning that considers the perspectives and opinions of a diverse group of SFFD members allows the organization to anticipate and plan for changes that impact customer service.

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If we can provide you with any further information about our review, please let me know. Once again, on behalf of our team, thank you for the opportunity to complete this important work and for the grace and hospitality that was shown to us during our visit to your beautiful city.

Sincerely,



Kevin Roche
Partner

Consultants



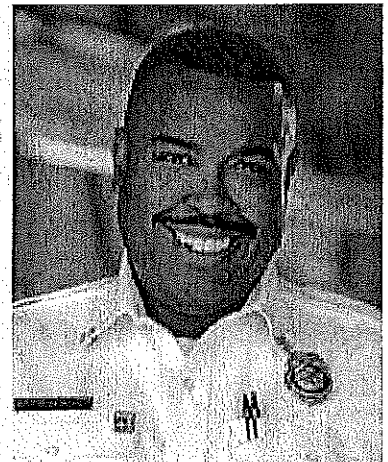
Mary Cameli serves as an Assistant Fire Chief with the Mesa, Arizona, Fire and Medical Department. She currently manages the department's Emergency Medical Support, Personnel and Wellness, and Planning operations. Mary has been a member of the fire department for 31 years and has been an Assistant Fire Chief since 2005.

Chief Cameli is the President of the Arizona Fire Chiefs Association and holds a Masters Degree in Organizational Management. Mary is also a board member for the International Fire Service Training Association.

Charles Hood serves as the Fire Chief of the City of San Antonio, Texas. His fire service career began as a member of the Tucson Fire Department. Charles served for 23 years as a member of the Phoenix Fire Department. He moved through the ranks in Phoenix and retired as an Assistant Fire Chief prior to moving to San Antonio.

Chief Hood leads one of the largest fire departments in the nation, commanding approximately 1,900 personnel with a budget of over 250 million dollars. He is ultimately responsible for providing fire, emergency medical, special operations, emergency management, and fire prevention services to over 1.4 million citizens.

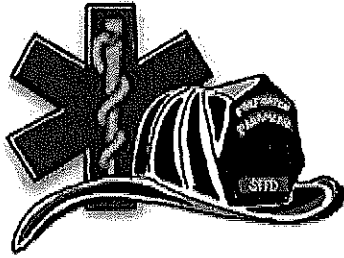
Chief Hood's educational credentials include a Bachelor of Science in Fire Service Management from Ottawa University. He was also selected to attend the Harvard Kennedy School of Executive Education on two occasions. Chief Hood serves as a member of the board of directors for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.



Michael Lombardo served as the Fire Commissioner for the City of Buffalo, New York from 2006 to 2010. He was a member of the Buffalo Fire Department for over 25 years, rising through the ranks to his appointment as Fire Commissioner and retiring in 2010.

Chief Lombardo is a recognized fire service educator with an expertise in fire fighting tactics, strategy, and deployment. He was recognized for his training efforts in 1999 as the first recipient of the Training Achievement Award at the Fire Department Instructors Conference. He is a contributor to several fire service journals.

Mike is a veteran of the United States Air Force. Prior to his appointment as Fire Commissioner, he led Rescue One of the Buffalo Fire Department.



Firefighter Paramedic Association

By: Jared F. Cooper

Today as I sit here, I think back and reflect upon the significant events of this last year which brought about the historic meeting and creation of the United Employee Groups (UEG) of the San Francisco Fire Department. September 29th will mark the one-year anniversary in which all the employee groups including Firefighters Local 798, the Asian Firefighters Association, Los Bomberos, SF ResQ, the Black Firefighters Association, the San Francisco Fire Chiefs' Association, the United Fire Service Women, the EMS Officers Association, and the Firefighter Paramedic Association came together for the common good in order to bring forth emergent change in the San Francisco Fire Department. I have been told that never in the department's history have this many groups stood together in solidarity in order to fight for progress and change.

leadership toward moving the department into the future was needed. While one can finger-point at the various parties who are responsible, which would be just as effective as watching our Congressional leaders debate, or engaging in root cause analysis to determine the nature of this crisis which is too lengthy to discuss here but would make an exciting case study, I'll simply provide a brief review of the past.

