

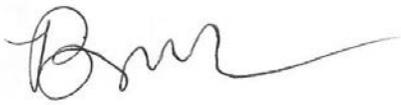
Causes of Dissension Between Career and Volunteer Staff in the Greenwich Fire Department

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**Certification Statement**

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

### Abstract

The problem was that there is ongoing dissension between career and volunteer staff that regularly impacts their relationship both on and off the fireground. The purpose of the research was to identify the causes of dissension between career and volunteer staff that if resolved, would minimize unnecessary conflict. Descriptive research was used to answer the following questions: a) What areas of dissension exist between career and volunteer personnel? b) What actions or conditions by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel? c) What actions or conditions by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel? d) What actions could be considered to help reduce dissension between career and volunteer personnel? A literature review was completed and summarized the findings of others pertaining to the transition of combination fire departments, the conflict that develops, and the solutions to the problems. Two focus groups were conducted using Improved Nominal Group Technique (INGT). One focus group was completed with volunteer personnel while the other focus group was completed with career personnel. The focus group results yielded a list of actions or conditions from each group that causes dissension with the other. Each group determined the five most important actions or conditions from their list using a voting process. The development of a strategic plan by all the stakeholders was recommended to reduce dissension between the career and volunteer staff in the Greenwich Fire Department.

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## Causes of Dissension Between Career and Volunteer Staff in the Greenwich Fire Department

### Introduction

“The Greenwich Fire Department is a combination department whose primary purpose is to provide a reliable and efficient force to ensure public safety of the Town of Greenwich in the areas of fire suppression, fire prevention, rescue, and other situations as needed” (Town of Greenwich, 2011). The problem is that there is ongoing dissension between the volunteer and career staff that regularly impacts their relationship both on and off the fireground.

The purpose of the research is to identify the causes of dissension between the volunteer and career staff that if resolved, would minimize unnecessary conflict. The research will provide possible solutions to resolve the areas of dissension identified.

To accomplish this, a descriptive research method was employed to answer the following questions: a) What areas of dissension exist between career and volunteer personnel? b) What actions or conditions by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel? c) What actions or conditions by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel? d) What actions could be considered to help reduce dissension between career and volunteer personnel?

### Background and Significance

The Greenwich Fire Department covers a 47.8 square mile area and protects over 62,000 residents ("Greenwich, Connecticut," n.d.). The department responds to approximately 4200 calls for service each year that range from minor fire alarm activations to structure fires. The department also responds to motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials incidents, and other emergency situations as necessary ([www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org)).

The fire department operates out of seven fire stations within the Town of Greenwich. Of these stations, one is staffed by all volunteer personnel; one is staffed by all career personnel,

while the remaining are staffed by a combination of both career and volunteer members.

Additionally, the Banksville Independent Fire Department (volunteer), New Castle, NY is chartered in the Town of Greenwich and responds as an entity of the Greenwich Fire Department primarily to the northeast corner of town ([www.banksvillefire.org](http://www.banksvillefire.org)).

The career staff consists of over 100 uniformed career firefighters ([www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org)). The career staff are divided into four shifts each staffed with 24 line personnel. A shift consists of one deputy chief, six lieutenants, and 17 firefighters. The rank of firefighter is permitted to decrease from 17 to a minimum of 15 for each shift before a replacement is hired for overtime. Career personnel are deployed to six fire stations and operate six engines, one truck, and one shift commander vehicle, all at various staffing levels. The remaining career personnel hold administrative positions or are assigned to the Fire Marshal's Division.

The volunteer staff consists of approximately 100 volunteers made up of residents and people who work the community. Each member belongs to one of eight independent volunteer fire companies or fire police patrol organizations within the Town of Greenwich ([www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org)). Volunteers are notified by radio pager to respond to incidents and also may ride out on first due apparatus if they are at the fire station at time of alarm. The volunteer staff receives no compensation other than a \$7.50 per call mileage stipend and other benefits such as health insurance, life insurance, and opportunities for paid fire watch ([www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org)).

The chain of command incorporates both career and volunteer fire officers in the organizational table (Appendix A). The Fire Chief is a career position who is responsible for the overall command and control of the fire department. The Fire Chief reports directly to the First

Selectman of the Town of Greenwich who is also the Fire Commissioner. In the absence of the Chief, the career Assistant Chief assumes the responsibilities of the Chief.

There are four career Deputy Chiefs who serve as shift commanders. A Deputy Chief is responsible for both the career and the volunteer firefighting force during his/her shift and assumes the responsibilities of Chief in the absence of the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief. The Deputy Chiefs report to the Assistant Chief.

Following the rank of Deputy Chief, the command structure consists of both volunteer and career officers. Each independent fire company elects a Volunteer District Chief. The administration and operation of an individual volunteer fire company is the responsibility of the Volunteer District Chief. The District Chief reports any problems or concerns to the on duty Deputy Chief. Below the rank of Volunteer District Chief, each fire company has varying line officer positions as outlined by their individual by-laws. In such instances where a career rank is the same as a volunteer rank, the career position has authority.

In the past, the Greenwich Fire Department has had ongoing dissension between career and volunteer forces on the fireground resulting in unsafe conditions. In December of 2003, three career firefighters were seriously injured while a volunteer firefighter and another career firefighter sustained minor injuries during an emergency exit from a third floor window at the scene of a structure fire. This incident prompted officials to order an independent review of the fire to develop recommendations to improve operations (Caspi, 2003). The authors of the independent panel stated that, "Polarizations between Career and Volunteer members has resulted in dangerous conditions occurring on emergency scenes and every member of the department must commit to doing what is right for the department and its firefighters" (W. S. Johnson, Jr., L. LaVecchia, & P. Struble, personal communication, February 23, 2004).

That dissention is also evident off the fireground. The Greenwich Time stated that, “The town faces a potential turf war between its career and volunteer firefighters as it considers using the Cos Cob fire station as a temporary home for those displaced during the upcoming renovation of the central headquarters” (Friedman & Vigdor, 2010, para. 1). The concern by the volunteers was that the sharing of space between career and volunteer staff would create conflict (Friedman & Vigdor, 2010). The tension further increased when two months later the Fire Chief referred to volunteers anecdotally as “thugs” during a public meeting regarding the same topic (Vigdor, 2011). The comment was making reference to a picture in the local paper where three volunteer officers stood expressionless with their arms crossed. That article publicly depicted the volunteers’ displeasure with the Chief’s plan to use their space for career personnel (Friedman & Vigdor, 2010).

Tension still exists between career and volunteer staff. On the fireground, it is common for a volunteer fire officer to arrive on scene, establish incident command as the ranking officer, and be ignored by career lieutenants and firefighters on scene. Off the fireground, it is common for volunteer officers to circumvent the chain of command and address their grievances to those with political influence. Without intervention, the present conflict will persist into the future and continue to host a hostile workplace and an unsafe fireground. Ultimately, the conflict will end with someone getting hurt or the demise of a volunteer system with years of history.

The research relates to the National Fire Academy EFO Executive Development course because it identifies an adaptive challenge where ultimately, the behavior and attitudes of the people within the organization must change to eliminate the dissention between career and volunteer staff.

