



Fire Authority Between Strasburg Fire, Byers Fire, and Bennett Fire 03/22/2023 RECAP

Chiefs have met and meetings to create merger plan will commence moving forward. Committees will be formed to work on various aspects of progress toward fire authority. Chiefs will create a list of things for committees to work on over the next 4 months approximately. Committees will create a plan and submit it to the Chiefs for review. All reports will be added to the final plans given to the Boards. When the reports and plans are all completed and the lawyers creating the Authority are done with their reviews and approvals, then the Fire Authority will be in place. The goal is January 1, 2024.

All committees should research and keep costs in mind associated with purchasing any needed new equipment or upgrading equipment, working toward all stations having the same items. Some committee needs listed below: (Other staff members encouraged to be involved in things that interest them)

- ⇒ Budget, Staffing, SOP, Handbooks, Payroll, Pension, Vol/Career, Benefits, Cadet Program, Vehicle Insurance, Driver Eligibility, etc. **(All Chiefs)**
- ⇒ Fire Operations – Fire apparatus plans (current and 5-year), equipment needs to make all apparatus equipment the same, future equipment needs **(McCawley/Disher)**
- ⇒ EMS Operations, EMS equipment, supplies, apparatus current and 5-year replacement plan, training **(Mack/Josie/Any EMS assistants desired)**
- ⇒ Life Safety – Station needs, codes, inspections (including reporting software), prevention activities, schools, businesses, water supply, hydrant infrastructure, investigations, open burning procedures, etc. **(Connor/Conroy/Flamini/Mullins)**
- ⇒ Administration / Office Management – Review combining information into one format, computer programs, job assignments for admin staff. **(Corren lead with Kendra, Heidi, Connie)**
- ⇒ Cadre Training Planning – yearly training and academy **(Tyler/Derek)**
- ⇒ Communications – Radio needs, dirt work for response area division, MDT needs, designators for apparatus, Maps, and mapping, Active 911. **(Conroy/May/Connor/Disher)**

- ⇒ Fleet – Report on current apparatus as of this year and the vision for the future – will work with other committees to plan for apparatus needs **(Llanes/Dillingham/Yoder)**
- ⇒ Information Management – Website, social media, etc., possible phone/contact list and shared Active 911 facilitation **(Flamini lead with Rogers/Anderson/Donner – with Chief Feedback)**
- ⇒ Authority Organization – Org chart will be created and disseminated - some officer promotions may be completed this year.

Added Thoughts:

- Employees and reserves will have the opportunity to be involved.
- Crews have already begun to integrate and work more closely together. This is further encouraged to foster collaboration and improved teamwork. Response plans will be created this year to further assist with this.
- NOBODY will lose their job.
- Some officer ranks may be changed.
- For the 1st year of the authority, current pay structure for each agency won't be changed, other than raises that are usually planned, providing additional time for budgetary items to be addressed and allow time for all employees to finish certifications and/or trainings that are needed to justify varying levels of pay (as determined through the process). Consider PRN or OT opportunities for those currently working at 2 agencies who may lose income potential.
- One name for the authority will be created – a contest is planned to see who can come up with the best patch, scramble, uniform logo, etc. EMTCA Logo or other ideas from past?
- Will budget to purchase t-shirts, hats, paperwork, polos, and new logos before January 1, 2024
- Considerations for working toward putting new logo on each apparatus including “Proudly serving these communities” on the sides.
- Consideration needs to be given to creation of new web pages, social media, etc. A more pressing need initially is going to be a central location for staff updates with a mechanism for posing questions and getting answers to those questions – available for all to reference and review. Would like to be able to transparently post information as progress is made to keep everyone informed.
- Employees will likely remain at their respective stations for the 1st year while the Board and Chiefs make best determinations on staffing for call responses and resource management.
- Everyone is aware there will be issues that come up that will need to be overcome and addressed. Some of the challenges include:
 - Utilization of budgets – The budget of other departments will be utilized to pay for other District's costs.
 - Gaps in payroll exist in various positions across the 3 departments.

- Chain of Command – What positions will be and should be filled?
- Some employees lose ability to supplement income by working for 2 agencies, FT at one and PT at another.
- Unforeseen challenges
- Current goals – we all need to look at ways to save money which can be hard for the first couple years in an authority. In beginning, we will have all the lawyers; with multiple things being covered. Discussed messaging on how to address public concerns on money, everything will go into one pot as far as money management, board authority, etc. We all need to remember that as the Authority, all money will go in one pot and subsequently go out. It will no longer be Bennett, Byers, Strasburg as separate agencies – we will be one department.
- Caleb discussed that there can be exciting parts of everything going on, but also some hard times and getting into things that you don't really know about or feel rough about. Talking about things and working through it all together is important; communication will be the key.
- Discussed transparency and talks between union, addressing rumors/assumptions, etc. Nothing to hide and the more input the better – it will take a group to accomplish all of this. Minutes / Notes will be completed for meetings.
- Be open if something rubs you the wrong way, things can inadvertently come off in the wrong way. All will be respectful.
- Utilize Union President as one point of contact. Chiefs are accessible too, but the Union can serve as a good single point of contact. Byers doesn't have a Union yet. Chief Cumley recommends Derek as point of contact.
- Chief Cumley – Would be good to have a dinner and invite everyone (open house) sometime soon.