Our aging ambulance fleet was constantly lacking available ambulances because the majority were in the shop for repairs. From oil leaks, to engine fires, to flat tires, to fractured ambulance chassis, to a smoking ambulance compartment, there was never a dull shift for our H3 ambulance members. The expense of repairing some of our ambulances far exceeded the cost of simply replacing them. It was so routine to have our

These problems persisted and a wildfire grew out of control without any suppression effort by our Leaders. I have said it before and will repeat it again, "sitting back and allowing the status quo harm to our City and not protecting the citizens, and not supporting the United Employee Groups in their advocacy for immediate change to our Fire Department's leadership tactics and need to address this crisis in the Department would undoubtedly be counter to the sworn oath which I and all department members agreed to,

I have been asked by many of my colleagues as to why we felt the need for such widespread public lobbying for change and why we decided to have a "vote of no confidence". Looking back a year ago our City was experiencing a dire situation with our Fire Department's global mishandling of virtually every aspect. While the ambulance response crisis stood out and made many ugly headlines and embarrassments, there were many others. Make no mistake, these crises did not develop overnight; rather it was a foreseen crisis in the making over many years. Solid departmental planning, strategic foresight, planning to hire the needed personnel, putting the right people in charge of certain operations, and forward thinking

good folks at the BOE responding to daily ambulance breakdowns, that I personally put their phone number on speed dial in my phone in case I might need their help. Our ranks of Firefighter-Paramedics assigned to fire engines were dwindling to the point that our City with a budget of over \$8.9 billion could only staff on a daily basis 25-28 ALS engines with paramedics. This is unacceptable considering every other neighboring Bay Area city and county has implemented ALS staffed first-response fire apparatus almost 15 years ago! Our lack of a citywide fire-based EMS system with an adequate number of ambulances and single-function H3 Level 1 and H3 Level 2 personnel to staff these vehicles resulted in our ever common

"medic to follow" problem. It was not uncommon to have the City pleading for private ambulance firms to come and "bail out" the City on a daily basis. Every day and at every hour fire engines on scene with critically sick or injured citizens would wait in queue from minutes to hours, until an available ambulance could respond. The wait time for clearing US Customs in Miami could be less than waiting for an ambulance in San Francisco! Radio batteries, monitor batteries, EKG heart monitors, working continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) units, and other critical equipment for ambulances were in short-supply and on a "first-come, first-serve" availability. The injury rate and sick pay usage among the H3 ambulance personnel was reaching its highest levels since the 2007 EMS re-configuration, obviously a huge "red flag" that something was amiss within an organization experiencing a catastrophe.

Before the formation of the United Employee Groups and the underlying "vote of confidence" the members of this Fire Department tried on multiple fronts to have these problems addressed by the appropriate leadership and through the proper channels in a professional manner. From direct complaints to our front line supervisors, to countless submissions of General Forms through the chain of command, to countless Labor Management meetings, to H3 committee meetings, to meetings with the command staff and Chief, to Grand Civil Jury Reports, to Fire Commission testimony and letters, to the Budget Analyst Reports, to audit reports, to complaints to the Board of Supervisors, to complaints and concerns by our Local EMS Agency. At each step our voice was heard, and the message was clear and understood that a critical problem exists which required immediate attention. Unfortunately, nothing happened. Complaints from our citizens increased, injured patients conditions worsened waiting for ambulances, deaths occurred, burnout among our members increased, and no progress appeared to be in the works. These problems persisted and a wildfire grew out of control without any suppression effort by our Leaders. I have said it before and will repeat it again, "sitting back and allowing the status quo harm to our City and not protecting the citizens, and not supporting the United Employee Groups in their advocacy for immediate change to our Fire Department's leadership tactics and need to address this crisis in the Department would undoubtedly be counter to the sworn oath which I and all department members agreed to, from the day we raised our hand and accepted that oath by our Fire Chief." The United Employees Group culminated that last backstop to saving the City of San Francisco when no other political leadership would confront this detrimental harm.

I'm happy to report that today the climate has slowly improved for the better and over the last year, it has been a learning opportunity for all who have been close to this crisis. Local 798 Executive Leadership, and the United Employee Groups have been instrumental in bringing forth the needed remedies.