With the dissention eliminated, both volunteer and career staff could focus on a common goal instead of working against each other. For that reason, the research addresses three of the United States Fire Administration's strategic goals by reducing our risk at the local level, improving our capability for response, and improving the professional status of our organization and the fire service as a whole.

### Literature Review

The volunteer fire service has always provided a majority of the nation's fire protection for much of its history. Research shows that in recent years the number of volunteer firefighters has decreased across the United States. According to the Nation Fire Protection Association, there were approximately 816,600 volunteer firefighters throughout the United States in 2002. In 2012, that statistic decreased 4.08 percent to 783,300 representing a loss of 33,300 volunteer firefighters (Karter & Stein, 2013, table 2).

The reason for a decline in volunteer firefighters is a "combination of factors that reflect our society's evolution" (Scott et al., 2005, p. 1). Some of these factors include a growth in population resulting in increased calls for service, greater expectations from the community, legislative mandates, challenging economic times, and personal time constraints (Scott et al., 2005). These unavoidable factors have outpaced many volunteer fire departments requiring them to make staffing changes so they can adequately deliver their service (Scott et al., 2005).

When a volunteer fire department can no longer keep up with the demands of the community, it will usually transition to a combination system before evolving to a fully paid department (Scott et al., 2005). "Combination fire departments (CFDs) are fire departments comprising both volunteer and career firefighters" (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 1). A combination system is an attractive solution over a fully paid department because it is

“inexpensive to administer owing to the reduced salary costs because of its use of volunteer personnel” (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 1). The length of time a department takes to transition from a volunteer system, to a combination system, and then to a fully paid department is determined by how well the leadership of the organization can identify and resolve the problems that arise along the way (Scott et al., 2005).

While combination systems are financially advantageous, they are “difficult to manage because career firefighters and volunteer firefighters often have different institutional interests” (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 1). The sense of identity to the volunteers and their organization are often threatened by career staff out of fear that they will no longer be needed. Conversely, volunteer members are seen as a threat to the job security of career staff (Benoit & Perkins, 2000). Stable leadership, communication, and strategic planning are all important parts to diminish these differences to achieve a successful combination fire department (Scott et al., 2005).

Recognizing that a combination system is comprised of career and volunteer personnel with different interests in mind, there are many negative consequences to a poorly managed combination department. It is important to identify and address any problems before they transpire or as they arise in a timely manner. The following is a review of common issues encountered in combination system.

A primary strain on the relationship between career and volunteer personnel is the, “natural human tendency to seek fairness” (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 3). “A combination system will not work when it is based on prejudice or when either group of firefighters, volunteer or career, functions in a minority role and is perceived as subservient to the other” (Buckman III

et al., 2004, p. 11). Some of the common issues that relate with this notion are authority and chain of command, promotional requirements, and training.

“One of the most controversial aspects of designing a combination system is establishing a clear line of authority and chain of command” (Scott et al., 2005, p. 11). Without a clear understanding of who is in charge, conflict will develop creating animosity and distrust between the two groups (Scott et al., 2005). This issue is of particular interest to the career perspective where volunteers have greater rank. “The belief of many career personnel is that they are in their chosen profession and should have control of their destiny” (Windisch & Crosby, 2008, p. 41). Furthermore, career personnel have concern that the attrition of volunteer members makes career personnel more experienced, and a better fit to lead (Windisch & Crosby, 2008). As the arrangement of authority will be tested, “Establishing local ordinances, resolutions or regulations that clearly define the authority of the fire chief and empower the position holder to effectively lead the organization is vital to success in the combination system” (Scott et al., 2005, p. 11-12).

Promotional requirements are another area where fair integration between career and volunteer personnel are imperative. “Officer promotions should be based on certification, tenure, experience and proficiencies in technical skills as well as soft skills, such as interpersonal communication” (Scott et al., 2005, p. 14). As the fire service has progressed, the profession has become more technical requiring leaders who have knowledge and education specific to the job and have acquired adequate experience along the way. Historically, volunteer fire departments have relied on the electoral process for officer selection. Often this is a vote of popularity (Windisch & Crosby, 2008). “Career and volunteer officers should be appointed on the basis of merit; they should not be elected” (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 12).

Closely related in concept is tactical equality which should span all the positions in a combination system (Scott et al., 2005). “Tactical equality is a concept in which positions are defined by their function and necessary knowledge, skills, and ability--not by career or volunteer status” (Windisch & Crosby, 2008, p. 45). To achieve tactical equality all personnel must be trained to the same level (Windisch & Crosby, 2008). This position is echoed by Benoit and Perkins (2000) by stating, “CFD’s appear to function best, however, when volunteers are trained simultaneously with career firefighters to the same standard and held accountable for performance to the same standard” (p. 3).

Tactical equality is much easier said than done. Lentsch (2013) says, “It is difficult to provide the same training to all personnel without the benefit of set shifts” (p. 16). Another hurdle is the amount of time needed for volunteer personnel to complete training to the same standard as career personnel. The time needed by volunteers is exasperated if an existing combination department has not yet embraced tactical equality. In this case, additional time must be spent catching up to the training level of career staff. Despite the challenges, tactical equality is a key component to successful combination fire departments (Scott et al., 2005).

When these types of conflict and dissension between career and volunteer personnel continue without resolution, the two components often segregate and fail to work with each other (Scott et al., 2005). “This type of system is best described as a “dual” rather than combination” (Scott et al., 2005, p. 10). When the two facets of the organization are working independently of each other, the community does not fully acquire the benefits that can be gained with a combination system (Scott et al., 2005).

A strategic plan and effective communication between all the stakeholders are necessary in order to address or avoid these and other pitfalls associated with combination fire departments.

A commonality found in much of the review of literature was that an organization needs to have a strategic plan:

I believe that any combination will work if you have a plan, and if you don't have a plan no combination will work. The emphasis here is on developing a plan so that everyone knows what's expected of the various parties as the organization undergoes the transition from one staffing configuration to another. (Coleman, 2012, para. 16)

Buckman III et al. (2006) reinforce this opinion by stating that, "If a fire department does not have a strategic plan, it has no vision for the future and provides a high level of uncertainty to the volunteers and the community" (p. 3). The result of an organization without a plan will often lead to failure. This is best summarized by the phrase, "those without vision, perish" (LeDue, 2012, para. 1).

The fact that an organization has a strategic plan does not ensure a solution to the dissension in a combination system. The most important aspect of developing a strategic plan is not the plan itself, but the journey taken along the way. The process of strategic planning requires communication between all the stakeholders allowing an atmosphere where, "trust can be built and players can turn to thinking about the future instead of retreating to the past" (Benoit & Perkins, 2000, p. 14). This process "ensures proper buy-in and ownership of organization direction from the rank-and-file, instead of feeling like a top-down-driven concept from the ivory tower" (LeDue, 2012, para. 4). The planning process permits input and perspective from all the stakeholders allowing collective involvement in problem solving and in addressing the destiny of the organization. With all the stakeholders involved, everyone holds some accountability for the success or failure of the plan. The importance of this view is repeated by Lentsch (2013) in the statement:

Your personnel are much more likely to buy into a plan if they have some ownership in the decisions in the initial stages. Best laid plans don't always work as we hope.

