

Ad Hoc Fire Integration Study Committee
October 23, 2007
6:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present

Chief Clarabut, Management UFD
John Strangio, Labor UVFD
Rob Gattenberg, Boardmember UVFD
Joyce Boghosian, Volunteer UFD
Larry Goodman, Labor UFD
Pat Dabbs, Citizen Alternate UFD
Doug Crane, Councilmember UFD
Dan Grebil, Management UVFD- by phone
Mike Mayfield, Volunteer UVFD- by phone

Committee Members Absent

Nancy Parker, Citizen UFD
Duane Mahan, Citizen UVFD

Others Present

John McCowen, Councilmember Alternate UFD
Kevin Jennings
Lee Howard
Chris Rowney
Jimmy Rickel
Julie Rogers
Everett Holbrook
Cindy Stanford, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Ukiah Fire Chief Tony Clarabut at 6:35 p.m. at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center, Riesling Room

1. Roll Call

The Committee Members present are listed above.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Ukiah Valley Fire Engineer Everett Holbrook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Introduction of Guests

Each member and guest introduced themselves and indicated what group they were representing.

4. Correspondence

None

5. Approval of Minutes

ACTION: Motion made by Joyce Boghosian to approve the Minutes of the October 9, 2007, meeting; seconded by John

Strangio. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

6. Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None

7. New Business

None

8. Old Business

- a. Continued Discussion of Integration of Fire and EMS Services

Dispatching:

Tony noted that at the previous meeting Jay Burstiano had asked about actual departments that were using cross dispatching with closest resource, agreements. Tony shared with the committee that it is being done approximately 2200 times per year between the City of Chico and Butte County FD. In order for our auto aid or closest resource to work optimally it is best if the dispatching is done from one center. However, this would create additional costs for the City. The next best thing is cross dispatching. A general discussion ensued re: the concept of cross dispatching and how it would work for the two departments. We are in same frequency range only infrastructure change is likely to occur in fire stations where we can currently monitor but not receive tone outs for the other agency. The benefit is to the citizens receiving the closest resource 100% of the time.

Reduction and duplication of effort:

Joyce reported that she had talked to the UFD volunteers and they would like very much to work and train with UVFD volunteers for a period of time, but not immediately combine the volunteer organizations.

Mike stated that the UVFD volunteers are in full agreement with the concept of fully combining organizations and that they would be willing to accept all the UFD volunteers into the ranks of UVFD as a unified organization. Tony asked if Mike was talking about a unified effort of volunteers from the two different organizations or the shifting of all volunteers toward one or the other parent agencies. Mike said they were thinking it was to be one organization. Tony questioned who will manage the one volunteer organization. Mike had not gotten into the specifics of that during his discussion with UVFD volunteers, but they are ready to become part of a combined organization

Tony asked if there was any further discussion from the committee on how to proceed. A general discussion ensued regarding two volunteer organizations starting to train together on standard operating procedures. Once we are confident that both groups are on the same page with the SOPs, then the volunteers could respond as one within both jurisdictions. Given that UFD has a relatively new volunteer force and UVFD's more veteran volunteer unit could offer their experience. Joyce indicated that UFD volunteers were very dedicated to keeping their affiliation with UFD and concerned that they were not absorbed into another organization. Tony suggested that the best thing to do at this point is continue on a plan to work closer together with the ultimate goal to make the working relationship so smooth that it would appear to the public that we are one organization.

John Strangio suggested that a consensus be reached at this meeting, i.e., starting in November both volunteer departments will train together at least one or two Thursdays a month. Tony thinks the next step is to put the volunteer leadership together with administration and figure out a plan to be brought back to the committee. Tony said it is certainly ok to get together on an informal basis right now. Joyce added that all of the UFD volunteers are really open to that. Discussion ensued re: logistics, i.e., looking at the current training calendars, decide on a couple of training days and topics a month. Mike suggested he and Joyce get together and go over some of these details and come back to the committee with something a little more firm. Tony said the next step might be that the volunteer representatives sit down with him and Dan and hammer out some of the details, i.e. similar standards, training, then consider taking the next step. John McCowen thinks that as long as the volunteers and administration works things out they can just proceed without having to bring anything back to the committee. **Committee consensus is that we proceed with John McCowen's approach.**

SOPs – John Strangio, John Corippo and Larry Goodman got together to compare and discuss the two departments' SOPs. Initial review indicates that the SOPs are very similar already and that it shouldn't be hard to make them the same. It was suggested that the departments train together and decide between themselves which SOPs work best. Discussion ensued re: getting ball rolling with volunteers, training, mixed evolutions, apparatus, just start getting involved. The two training officers will get together and continue working on identifying the best SOPs combining and adding to them. Tony noted that this is not limited to fire and covers all types of responses, medical aids, HazMats, traffic accidents, anything we are doing.