We have hired a greater number of H3 Level 1 and Level 2 employees to bring us closer to our needed ambulance staffing. New ambulances have been purchased and the fleet of old ambulances has been drastically reduced. ALS engines have increased and there is discussion about making every firehouse ALS within the next couple of years. The H3 Level 3 mandatory WDOs have been reduced through the added staffing to this rank, and I'm hopeful this will continue. The "medic to follow" situation has been almost eliminated and only occurs on certain "peak" days. The daily workload for the H3 ambulance personnel has been reduced to a workable level and hopefully we can integrate company-based on-duty training for ambulance members to improve their skills. Chief Hayes-White has formed a strategic planning committee and I even read a recent email that the Chief will be sending out a quarterly email on department events. This is all very good progress. With the recent increase in our operating budget we have added an additional Rescue Captain position to station 49 and in the coming months the department will be "reopening" the Rescue Captain 4 District, which serves our residents in the southern portion of the City. Captain Niels Tangherlini is currently working to partner with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to have a blended fire department/HOME team to better serve our most fragile and underserved customers in the downtown and SOMA corridors, allowing us to free up our valuable engine and ambulance resources.

This is all wonderful news and I applaud the men and women of the Fire Department for their commitment to serving this City and this fine organization under some of the most punishing circumstances and challenging conditions. I'm very proud of the UEG committee members for being bold and advocating for change when nobody else met the challenge. I believe that if we can continue to make these positive in-roads and continuously push for strategic change while always looking into the future, we will all do a better job of serving our customers in San Francisco!

Sincerely,

Jared F. Cooper

Firefighter Paramedic Association.



Mision San Francisco de Asis

Los Bomberos de San Francisco

San Francisco Fire Department employee group

September 20, 2015

Officers and Directors

Mariano Elias
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Lester Lesavoy
Vice-President

Robert Lopez
Treasurer

Robert Vigil
Secretary

Ramon Barreto
Ramon Simon
David Crespín
Directors



When the *Los Bomberos* received a request to meet and address the deplorable condition of the San Francisco Fire Department and the current administration's inaction in addressing the obligatory duties of that office, we were unquestionably interested and dutifully inclined to appear.

The idea was to unite all the employees groups under a single umbrella to advocate for a change in management.

We approached our members, sought their opinions, and questioned the provocation of the status quo.

In the end, we as a group could not deny that this Administration's management of the Department, which has been widely documented, was not meeting the expectations of the citizens and providing the resources necessary for the work force to perform their duties.

The inaction of the Administration in addressing department needs was the key component that brought forth the employee groups now referred to as the Unified Employee Group (UEG).

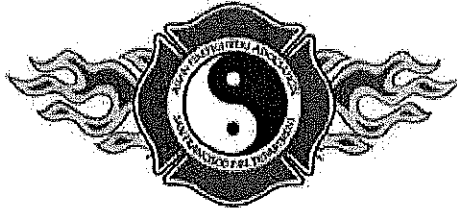
The groups unified and decided that a "vote of No Confidence" of Chief Hayes-White was the only way to stop the negligence from continuing.

The UEG did obtain, through the memberships, a Vote of No Confidence, the **Group's** first official act.

Los Bomberos is steadfast in our belief that the citizens of San Francisco have an expectation of service from their fire department. That we maintain our 'Mission Statement' as our goal and that the firefighters whom respond to their calls have the resources to accomplish their duties.

Sincerely,

Mariano Elias
President Los Bomberos



A Message from the AFA

By: Norm Caba, President of the Asian Firefighters Association

The last year has been quite a ride in the world of employee groups.

I don't ever remember a time when all of these groups have agreed on anything. From the Consent Decree to the EMS merger and every other issue, everyone has had a different opinion about everything. When every group in the fire department met in one room last year, I did not know what to expect. The topic was about the leadership in our department. As each person spoke, it became clear that we were all telling the same story, but all from very different perspectives. Stories were told about EMS, equipment, facilities, recruitment, vehicles, training, promotions, etc. It didn't matter what the topic was, the story was the same: We all wanted new leadership.

For me, this first meeting was eye opening. I had felt like we needed new leadership for a long time but that was based only on my own experiences. Once I heard it from everyone else, I knew it wasn't just me; everyone felt the same.