Allowing opportunity to try different options helps build trust and eventually support for the right plan. (p. 16)

The literature review for this applied research project provided insight to this researcher with regard to the reasons of a decline in volunteerism in the fire service and why as a result, departments must transition to a combination system to continue to provide their service. Furthermore, the review outlined the various areas of conflict that erupt during the integration of a volunteer and career workforce. The review specifically examined the perspective of a volunteer firefighter and the perspective of a career firefighter in an effort to understand the root causes of dissension between the two groups. The content of this review also served to substantiate the results of this applied research project as many of the conditions or actions that cause dissension identified during the focus group meetings were consistent with those found in the literature. Finally, the review recognized that communication and a strategic plan are two main ingredients that have proven successful for other combination fire departments.

#### Procedures

In an effort to address the problem of ongoing dissension between the volunteer and career staff that regularly impacts their relationship both on and off the fireground, this researcher set out to answer the following questions:

- a) What areas of dissension exist between career and volunteer personnel?
- b) What actions or conditions by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel?
- c) What actions or conditions by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer

personnel?

- d) What actions could be considered to help reduce dissension between career and volunteer personnel?

To complete the background and significance, literature review, and discussion sections of this project, this researcher examined periodicals, trade journals, books, reports, and websites. These sources were located using the United States Fire Administration Learning Resource Center in Emmitsburg, MD and online search engines.

Research was also collected by means of hosting two focus groups with members of the Greenwich Fire Department. The first focus group contained all volunteer personnel while the second focus group contained all career personnel. The purpose of the volunteer member focus group was to answer the question of what actions or conditions by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel. Conversely, the purpose of the career member focus group was to answer the question of what actions or conditions by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel.

A method called Improved Nominal Group Technique (INGT) was utilized to conduct each focus group (Fox, 2007). This method was selected because INGT, “consists of research-based rules and procedures that minimize or eliminate the many problems associated with conventional group procedures” (Fox, 2007, p. x). The steps taken to complete each focus group are described below.

During late July, 2013 the participants for each focus group were selected. Volunteer candidates were chosen based on their level of attendance at training and incidents, interest in making the department better, and their response district. It was the researcher’s intent to find volunteers who were active and affiliated with different volunteer fire stations. Furthermore,

some of the volunteer candidates selected have had past conflict with career personnel while others have had a good working relationship with them.

The career candidates were also selected based on their level of participation and interest in the department. Candidates selected were also assigned to different shifts and stations in hope that they would each share a unique point of view to the question at hand. Similar to the volunteer candidates, career members were also selected based on past conflict with volunteers personnel, while others were selected based on a good working relationship.

On August 7, 2013, separate emails (Appendix B and Appendix C) were sent to the selected six volunteer and seven career members inviting them to participate in the focus groups. The email invitation outlined the purpose and listed suggested dates for the focus group. Over the following week, the recipients responded and two focus group dates were set.

Prior to the focus group meetings, letters (Appendix C and Appendix D) were sent to all the participants with a pre-meeting assignment. The participants were asked to answer their given question in as many ways as possible. This was done before the meeting to allow adequate time for the participants to think about the question, and to make better use of time on the night of each meeting. Index cards were provided with the letter to complete this task. The letter also included a brief agenda on how the meeting night would proceed.

On August 12, 2013, the volunteer staff focus group was held. The researcher was assisted by a neutral colleague not affiliated with the Greenwich Fire Department to take notes during the meeting. The pre-meeting assignment cards were collected at the beginning of the meeting and all the responses were written on a large easel pad. As each easel pad page was filled, it was hung on the walls throughout the room for all to see. The group was given another opportunity to answer the question. Index cards were provided, filled out, and submitted to the

center of the table. Again, new submissions were added to the easel pad. This method allowed for all submissions to be anonymous. This was repeated until there were no further submissions. Every response listed on the easel pad was given a number for reference so that all the participants could easily identify the submission.

The second part of the meeting was a group discussion of all the submissions. One at a time, each submission was discussed in detail by the group. All participants were permitted to express their point of view on the submission at hand. The purpose of this discussion was to allow everyone to understand the submission in detail. This discussion also allowed the group to identify duplicate submissions. If the group agreed a submission was a duplicate, then a submission was deleted.

The last part of the meeting required each participant to vote. The objective was for the group to identify the top five actions or conditions by career personnel that cause conflict with volunteer personnel from all the ideas that were submitted. To accomplish this, each person took an index card and listed the numbers that corresponded with their top five submissions. After that, each person placed a number from one to five next to their top five choices. The number five next to a submission indicated it was most important to them while the number one next to a submission indicated it was least important to them. The numbers two, three, and four were assigned to the remaining submissions where the higher number was more important than the lower numbers.

After voting, all the index cards were collected. The researcher then went through each card and placed the numerical value assigned by the voter under the corresponding submission on the easel pad for all to see. This was completed for every voting card submitted by all the participants. The final step was to add all the numbers together under each submission that

received votes. The submissions with the highest values were the most important. The five highest value submissions were selected as the groups' top five actions or conditions by career personnel that cause conflict with volunteer personnel.

On August 26, 2013 the career staff focus group was held. The same procedure was used for the meeting that was used for the volunteer staff focus group. The objective of the career staff was to identify the top five actions or conditions by volunteer personnel that cause conflict with career personnel. A difference between the two focus groups was that the career group resulted in four answers with tied votes and two spots remaining for the top five most important issues. To break the tie, the group voted again but only with consideration for the four tied answers. The two votes with the most value were placed in the top five actions or conditions by volunteer personnel that cause conflict with career personnel.

The research conducted was limited by the number of participants representing each group of the organization. For the volunteer focus group, six people were invited and attended. This only represented approximately six percent of the volunteer staff. Similarly, seven people were invited to the career staff focus group but only six were present. Again, this only represented approximately six percent of the career staff. Additionally, although a strong attempt was made for diverse participation, each focus group was made up of individuals the researcher believed would show interest in participating. Had more staff been made aware of the research and participated, each group may have been better represented and more ideas could have been brought to light.

## Results

### Volunteer Focus Group

The focus group with volunteer staff aimed at answering the research question of what actions or conditions by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel. The exercise yielded a total of 31 responses which are listed in Appendix F. From those 31 responses, the voting procedure yielded the five most important responses according to the group which are highlighted in further detail below.

The first action or condition by career personnel identified by the volunteer group that causes dissension is a lack of communication, specifically between the career fire administration and the volunteer force. The discussion detailed that the volunteer officers seldom have any input into the development or revision of standard operating procedures (SOP's) that directly affect them. Instead, they only receive word that an SOP has been added or changed with no opportunity to weigh in from their perspective. As a result, SOP's are not always inclusive of the department as a whole with both career and volunteer viewpoints considered during their development.

