



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

Study Session/Special Meeting

Item -1

Presentation to Restructure Fire Department Command Structure

Staff Contact: Cory Schmidt, Fire Chief

Council Agenda Memo

From: Cory Schmidt, Fire Chief
Meeting: February 19, 2013
Subject: Restructure/Reclassification of FTEs
Item #'s: 1
Presenter(s): Cory Schmidt, Fire Chief

Background

The City contracted ICMA to conduct an analysis of fire operations for the Grand Island Fire Department which was presented in 2012. Several recommendations were presented as options to make the fire department more efficient. One of the recommendations was to consider changing the administrative structure of the Grand Island Fire Department. A second recommendation was to improve the fire education and prevention programs delivered by the department.

The organizational structure of the fire department has remained relatively unchanged since the addition of the EMS Division Chief in the 1980s. Currently there is a vacant Division Chief position which makes a change easier to accomplish.

Discussion

The Grand Island Fire Department's current organizational chart appears top heavy in regards to management. There is a distinct gap in management between shift personnel and upper management. It is proposed to add a middle level of management (Shift Commander) to bridge this gap. Since the retirement of a Division Chief in October 2012, the Fire Chief and the remaining three Division Chiefs have assumed additional duties. Some of the additional duties are very time consuming and are affecting overall performance. The proposed Shift Commander will assume some of these duties.

A second requested change is to add a certified life safety inspector. This position will help accomplish the department's goal of inspecting at least ½ of all commercial properties each year. Currently we are struggling to inspect 1/3 of all commercial properties.

The changes will not increase the Fire Department's FTEs. A reduction in overall personnel costs should also be achieved.

Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting.

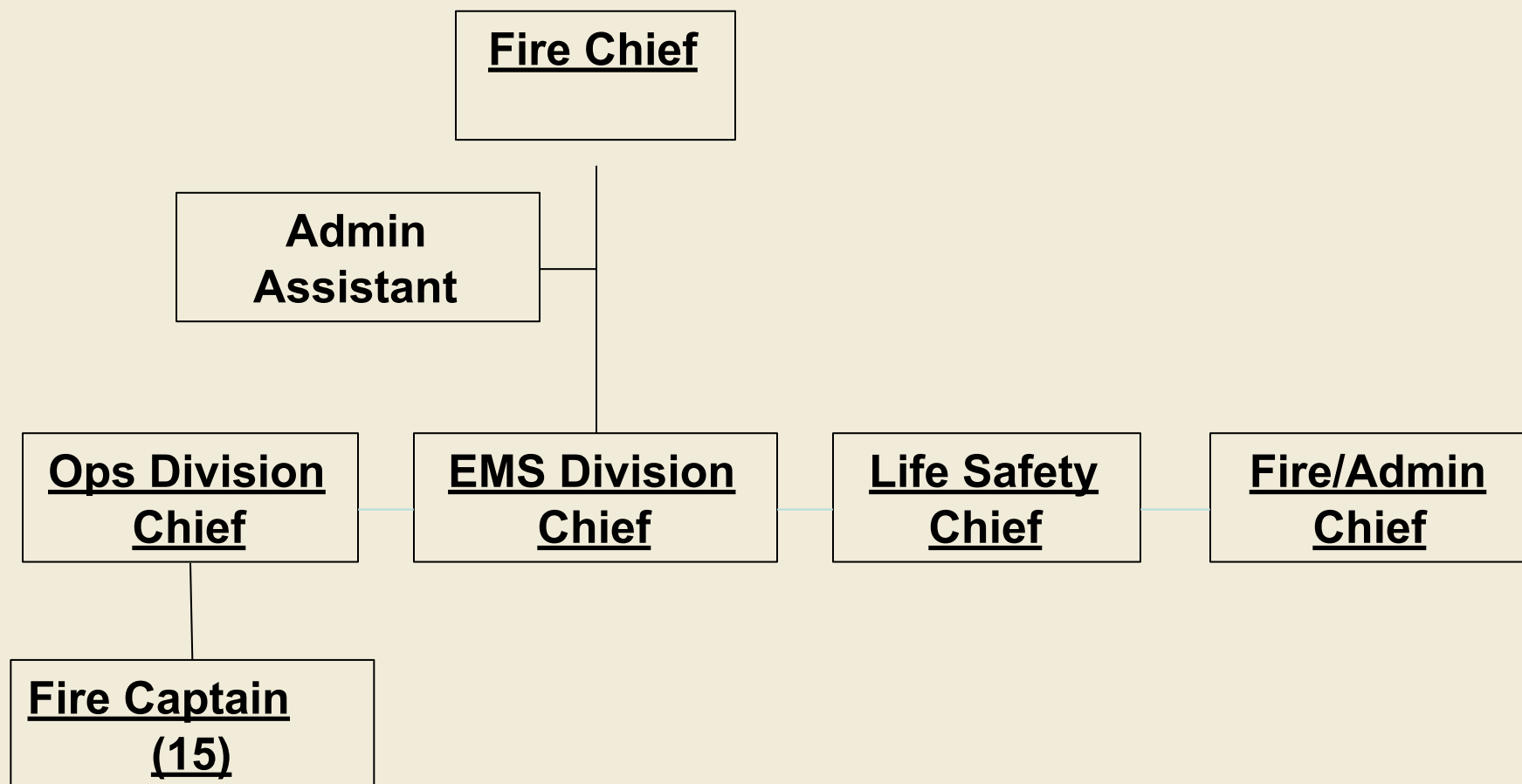
Proposal to Restructure Fire Department Command Structure