It was not an easy decision to ask the Mayor for new leadership last September, but it seemed to be the ONLY decision. And looking back now, it seems to have been the right decision. Since last September, there has been a formation of a new budget committee, a new recruitment position, and a formation of a new strategic planning committee. After 10 years of no one listening, it seems our voices are starting to be heard. Don't get me wrong, our problems are not all solved. We still have a long way to go.

Despite any new changes since last September, the UEG stands fast with its original request for new leadership. It seems that the relationship with our leadership has been

broken to such a degree that there is no longer any trust. Without a good working relationship, it makes it difficult to truly accomplish anything. The metaphor I told the Chief to compare the relationship between the leadership and the rank & file was this: Imagine I'm in a relationship with someone. That someone does something so egregious to me that I do not want to be in that relationship anymore. That someone can apologize and promise to do everything right from this point forward. They might have even started doing some of the right things. But it's too late for me. I no longer want to be in that relationship. The relationship is broken beyond repair. The Chief did not agree with my metaphor, and I know it's not fair to compare our relationship with the leadership to just any relationship, but it is just an illustration to paint the picture of how we feel.

Most scholars would define 21st Century Leadership as this: "Leadership is an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real change toward mutual purposes." It basically means that leadership is all about relationships. Our leadership has shown influence is NOT a two way street, has not proven they intend real change, and we can no longer trust that we have mutual purposes. So, after ten plus years of this type of leadership we asked to leave this relationship.

The Mayor is the only one who can mend this situation. I hope he starts to listen. The united front created by every single group of the fire department continues to amaze me. I'm hoping that this is only the beginning of the things we can accomplish by working together.

Until recently, in the nearly 150 year history of the SFFD, there had never been a formally recognized organization for folks in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) community. This fact changed in 2014. In July of 2014, SFResQ was officially recognized as a LGBTQ employee group for current and past members of the SFFD. SFResQ (pronounced SF Rescue) was formed to reach out and support other LGBTQ members of the SFFD and act in an advisory role to the Chief and the Administration.

Since our inception we have met several times with the Chief and the command staff to discuss items pertinent to current, past, and future LGBTQ members of our Department. Beginning October of 2013, prior to SFResQ being officially recognized, there were numerous discussions and letters submitted to the Chief and the Fire Commission; these communications outlined and described in detail, the need for dialogue and remedies to several problematic situations concerning LGBTQ members. At the heart of these concerns were activities and conditions stemming from a lack of cultural competency training and clear directives from the Chief that our Department is no place for homophobia, harassment, or hostile working environments.

Cultural competency training relevant to our work environment and culture serves not only the culturally diverse employee, but also those seeking to better serve the diverse populations that live and work in San Francisco. Moreover, we best serve the citizens of San Francisco when our Department is made up of folks that represent the various communities we serve. Although part of the Fire Department's Mission is "to provide a work environment that values health, wellness and cultural diversity and is free of harassment and discrimination", there currently is no strong evidence that this is truly valued or enforced. Furthermore, SFResQ posits the LGBTQ community has been critically underrepresented for a number of years. More extensive recruitment efforts are needed to reverse this trend.

Under the facilitation of Firefighters Local 798 President, Tom O'Connor, we took the historically unprecedented step of uniting every single employee resource group recognized in the SFFD in unanimous agreement that it was time for a change in leadership. Over the years, Chief Joanne Hayes-White, Deputy Chief Mark Gonzalez, and Deputy Chief Ray Guzman had failed on numerous levels, which culminated in a crisis for the Department. Our EMS system mismanaged, legal battles involving fraud and misrepresentation of the facts and no strategic plan for our Department have been just some of the issues plaguing the current administration.

When SFResQ was approached to join the United Employees Group (UEG) and the subsequent vote of no confidence, it was made with much thought and consideration of the facts. We were asked to present the following question to our respective members: has the Chief's actions or lack thereof, merited a vote of no confidence? Based on the facts, our answer, and the answer of the general membership was a resounding: Yes, we do not have confidence in the Chief.

When the no confidence vote was distributed among the rank and file of the SFFD, the vote had the same outcome. In fact, the result was overwhelmingly the same; over 80% voted no confidence in the Chief to lead our Department.