The second action or condition by career personnel identified by the volunteer group that causes dissension is the attitude of the career personnel that volunteers cannot contribute to the system, while at the same time, they volunteer with the fire department in their own communities when they are not on duty. The discussion highlighted the hypocrisy of a career firefighter volunteering in their home community and then treating Greenwich volunteers with tremendous disrespect in their own town for doing the same thing. Although the participants commended the career staff that volunteered in their respective communities, their dissension was rooted at the double standard by those who showed disrespect to the volunteers during their work shift.

The third action or condition by career personnel identified by the group that causes dissension is that there are two different set of rules between the career and volunteer staff. As

an example, the participants discussed their observations on personal protective equipment (PPE). First, there is a difference in the color of the reflective striping between the career and volunteers forces clearly differentiating the two groups. Second, career firefighters receive two sets of PPE while volunteers only receive one. Lastly, career firefighters receive PPE before volunteer firefighters. It was concluded that these conditions resulted in a shortage of PPE. As a result, there is no PPE available for new volunteers who are enrolled in Firefighter I and require this equipment. To address this, the fire administration temporarily leases PPE for these new members for their class.

The fourth action or condition by career personnel identified by the volunteer group that causes dissension is the career force perception that the volunteers are trying to stifle paid staffing. The participants felt that they were treated as the enemy because of a fear by career staff that an increase in volunteer staffing could reduce or stifle the future staffing of career personnel. The group cited how they supported the recent addition from two to four career staff at the Glenville fire station. The participants felt that it was a false perception but agreed that the sentiment was common among most labor unions no matter the occupation.

The fifth action or condition by career personnel identified by the volunteer group that causes dissension is that there are no portable radios in the empty riding positions on the apparatus. A conversation was had about the shortage of portable radios in general. Every career member is assigned a portable radio while they are on shift. There are a limited number of radios available for volunteers aside from that. In instances where there are only two career personnel assigned to a unit, the remaining seats on the apparatus are not equipped with a portable radio. This was identified as not only a safety issue, but eliminated the ability for a

volunteer crew to be assigned a task because there was no a means to communicate. The radio needs of the department are coordinated by a career fire officer.

#### Career Focus Group

The focus group with career staff aimed at answering the research question of what actions or conditions by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel. The exercise yielded a total of 29 responses which are listed in Appendix G. From those 29 responses, two voting procedures yielded the five most important responses according to the group which are highlighted in further detail below.

The first action or condition by volunteer personnel identified by the career group that causes dissension is that the volunteers have a tendency to circumvent the chain of command. The group discussed how often times the volunteers would address the Fire Commissioner, who is also the First Selectman, if they did not get the desired outcome from the Fire Chief. The group believed that the Fire Commissioner helped to facilitate this behavior by entertaining and acting on their grievances. The participants agreed that the Fire Chief should have the opportunity to run the department as he or she sees fit.

The second action or condition by volunteer personnel identified by the career group that causes dissension is that the volunteers take political action against the paid staff. In this discussion, one participant stated that each time he has ever witnessed the volunteers bind together in numbers to accomplish something; it has been to work against the career staff. One example given was when the volunteers spoke against the addition of career lieutenants at a town meeting. Another example given was when the Fire Chief wanted to move the career truck company to another station during the demolition and reconstruction of the Central Fire Station and occupy volunteer space. Again, it was discussed that the volunteers went to speak against

this at town meetings. It was noted that seldom do the volunteers work together so well for something to move the department forward.

The third action or condition by volunteer personnel identified by the career group that causes dissension is that there are unqualified members operating in the chain of command. The participants discussed how in the volunteer companies, officers are elected by popular vote and not by qualifications. Additional comments were also made regarding the smaller volunteer companies in central Greenwich. It was stated that those companies have so few volunteers that every member is an officer by default. Lastly, the sentiment was described that career personnel put so much time, effort, and hard work to achieve an officer rank but are under the direction of an unqualified volunteer officer in the chain of command.

The fourth action or condition by volunteer personnel identified by the career group that causes dissension is that the volunteers can make us look bad by their actions and presence. An example was given pertaining to volunteer members who are dirty and hang out at the fire station. Another example given was the circumstance where a volunteer unit arrives on the scene first and clears incoming units prior to arrival. There was uncertainty by some of the participants as to the volunteers' ability to make a professional first impression to the public as representatives of the Greenwich Fire Department.

The fifth action or condition by volunteer personnel identified by the career group that causes dissension is that career and volunteer staff are expected to work together at emergencies, yet never work with each other any other time. The participants discussed their concern that they have little knowledge of the skill level of each volunteer due to infrequent exposure to each other. In some cases, volunteer and career personnel have never met. There was agreement by the group that training together would be a challenge due to scheduling. There was discussion

about the past practice of career staff training in the evening instead of during the day. Even then, the volunteer and career staff would usually not train together. Instead, the volunteers would often cover the positions of the career staff while they trained.

### Discussion

#### Volunteer Focus Group

The literature review illustrated that good communication is necessary in order to minimize dissension in a combination system. The volunteer component placed much emphasis on a lack of communication within the department that has caused them angst. The focus group discussed that there was little communication or input sought in the development of standard operating procedures that affected their actions. Although their discussion concluded with a description of poor communication, it is the author's opinion that a deeper source of tension is the inability to incorporate their ideas into the organization. When people have an opportunity to engage, they have an opportunity to take pride and ownership in their contributions to the organization. This participation in the organization gives volunteers a "sense of worth and feel they are using their talents to contribute to the overall good" (United States Fire Administration [USFA], 2007, p. 15).

A great source of animosity identified by the volunteers is the double standard created by some career firefighters who volunteer in their own community. The results showed volunteers were made to feel uncomfortable in their work environment by those career personnel from their words, actions, or ignoring them all together. This behavior is reinforced by the USFA (2007) when they explain that "one group may be a minority and feel of less importance than another group, especially if the majority group infers that they are superior" (p. 70). Essentially, this researcher believes this is a form of bullying. Bullying is described as "attacking someone

physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group or purpose”

(<http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/>). When a person is made to feel uncomfortable they will most likely remove themselves from that condition and either quit or retaliate. When these conditions develop, leadership must intervene if they want to retain volunteer staffing or diffuse the conflict (USFA, 2007).

The volunteers also discussed their displeasure with having personal protective gear striped differently from career personnel making it easy to distinguish between the two groups on the fireground. The volunteers state that it purposely sets them apart from rest of the department while the Chief argues that it is a good tool for accountability purposes, allowing officers to easily identify who is who in an expeditious manner. In meetings where this topic has been discussed, the Chief has defended the striping configuration by citing a fire where a volunteer was not accounted for. According to the Chief, the missing firefighter was quickly identified from across the fireground because of the striping configuration. When the information was given that a volunteer was missing, career personnel were quickly identified by their striping and dismissed as possible candidates for the missing firefighter, thus limiting the amount of personnel to investigate further. Although this author understands that rationale and has similarity benefited from the different striping configuration in command situations, a question is raised whether the dissension it has caused outweighs the benefit of the configuration. The USFA (2007) says to “avoid setting volunteers apart unnecessarily by creating different policies or uniforms” in their list of ways to avoid friction and promote teamwork in combination departments (p. 71). In this case the volunteers may feel that their sense of identity is being compromised and it is resulting in structural distrust between the career and volunteer components (Buckman III et al., 2004).