 Presented by Cory Schmidt, Fire Chief

ICMA Recommendations

- 🌊 Restructure administrative staff
- 🌊 Develop succession plan
- 🌊 Improve fire prevention/public education program
- 🌊 Utilize technology to become more efficient

Current Organizational Chart



Problems with Current Structure

- 🌊 Top heavy management
- 🌊 Span of control
- 🌊 Different work schedule
- 🌊 Lack of communication
- 🌊 Uniformity issues
- 🌊 On-call officer
- 🌊 Mentoring/succession planning not effective

Call Volume Statistics

Call volume continues to rise – medical and fire

2000 – 3,131 emergency requests for service

2012 – 4,589 emergency requests for service

47% increase in calls

Call Volume factors

- 🌊 Baby Boomers (medical)
- 🌊 Growth of Grand Island's population (1% a year)
- 🌊 New construction
- 🌊 Aging commercial and residential properties
- 🌊 Influx of people (daytime population)

Expect continued upward trend in call volume

Future Issues

- Shift supervision will continue to be difficult
- Lack of uniformity
- Training issues
- Quality control may decrease
- Succession planning/mentoring needs to be addressed

Grand Island has reached a threshold

Time to improve fire department management

☞ Maintaining or improving level of service will require better utilization of current resources and/or additional resources

☞ Need strategic management on each shift where it is most beneficial

Options?

- 🇺🇸 Solution #1 - Continue with current structure
- 🇺🇸 Solution #2 – Leave Division Chief position open
- 🇺🇸 Solution #3 – Reclassify three Captains to Shift Commanders

Solution #1

Continue with current system

Pros: Costs remain predictable and known track record

Cons: Current issues will persist and doesn't address future City growth

Solution #2

Leave vacant Division Chief position open

Pros: Saves personnel costs

Cons: Remaining officers will be unable to perform all duties, doesn't address current/future issues

Solution #3

Reclassify three Captains to Shift Commanders

Pros: Better management at shift level, improves mentoring/succession planning, in line with ICMA recommendation

Cons: Requires creating positions, testing, and additional work for Human Resources

What is a Shift Commander?

Shift Commanders are essentially shift supervisors. GIFD has 3 shifts (A,B,C) each 24 hours long. In Grand Island, this would be a union position.

Example: “A” shift begins shift at 0700 on Monday. Their shift ends at 0700 on Tuesday.

“B” shift begins shift at 0700 on Tuesday. Their shift ends at 0700 on Wednesday.

Duties of Shift Commander

- 🚒 Evaluate Captain's job performance
- 🚒 Reviews reports for quality issues
- 🚒 Supervises training operations for shift
- 🚒 Coordinates activities among shifts and stations
- 🚒 Investigates fires for origin and cause
- 🚒 Respond to major emergencies, act as Incident Commander

Duties of Shift Commander

- 🚒 Act as representative for shift to upper management
- 🚒 Act as mentor for new and aspiring Captains
- 🚒 Facilitate succession planning
- 🚒 Make daily staffing assignments (including coordination of time off, overtime, etc)
- 🚒 Schedule shift activities

Benefits of Shift Commander

- Shift supervision on a 24/7 basis
- Span of control – reduced
- Uniformity
- Safer work environment
- Mentoring and succession plan
- Division Chiefs can focus on their specific job duties
- Utilize technology on emergency scene

Are Shift Commanders common?