As mentioned, October of 2013 was the first attempt to address critical concerns being brought to the administration's attention from SFResQ. Unfortunately it was an entire calendar year before even the least of our concerns were addressed. With the exception of participating in the SF Pride Parade along with many of the Assistant Chiefs and Deputies, the Chief has failed to show leadership regarding our concerns. The Chief seems reluctant with regard to instituting or addressing cultural competency training. Our requests have seemingly fallen on deaf ears. SFResQ, at the direction of the Chief and her Deputies, have met with with D.O.T. Chief Williams on this training endeavor but further development has stalled. SFResQ and its representatives have met

with the Chief, et al., once in 2013, twice in 2014, and three times in 2015 to discuss matters relating to our requests for training. As firefighters, we gladly accept our sworn duty to protect the lives and property of the citizens of San Francisco. We accept, without reservation, this charge and have an enormous amount of pride associated with its responsibilities. A Chief who has pride in the Department would never have allowed the Department to reach the crisis that it did without a fight. It may be impossible for the current Chief to recover from this vote of no confidence. Although there has been some progress made addressing the concerns raised

by the UEG since the time of the vote of no confidence, the question remains whether or not the Mayor, with the information he has been given, has the political will and motivation to do the right thing for the Department and the citizens of San Francisco. Keith Baraka, Chair, SFResQ



Mike Whooley, SFEMSOA
San Francisco EMS Officers Association

Sigh...

A whole year has gone by since we suited up and headed to City Hall to meet with the Mayor and express our frustration with the rudderless ship that was the management of the San Francisco Fire Department. (A little perspective, I wasn't an officer in our Association, just an advisor.) Our then current president, my friend, was agonizing over whether to sign the letter put out by the United Employees Groups denouncing the absolutely ineffectual upper management of the once great SFFD. There was risk involved, both personally and professionally, but the risk in not acting was much greater, so we both headed down to meet with the Mayor and his Chief of Staff.

When we arrived I was amazed by the intensity of feelings in the room, groups that historically hated each other (I don't think that's too strong a word) had banded together to say, "Enough was enough". It was beautiful.

Of course the Mayor and his COS pretended to listen, looked for a way to throw money at the issues to make them go away, but never got down to the essential issue of our plea, quite simply that there is no leadership present at 698 2nd St.

So what's happened since then? Well we got more ambulances, the funding that was frittered away of other projects in years past, we got more EMS personnel, and we restored

a EMS Section Chief to help manage the 200+ folks who operate our ambulances each day. All these were desperately needed and welcomed, you only occasionally hear the dreaded words "Medic to follow", on a daily basis, but what we didn't get, the most essential part of the puzzle was LEADERSHIP.

There's still no strategic plan in this department, 5 years, 10 years, hell I'd settle for 1 year, there's no trust that upper management will do the right thing, as amply proven 2 weeks ago, and we still don't have enough reserve equipment to even staff a strike team. Yet the most important issue on anyone's mind downtown is planning for the yearlong celebration of our 150th year. Perversely I think I get this. It's always easy to dwell on past glory than to actually sit down, buckle in and lead this department into the 21st Century.

So Mr. Lee, it's quite simple, if you want to spend money this time, utilize it for the search team to find a new chief for this department, I don't think you'll have to look far, there's plenty of talent in the ranks of the SFFD, you probably saw a few of them on TV last week at the Fire Commission meeting. By the way, they were the ones making the public comments. My time left in this department is limited, I've had a great career, worked with some the most amazing people I could ever hope to, but the time to fix this is now. I don't want to read another after action report brimming with the lessons learned from our mistakes, I want to hear about how we anticipated the problems, trained for them and overcame them because our top down leadership led the way.

THOMAS P. O'CONNOR JR.
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September 22, 2014

The Honorable Edwin M. Lee
Mayor of San Francisco
One Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 200
San Francisco CA 94102

Dear Mayor Lee:

We, the undersigned members of the United Employee Groups of the San Francisco Fire Department, wish to advise you of a grave crisis of confidence we have in the direction and leadership of the current administration.