The volunteers feel that the career personnel have a perception that the volunteer personnel are trying to stifle paid staffing levels. As a result, the volunteers believe they are looked at as an enemy to the career staff thus causing dissension. This is a common institutional difference between career and volunteer personnel in a combination system (Benoit & Perkins, 2000). This belief by volunteer personnel is validated by a discussion in the career focus group where they stated that dissension was caused by volunteer personnel who take political action against career personnel. Their example cited instances where volunteers publicly spoke against the addition of career Lieutenants to units that did not have an officer assigned to them. In this case, career personnel witnessed volunteers stifle the staffing and command structure of their workforce substantiating this source of dissension. This conflict may have been avoided if a planning process were used as a tool to build consensus.

Planning is essential. Planning brings people together and creates important consensus on the major issues facing your department. Planning builds support, and creates teams out of disparate groups. Planning is the foundation of progress. (Windisch & Crosby, 2008, p. 78)

The last area of area of dissension pointed out by volunteer personnel was a lack of portable radios in empty riding positions with SCBA on the apparatus. While the group conversation centered on a frustration of a lack of radios, the author suspects the volunteer angst stems from a belief that there is operational inequality between career and volunteer members which again, creates a structural distrust between the two groups (Buckman III et al., 2004). Without a radio, a firefighter won't be assigned to an IDLH environment and is therefore sidelined from the action to fulfill a support role. It could also be inferred that symbolically, volunteers have no voice when all the career personnel carry a radio and the volunteers do not.

This exemplifies a palpable power struggle that exists between the career and volunteer personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department, a condition that persists in many combination systems (USFA, 2007).

#### Career Focus Group

The tendency for volunteer personnel to circumvent the chain of command is the chief cause of dissension for career personnel. Career personnel expressed frustration that volunteer chief officers negate the chain of command by bringing their concerns to the First Selectman who is also the Fire Commissioner without negative consequences. For this reason, they concluded that the Fire Chief cannot effectively lead the department because these circumstances do now allow him the authority to do so. The author surmises their frustration is exasperated because they sense more support for volunteer personnel than career personnel by the First Selectman. No matter the reason for circumventing the chain of command, animosity has developed between the career and volunteer staff because a clear line of authority has not been enforced. In order to eliminate this contention, the person having authority must be established and the chain of command enforced (Scott et al., 2005). The barriers that have formed between the Fire Chief and the volunteer chief officers must be identified so that conversation and trust can be achieved.

Closely related was the discussion that volunteers take political action against paid staff. Essentially, it is a similar situation where the volunteers express their own opinion on how the department should proceed but go to other influential political groups instead of the Fire Chief. This action was detailed in the volunteer member focus group discussion section pertaining to the perception that volunteers stifle the staffing of the career staff. The author believes that actions of circumventing the chain of command and taking political action outside the

organization will continue until a plan is developed and all stakeholders are in agreement as to the direction of the Greenwich Fire Department. Scott et al. (2005) stress the importance of a plan by saying “a combination system works best when the system is developing through detailed communication and strategic planning, rather than blind evolution” (p.9).

Unqualified volunteer officers in the chain of command are another cause of dissension for career personnel. Volunteer officers are elected by their peers in their respective volunteer fire company. The concern is that promotions made in this manner tend to result in a vote of popularity rather than merit (Windisch & Crosby, 2008). Another concern is the promotion of a volunteer officer by default because a fire company only has enough members to occupy the officer positions. This is concerning to career personnel because volunteer officers outrank some career officers, and all career firefighters in the chain of command without their participation in the vote. Of further concern is that some of these volunteer fire officers have attempted to become career firefighters in Greenwich, but failed the entry level test. Still, they are able to hold positions of authority in the volunteer system that outranks career personnel. It is the opinion of the career focus group and this author that officer positions should be awarded by merit rather than an election. Multiple citations were made to this point in the literature review. Whether career or volunteer, a means to reach equality would be to provide the same testing procedure for the same rank in order to promote. This is echoed by the USFA (2007) when stating “Some departments use the same standards for promoting volunteer officers as career officers (i.e., a civil service exam or assessment center and interviews)” (p. 37).

The idea that the actions and presence of volunteer personnel make the Greenwich Fire Department look bad was also a source of dissension for the career personnel. The group discussion focused on a need to project a professional image to the public. The desire “to promote a favorable image of the department throughout the community and among its

members” (USFA, 2007, p. 42) is a goal common to many fire departments. The group believes that volunteers hinder a positive image for the department based on their performance at incidents, interactions with the public, and their appearance at the station. Although it is easy for career personnel to suspect a negative reaction from the public, the author has heard little feedback to suggest the image of the department is tainted by the actions or appearance of the volunteer personnel. A common source of conflict between career and volunteer personnel is that there is “a feeling that one group is better trained or more experienced than the other” (USFA, 2007, p. 70). The author thinks that in this case, the career group mimics this statement, but the public does not have the means by which to discern between the volunteer or career personnel for the majority of incidents. For these reasons, the author believes that whether the volunteer or career staff responds to the call, the image to the public is not really affected in most cases.

The final condition identified by the career personnel that causes dissension with the volunteers is the expectation of a symbiotic working relationship between career and volunteer personnel at an incident when there has been little or no exposure to each other in a training environment. Currently, the training schedule does not facilitate simultaneous training between career and volunteer personnel. As a result, career and volunteer staff do not have an opportunity to work in a team environment aside from incidents. Although a challenge, a schedule where both career and volunteer personnel train together could help to improve the working relationship and bridge the gap of tactical equality. Windisch and Crosby (2008) say that, “If all personnel are trained equally, this substantially reduces the impetus of any potential disagreements” (p. 45). Furthermore, training together would help each component realize the

other's strengths and weaknesses and give the incident commander the knowledge to assign key people to key places to mitigate an incident.

In conclusion to the discussion, the research resulted in barriers that impede the relationship between the career and volunteer personnel. Although collectively ten of these barriers were voted to be most important to the problem by the two focus groups, all the answers provided point to a dual system under the guise of a combination fire department. Common attributes to a dual system are described by Scott et al. (2005) and are consistent with our physical and organizational barriers:

- Volunteers operating in different quarters than paid staff.
- Volunteers riding on separate apparatus than paid staff.
- Separate rules and regulations used.
- One group receiving better equipment and apparatus than the other.
- Ranks structures and supervision not integrated.
- No opportunity for social interaction. (p. 10)

A system such as this often fails when it is not managed correctly leading to a decrease in volunteers and an increase in costs to run the department (Scott et al., 2005). To alleviate this scenario, "Departments should work to ensure system fairness for all parties. Integrating personnel fosters relationships that help to sustain the system" (Scott et al., 2005, p. 10).

#### Recommendations

This researcher set out to identify areas of dissension between career and volunteer personnel that if resolved, would reduce conflict between the two groups. After a detailed literature review and information collected from research in the form of focus groups with the Greenwich Fire Department, I concluded that addressing the areas of dissention identified would

only provide temporary solutions for a deeply troubled department. Instead, the recommendation suggested is that a comprehensive strategic plan is developed to breakdown all the barriers that impede us, and to bring all the stakeholders together to formulate a plan for the future.