One of the past arrays used by the City of Grand Island and IAFF 647 consisted of six cities. The cities were Norfolk; Fremont; North Platte; Salina, Kansas; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Council Bluffs, Iowa .

At least four out of the six cities utilize a similar position

North Platte, Nebraska

Salina, Kansas

Rapid City, South Dakota

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Are Shift Commanders common?



800 mile radius around Grand Island, NE

Are Shift Commanders common?

Info requests were sent to cities with populations between 40,000 - 60,000 (151 total)

59 responded

53 out of the 59 cities utilized Shift Commanders or equivalent

(89.8%)

True cost of Shift Commander

 *Shift Commander \$112,946 x 3 = 338,838

 *Fire Captain \$ 103,916 x 3 = 311,748

Increased expense \$27,090

*Total employee cost at top pay, including taxes, insurance, benefits, etc .

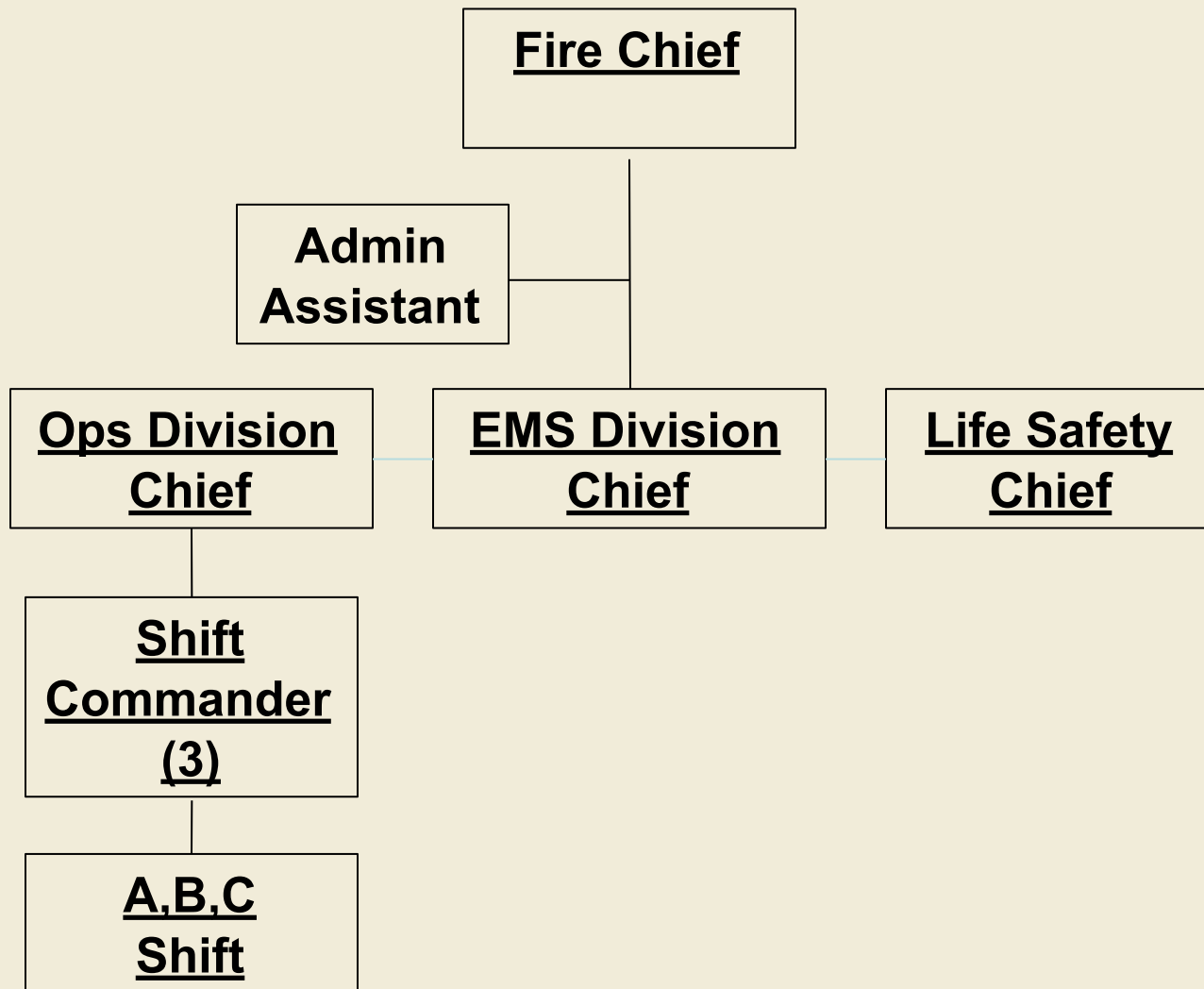
Paying for Shift Commander

- 🌊 Eliminate Fire/Admin Division Chief
(currently vacant due to retirement)
- 🌊 Current cost for Division Chief \$122,666
- 🌊 Apply savings to cost of Shift Commander

Paying for Shift Commander

\$122,666	(savings result of Division Chief elimination)
- <u>27,090</u>	(Shift Commander additional costs)

\$95,576 savings



How to implement changes?

- Create job description and test procedure meeting Civil Service rules to develop candidate list
- Obtain Council Approval to amend salary ordinance and FTE classifications
- Promote three Captains to Shift Commander
- Eliminate Fire/Admin Division Chief

Summary

- Shift commanders will provide better management
- Mentoring and succession planning possible
- Grand Island is a growing city, need to prepare for future
- Financially makes good sense
- Implements ICMA recommendations

Questions/Comments?

Proposal to hire a certified life safety inspector

ICMA study said, “Grand Island has a very limited prevention program which has shrunk. Inspections of commercial establishments do not regularly take place.”

Fire Prevention Mission

Our focus in the Fire Prevention Division is to decrease the number and severity of all fires within our City

This is typically accomplished by inspection, plan review, and public education

Most inspections are conducted by engine companies subject to emergency call

Commercial Property

- Currently 2,337 commercial properties in Grand Island (and growing)
- In 2012, 465 life safety inspections were completed
- Current goal is to complete at least 1/3 yearly (779)

State Delegated Inspections