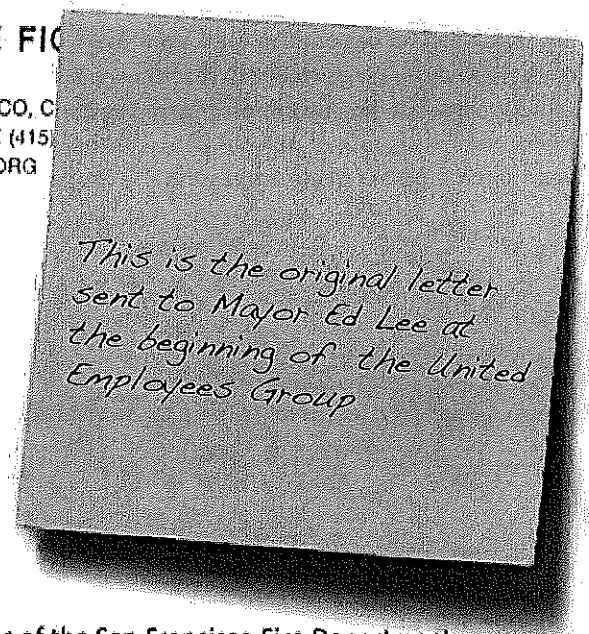
As demonstrated by recent headlines, the SFFD is failing in its most basic of missions, to protect the lives and property of citizens of San Francisco. Our current inability to respond adequately to medical emergencies was not an unforeseen crisis. Rather, this situation developed slowly over time by ignoring very basic management principles. Moreover, your administration should have been constantly briefed as to this developing crisis.

Our department has also been facing a series of other problems. We have witnessed an institution torn apart by a series of controversial promotional exams and a slew of lawsuits currently working their way through the judicial system.

We have also watched the Department become ineffective due to the following:

1. Failing to provide timely emergency medical response on a daily basis.
2. Failing to develop a strategic plan for the San Francisco Fire Department.
3. Failing to maintain a consistent command structure by allowing the SFFD administration to become a revolving door of Command Staff members who have been demoted, forced to resign or have stepped down voluntarily out of frustration and disappointment with the leadership.

Mr. Mayor, We, the proud and united members of the San Francisco Fire Department know we are better than what the current public perception reflects. Our department can and will return to the level of excellence the people of San Francisco deserve. However, this can only happen with a change in our current leadership and with the support of your administration.



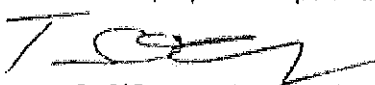
On September 22, 2014, the executive boards of every employee group in the San Francisco Fire Department convened a special meeting to discuss the state of the Department. By unanimous decision the members voted to raise our concerns and lack of confidence in the current Administration. Collectively, the employee groups have recognized that in order to provide effective services to the people of San Francisco, management changes must happen. In your capacity as Mayor of San Francisco we urge you to take the following actions:


1. Immediately establish an Interim Management Team comprised of three chief officers to transition from the current administration and oversee the daily operations of the Fire Department until a new Chief of Department is appointed.
2. Task the Interim Management Team with the following objectives:
 - a. Develop the framework of a strategic plan that establishes specific goals, strategies and projects for the resolution of the Department's many issues.
 - b. Develop and implement an apparatus fleet replacement plan.
 - c. Increase the SFFD Emergency Medical Services System in order to bring it into compliance with all local and State mandated response times as quickly as possible.
 - d. Develop a comprehensive EMS Hiring Plan to minimize overtime.
 - e. Work with the City Attorney's office to quickly resolve all lawsuits by Department employees and institute new policies and procedural changes that would address the root causes for the lawsuits.


We recognize the potential public impact this joint statement may cause and the importance of composure in the public eye. However, the current state of the Fire Department has become untenable and immediate action is necessary.

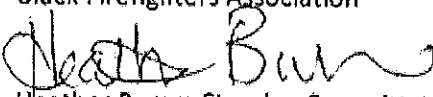
Respectfully submitted,


The United Employee Groups of the San Francisco Fire Department



Thomas P. O'Connor, Jr., President
Local 798



Norm Caba, President
Asian Firefighters Association

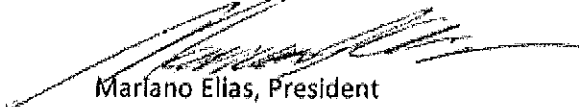

Kevin Smith, President
Black Firefighters Association


Heather Buren, Steering Committee
United Fire Service Women


Keith Baraka, Chair
SFResQ


Jared Cooper, President
SF Paramedic/Firefighter Association


Tony Dumont, President
SF EMS Officers Association


Mariano Elias, President
Los Bomberos

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PRESIDENT, LOCAL 798



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