Although a physical plan is important, it is the process of communication and planning by the stakeholders that would yield the most benefit and mitigate the barriers between them. With this in mind, the author does not recommend a consulting firm be hired to develop a strategic plan for the Greenwich Fire Department. If that were the case, the benefits of the process would be lost. However, the author does recommend that the town consider hiring an expert trained in strategic planning to guide the stakeholders through the process. This will help to ensure that the process is done correctly and eliminate any speculation that the planning is steered towards one group or the other.

In conclusion, over the course of many years, the Greenwich Fire Department has evolved from a simple all-volunteer system to a complex dual department. The growing pains have been severe because there is no evidence to suggest that a long term plan was developed to provide the organization with a unified mission, vision, or set of values to rely on during its growth. Instead, leaders have addressed the problems of incorporating career personnel as they have surfaced resulting with the volatile system in place today. As a result of this and other social factors, volunteerism in the department has gone down, while the reliance of career personnel to provide our services has gone up. With help from the strategic planning process, I believe the volunteer system in Greenwich can be salvaged and developed into a true combination system with career personnel. This will allow the residents to take advantage of the benefits that a combination fire department has to offer for years to come.

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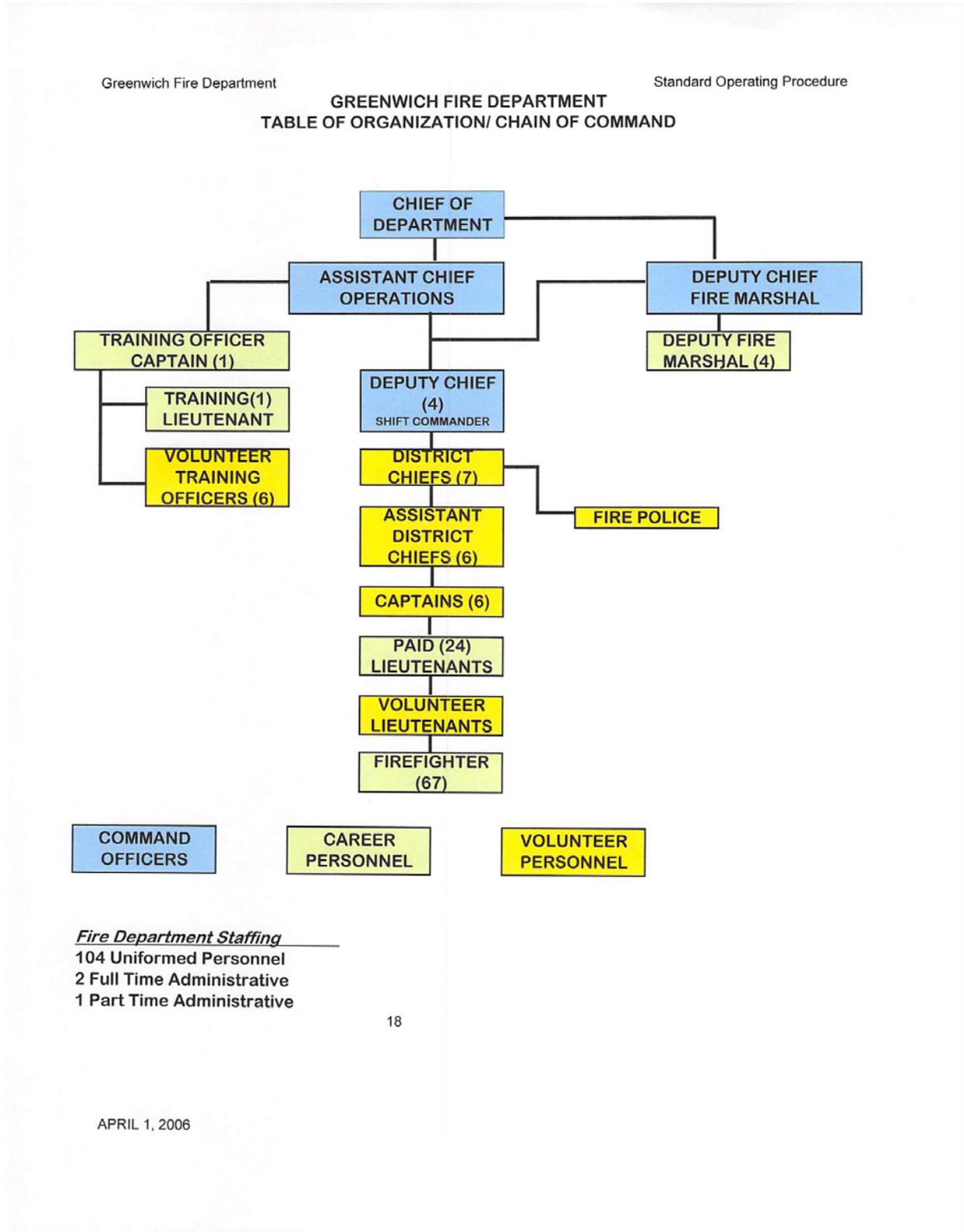
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Appendix A – Table of Organization/Chain of Command



## Appendix B – Invitation to Focus Group - Volunteers

Dear Colleagues,

If you did not know, I am currently enrolled in the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. The EFOP is a four year program that meets once each year for a two week session. After each two week session, we are required to complete an applied research project that relates to our organization. For my recent applied research project, I am looking to clearly identify and analyze the dissension that impacts the relationship between the career and volunteer staff in the Greenwich Fire Department.

I am hoping to obtain some research for my paper through a **focus group** with volunteer members of our department. The **focus group** will utilize a variation of a method called nominal **group** technique where **group** members can respond anonymously to the question given. All the answers given will be discussed and voted on to rank their importance to the problem.

The meeting will **focus** on the question, "What actions or conditions conducted by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?"

I have invited the seven of you because it is evident that you care about our organization by your level of participation and the conversations I have had with you in the past. It is my hope that you are available to meet and will embrace the opportunity to provide your valuable input by attending. Although the results of the **focus group** will be published in the paper, I will omit any names for confidentiality so that you will feel comfortable speaking freely about the topic.

For your information, a similar **focus group** will be conducted with some career personnel asking the question, "What actions or conditions conducted by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?"

I truly do care about the Greenwich Fire Department and how we all work together. It is my desire to do what I can to improve the rapport between the career and volunteer forces and I think a candid discussion is a good start to an improved relationship.

Please let me know as soon as you can if you are interested in attending. Please check the following dates for your availability. I will choose the one date that works best for the most people. The meeting should last about 2 hours and will be conducted at 75 Holly Hill with no other career personnel present, other than myself. I will send further instructions to each of you before the meeting. Feel free to call if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your support!