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 81-502, Fire Marshal Hotz has been delegated the responsibility to conduct State inspections in Grand Island city limits

State Delegated Inspections

Increases workload tremendously in the Fire Prevention Division

Examples of State delegated inspections: In home daycares, adult daycare centers, nursing homes, health care facilities, underground storage tanks, liquor licenses, plan reviews, etc.

Why do we perform State inspections?

- 🇺🇸 Responsive to our community

- 🇺🇸 Financial compensation

Fiscal year 2011-12 received \$44,693.72*

*Does not include any tank inspection fees

Improvement is needed

- Declining number of annual inspections completed
- Engine company crews are not certified as inspectors
- Time is limited due to increasing call volume and training requirements
- City is growing, inspections will continue to fall further behind

Is there a solution?

We have come to a critical time in our City. In order to remain effective in fire prevention, we need to hire one full time life safety inspector in addition to our current Fire Marshal.

Survey earlier mentioned: 47 cities out of the 59 that responded have dedicated life safety inspectors in addition to Fire Marshal. (79.66%)

Benefits of an Inspector

- 🌊 Inspect at least ½ of all commercial properties annually (1,168 per year)
- 🌊 Inspections will be more uniform/efficient
- 🌊 Ability to schedule inspections
- 🌊 Make the community safer
- 🌊 Improve code enforcement/prevention (ICMA)
- 🌊 Another set of eyes in the community

Cost of a Life Safety Inspector

Pay and benefits based on Building Department
inspector position (IBEW-Clerical/Service Union)

\$85,117

(Total employee costs includes all benefits, taxes, etc.)

Paying for Inspector

- 🏖️ Apply savings from reorganization to offset costs for an inspector
- 🏖️ Take over underground tank inspection from the State, (\$3,175)
- 🏖️ Enforce \$100 inspection fee schedule for all major events (concerts, exhibitions, etc.)

Paying for Inspector

Apply savings from earlier proposal – cost of inspector
at current top pay with full benefits

\$95,976

– 85,117

\$10,859 in total savings

Implementing Inspector

- 🇺🇸 Develop job description and hiring procedure
- 🇺🇸 Request Council approval to amend salary ordinance and FTE classifications
- 🇺🇸 Hire certified life safety inspector
- 🇺🇸 Regularly evaluate position for performance (goal of at least 5 inspections per work day)

Summary

- 🇺🇸 FTEs will remain the same for the department
- 🇺🇸 Work towards ICMA recommendation of better code enforcement/prevention
- 🇺🇸 No additional cost to City

Questions?