Fleet Management and Prevention: Tony and Dan still plan to get together re: fleet in general, combining fleet maintenance, inspections, plan checks, and fire prevention as the duplication of effort is in these main areas. Tony stated that we are doing some things together right now and we just need to perfect them. i.e., fire prevention week.

Tony brought up other issues still to be covered - defining the level of service, level of service in rural v. urban areas, response times, and staffing at incidents.

Response Time:

Tony presented the issue of response time, that being a response within a given time frame a certain % of time. This is determined by what a department can afford to do staffing wise and on what your administrators think the departments are capable of. Rob said he would like to see options, i.e., EMS with a quick response and fire with a progression curve, trying to get to a fire before it reaches a stage that exceeds the capabilities of the first response. Tony and Dan will get together to define/develop standards and bring them back to the committee. The problems are our resources and staffing.

Phasing: Tony stated that the issues the committee is covering now are not significant policy changes, but more operational changes. He suggested that as we develop and agree to operational changes that we implement them as soon as possible and not wait for a comprehensive plan before we start implementing the easy stuff.

What is Important:

- Dispatching - An analysis needs to be done regarding costs, involving Howard Forest in dispatching and how to implement changes. CDF Chief Romero and Tony will get together next week. Dan commented on current response areas, defining them and deciding where the response should come from. Dan will have UVFD's GIS person get the map going on the areas. Tony said that CDF ought to be able to create sub response areas within a given response area w/out there being a problem. Tony will working on that and will have to determine the associated costs.

Tony stated the next big question is how far do we want to take this? UFD volunteers are ready to begin working with UVFD volunteers, career firefighters are in favor of getting the ball rolling to work together as one unit. General discussion ensued re working together first or go ahead and do it now and see how everyone works together. The main consensus is to move forward now to get together and train on a consistent basis taking baby steps and learning how to work together.

Tony thinks there are two parts to this concept:

1. Operationally working as one.
2. Bringing both administrations together to reduce administrative duplications.

Let's work together to build a relationship and confidence in each others' abilities. Do it for a while and then come back to the committee to decide the next natural steps to go forward.

Things can we do immediately that are not too invasive:

- Develop SOPs and put into play
- Implement both departments training together and implement guidelines provided by administration
- Resolve communication issues
- Implement an advanced auto aid or boundary drop (board approval)
- Address Fire Prevention duplication
- Fleet maintenance - we can count each others resources for ISO ratings

Tony said that dispatch, response, SOPs and training can be implemented in short order with few approvals. Then the committee needs to continue with fire prevention, fleet maintenance and fleet structure. After those have been addressed the committee can move on to improved response times, appropriate staffing at incidents and level of service.

Tony brought up combining the administrative efforts of both departments. The City is currently advertising for the new UFD chief position and that will likely happen in January. It will take time for the new chief to come up to speed with the job and this committee. Tony suggested taking a vacation from meetings while allowing the processes to continue outside meetings. Then at a time predetermined reconvene and continue the process. John would like to continue if the committee is making progress, but sees it is not fair to a new chief. Doug suggested that Dan take over as chair of the committee and provide leadership continuity until the new chief gets up to speed. Jimmy Rickel agrees that the committee needs to keep going to reinforce the new actions and committee. A discussion

ensued re the new chief's need to learn the people, history, politics, lay of the land, etc. The committee will be the catalyst to keep things going as employees become comfortable working with each other and departmental changes. John Strangio asked Tony if he would be able to act as a consultant and Tony stated that he was unable to make that commitment. The Chief polled the committee members and the general consensus was that the committee continues to meet on a regular basis, currently every other week. If there is a break in the schedule the committee may lose its impetus. This evolution will take continued effort to keep the momentum going. Jimmy suggested more public awareness and involvement.

Tony reiterated the importance of him, Dan, Joyce and Mike, and Larry and John continuing to meet and finalize those items having to do with volunteers and SOPs.

Kevin stated that the UFD training calendar is posted and Kevin can change it any time to coordinate with UVFD to adapt to a new training schedule. Kevin will meet with Jeff to discuss training calendars and coordinate schedules,

Lee Howard: Presented the committee with a copy of the Ukiah Valley Task Force Report (1990) for the greater Ukiah Valley area. Lee requested that the committee review this report and applauds the departments for getting together.

Adjournment - 7:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: November 6, 2007, at 6:30p.m.