Monday, August 12, 2013, 7PM  
Wednesday, August 14, 2013, 7PM  
Monday, August 26, 2013, 7PM  
Tuesday, August 27, 7PM

Sincerely,

Brian Koczak

## Appendix C – Invitation to Focus Group – Career

Dear Colleagues,

If you did not know, I am currently enrolled in the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy. The EFOP is a four year program that meets once each year for a two week session. After each two week session, we are required to complete an applied research project that relates to our organization. For my recent applied research project, I am looking to clearly identify and analyze the dissension that impacts the relationship between the career and volunteer staff in the Greenwich Fire Department.

I am hoping to obtain some research for my paper through a **focus group** with career members of our department. The **focus group** will utilize a variation of a method called nominal **group** technique where **group** members can respond anonymously to the question given. All the answers given will be discussed and voted on to rank their importance to the problem.

The meeting will **focus** on the question, "What actions or conditions conducted by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?"

I have invited the seven of you because it is evident that you care about our organization by your level of participation and the conversations I have had with you in the past. It is my hope that you are available to meet and will embrace the opportunity to provide your valuable input by attending. Although the results of the **focus group** will be published in the paper, I will omit any names for confidentiality so that you will feel comfortable speaking freely about the topic.

For your information, a similar **focus group** will be conducted with some volunteer personnel asking the question, "What actions or conditions conducted by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?"

I truly do care about the Greenwich Fire Department and how we all work together. It is my desire to do what I can to improve the rapport between the career and volunteer forces. I think this is a good way to identify and examine the core of the problem.

Please let me know as soon as you can if you are interested in attending. The meeting should last about 2 hours and will be conducted at a location to be determined. As this is my own project, overtime will not be granted and your time will be a favor to me. However, I will seek permission for administrative leave if this falls on a day you are on duty so that we are not interrupted.

I will send further instructions to each of you before the meeting. Feel free to call if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your support!

I'm looking at one of these dates. I will choose the date that works best for the most people. Let me know if morning or evening is better.

Monday, August 12, 2013  
Wednesday, August 14, 2013  
Monday, August 26, 2013  
Tuesday, August 27

Sincerely,

Brian Koczak

## Appendix D – Volunteer Letter – Pre-meeting Assignment

**Greenwich Fire Department  
Volunteer Member's Focus Group**

Thank you for your accepting my invitation and for your interest in participating in this focus group. We will meet on **Monday, August 12, 2013, 7PM, at 75 Holly Hill Lane on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the administrative offices.**

The following members will be participating in the focus group:

{Names Omitted}

I will also be present to direct the meeting. In addition, {Name Omitted}, a colleague of mine will be in attendance. {Name Omitted} is a neutral party who will be present to assist me as a recorder during the meeting.

**General Scope:**

The focus group we will be doing is a variation of process called nominal group technique. The steps are explained below. The data I receive from the focus group will be used as research for my applied research project.

The purpose of my research paper is to identify what causes dissention between the volunteer and career staff that if resolved would minimize unnecessary conflict.

The single question you will focus on during the meeting is, **“What actions or conditions conducted by career personnel cause conflict with volunteer personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?”**

**Pre-Meeting Assignment:**

Enclosed are 5 index cards. If you have a chance before the meeting, please answer the question in bold above with as many responses as you can think of. You can put as many answers as you would like on each card, just make sure they are separated into individual responses. This is brainstorming so anything goes. **Do not put your name on the cards.**

**Example:**

1. Career personnel always cancel us enroute.
2. Career personnel never notify us when they take the second engine from the station.
3. Etc.

Although I will allot additional time at the meeting for more submittals of your answers, it would be a huge time saver if you could get your ideas down on these cards beforehand.

Meeting -Night:

The first part of the meeting will be collecting the cards you have completed and putting your answers up on an easel pad so that the group can see them. Your names will not be associated with the posted answers. You will then have an additional opportunity to answer the question, in case you thought of a new idea since you filled out the index cards.

The second part of the meeting will be a discussion session on each of the submittals on the easel pad. This will allow all of your input to the topic at hand. This will be the longest part of the meeting.

The final part of the meeting will be a voting process that will identify which issues have the greatest impact on the career and volunteer staff relationship. This exercise will again be anonymous. The exact voting procedure will be described on the night of the meeting. Once this is completed, we are done for the night.

I will provide beverages and snacks on the night of the meeting.

Once my research paper is complete, I will certainly forward you all a copy. I will also submit it to the Chief for his consideration. I hope that it can be used as a tool to improve everyone's working relationship.

I look forward to seeing everyone and hearing what you have to say. It is important work and I think we will have some fun too! Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Koczak

## Appendix E – Career Letter – Pre-meeting Assignment

**Greenwich Fire Department  
Career Member Focus Group**

Thank you for your accepting my invitation and for your interest in participating in this focus group. We will meet on **Monday, August 26, 2013, 7PM, at 75 Holly Hill Lane on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the administrative offices.** Pizza will be available at about 6:15 PM.

The following members will be participating in the focus group:

{Names Omitted}

In addition, {Name Omitted}, a colleague of mine will be in attendance. {Name Omitted} is a neutral party who will be present to assist me as a note taker during the meeting.

Group {Name Omitted} is working the night of the meeting. {Name Omitted} and {Name Omitted} have been approved by the Chief for AL to minimize interruption. {Name Omitted} will attend in service. I did not request overtime for off duty members as this is my own endeavor. Your support is greatly appreciated.

General Scope:

The focus group we will be doing is a variation of process called nominal group technique. The steps are explained below. The data I receive from the focus group will be used as research for my applied research project.

The purpose of my research paper is to identify what causes dissention between the volunteer and career staff that if resolved would minimize unnecessary conflict.

The single question you will focus on during the meeting is, **“What actions or conditions conducted by volunteer personnel cause conflict with career personnel in the Greenwich Fire Department?”**

Pre-Meeting Assignment:

Enclosed are 5 index cards. If you have a chance before the meeting, please answer the question in bold above with as many responses as you can think of. You can put as many answers as you would like on each card, just make sure they are separated into individual responses. This is brainstorming so anything goes. **Do not put your name on the cards.**

Example:

1. Volunteer personnel have access to our private areas.
2. Volunteer personnel circumvent the chain of command.
3. Etc.

They only need to be short concise answers with no explanation. There will be opportunity to discuss each answer at the meeting. Although I will allot additional time at the meeting for more submittals of your answers, it would be a huge time saver if you could get your ideas down on these cards beforehand.

Meeting -Night:

The first part of the meeting will be collecting the cards you have completed and putting your answers up on an easel pad so that the group can see them. Your names will not be associated with the posted answers. You will then have an additional opportunity to answer the question, in case you thought of a new response since you filled out the index cards.

The second part of the meeting will be a discussion session on each of the submittals on the easel pad. This will allow all of your input to the topic at hand. This will be the longest part of the meeting. The final part of the meeting will be a voting process that will identify which issues have the greatest impact on the career and volunteer staff relationship. This exercise will again be anonymous. The exact voting procedure will be described on the night of the meeting. Once this is completed, we are done for the night.

I will provide pizza, beverages, and snacks on the night of the meeting.

Once my research paper is complete, I will certainly forward you all a copy. I will also submit it to the Chief for his consideration. I hope that it can be used as a tool to improve everyone's working relationship.

I look forward to seeing everyone and hearing what you have to say. It is important work and I think we will have some fun too! Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Koczak

## Appendix F – Volunteer Focus Group Results

	<b>Answers</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	Communication - SOP changes. Admin does not always look at whole department. (i.e. Global picture for all members) (Duplicate #19)	5+4+2	11*
<b>2</b>	SOP's do not always get out to general population.		0
<b>3</b>	Members get upset when officers quote SOP's.		0
<b>4</b>	Being ignored when confronting career staff on or off the fireground.	2+4	6
<b>5</b>	Treating volunteers with disrespect when they leave their shifts, they go home and are volunteers in their own towns (officers) (Duplicate #6)		0
<b>6</b>	The "buy-in" or "attitude" on the career side that the volunteers cannot contribute to the system and that career firefighters that also volunteer can support the system on one side and work against it on the other. (Duplicate #5)	1+3+5+2	11*
<b>7</b>	The suppression or rejection of the individual volunteer department identities in an effort to create a unified department.	1	1
<b>8</b>	A general lack of communication and acknowledgement between career and volunteer firefighters. "mine" vs. "yours" attitude.		0
<b>9</b>	Lack of integrated training between career and volunteer firefighters. (Duplicate # 21)	3+3+1	7
<b>10</b>	Moving around of apparatus and equipment just to fit personal vehicles in the fire stations.	1+1	2
<b>11</b>	No notification when equipment is removed from 2nd due or volunteer department.	4	4
<b>12</b>	Not listening to chief officers on the fireground.	2	2
<b>13</b>	Playing games in station when asked not to. (Duplicate #14)	1+5	6
<b>14</b>	Turning AC Off/Turning heat up/Hiding company property (chairs) (Duplicate #13)		0
<b>15</b>	Overhearing a conversation between a group of career firefighters "we are trying to make things as difficult as we can for them and (name omitted) is over the talking with them".		0
<b>16</b>	Leaving notes with your dislikes about the volunteer manpower unsigned and undated.		0
<b>17</b>	Division of two different departments with gear color. Purchasing of gear in one big order for all members. Department future budgets affected with future purchases of gear or other capital items.		0

<b>18</b>	Lack of communication and appearance of attitude. Talk, say, what you expect or want help with, be transparent, respectful as much as possible, everyone will benefit from some degree.	4+3	7
<b>19</b>	New rules and regulations popping up without discussion. Communicate, don't just do it. There are a lot of things we can contribute. (Duplicate #1)		0
<b>20</b>	Taking responsibility and offloading tasks that seem inconvenient.	5	5
<b>21</b>	We never train together. At least a few times a month. It would be nice to train together at convenient times for both. (Duplicate #9)		0
<b>22</b>	Gear issue. Career FF's get gear before volunteers get gear. Career have many sets while volunteers only get one.	2	2
<b>23</b>	Taking gear off apparatus, taking PPE out of lockers without asking or posting on whiteboard. (Duplicate #28)		0
<b>24</b>	When doing a truck check and the phone PA system is playing a baby crying for 20 minutes.		0
<b>25</b>	When you walk on the apparatus floor and the day room door is slammed shut. You are not wanted here.		0
<b>26</b>	No wanting to listen because of being a volunteer.		0
<b>27</b>	Trying to get rid of volunteers in town.		0
<b>28</b>	Taking equipment off volunteer apparatus without notifying us. (Duplicate #23)		0
<b>29</b>	Two different set of rules.	5+4	9*
<b>30</b>	Radios with every pack for empty riding positions.	3+3+2	8*
<b>31</b>	Perception volunteers are trying to stifle paid staffing.	5+4	9*

\* Indicates a top 5 answer

## Appendix G – Career Focus Group Results

	<b>Answers</b>	<b>Vote 1</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Vote 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	Don't go to calls, even if they are in the firehouse. (Duplicate #14)		0		
<b>2</b>	Prefer autonomy over assimilation		0		
<b>3</b>	Volunteers only provide fraction of the service career force provides, but receives most of the credit/recognition.		0		
<b>4</b>	Overstated importance. Career force goes to nine calls during the day and volunteer chief goes to one call at night and tries to take over like he is a cog in the wheel. The call then goes downhill.		0		
<b>5</b>	Lack of standards/enforcement. How can (names omitted) still be counted? They come to the firehouse and don't contribute.	2+1	3		
<b>6</b>	Doing jobs half way and then leaving.		0		
<b>7</b>	Circumventing the chain of command (Duplicate #17 & #22)		0		
<b>8</b>	Speak out against the needs of the career staff in regards to manpower and officers. (Duplicate #19)		0		
<b>9</b>	Perpetuate the myth of the "volunteer" fire department.		0		
<b>10</b>	Unqualified members in the chain of command. (Duplicate #21)	3+4+4	11*		
<b>11</b>	Can make us look bad by their actions/presence.	2+4	6	1+3+4+4+4+3	19*
<b>12</b>	Fund drive letters based on lies or taking credit for things they are not responsible for. (Duplicate #23)		0		
<b>13</b>	Career discipline equals lost wages or employment while volunteer discipline equals stay at home and stop donating your "free time".	5+1	6	4+2+1+3+1+3	14
<b>14</b>	Volunteers come and go as they please deciding which calls to respond to. (Duplicate #1)	3+2	5		
<b>15</b>	Volunteers don't receive the same level of training as career personnel, yet are allowed to supervise and direct those with more knowledge and skill.	3	3		
<b>16</b>	Volunteer officers do now earn their rank by a competitive process. It's done by popular vote or default.	4	4		
<b>17</b>	Demand unearned authority in the chain of command (Duplicate #7 & #22)		0		
<b>18</b>	Misrepresent level of volunteer service provided.		0		
<b>19</b>	Take political action against paid staff. (Duplicate #8)	3+4+2+3	12*		

<b>20</b>	Lack of communication. Hiding their agenda and then you find out they spend money on something that is not needed or junk. Example: Battery operated Hurst tool or pneumatic power unit.	1	1		
<b>21</b>	Volunteer officers follow a different set of rules than career officers. Example: A volunteer can be called an "officer" just by being elected by popularity. (Duplicate #10)		0		
<b>22</b>	Volunteers have a tendency to circumvent the chain of command. (Duplicate #7 and #17)	5+5+5+5	20*		
<b>23</b>	Volunteer fund raising advertisements are generally misleading to the public. (Duplicate #12)	2+1	3		
<b>24</b>	Volunteers tend to have unreasonable expectations when seeking parity within the department. Example: Just having a firefighter and/or fire officer certification should qualify me regardless of time on the job.	2+4	6	3+1+1+3+1+2	11
<b>25</b>	Volunteers tend to think that requirements to maintain certifications are more punitive than beneficial to job performance.		0		
<b>26</b>	Expected that we work together at emergencies yet we never work with each other any other time.	1+5	6	2+4+2+2+2+4	16*
<b>27</b>	Lack of career space vs. volunteer space in fire station. Example: Station 2		0		
<b>28</b>	Officers by default.		0		
<b>29</b>	Take punitive action against career staff.		0		

\* Indicates a top 5 answer