

**A Prescription for Success: Assuring the Development of the Future Leaders of
Miami Township Fire and Emergency Medical Service**

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

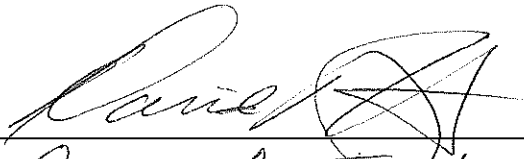
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David P. Jetter

ABSTRACT

Miami Township Fire and EMS (MTF&EMS) has 14 officers. All but one member of the officer staff will be eligible to retire within five to eight years. The problem was that there is no plan to assist in the replacement of these officers as they leave their posts.

The purpose of this applied research project was to determine if succession planning is needed within MTF&EMS by identifying the retirement intentions of the current officer staff and assessing the level at which the department's members are prepared to promote. Research was conducted to answer the following questions: (1) what are the retirement intentions of the full-time employees eligible to retire in ten years or less, (2) to what extent are the existing firefighters and officers aware of the requirements for promotion to the next rank, (3) in what ways has the fire department prepared to replace the officer position(s) of assistant chief, captain and lieutenant, (4) how are other fire departments similar to MTF&EMS addressing the issue of succession planning?

The procedures used were a literature review and the administration of three survey instruments. Two surveys were distributed to the employees of the department. One survey was administered to the firefighter/paramedics, lieutenants and captains that focused on career development. The other survey focused on retirement intentions and was distributed to all full-time members except the chief of the department. A third survey about succession planning and career development programs was administered to 24 fire chiefs of fire departments throughout Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren Counties.

Results of the research confirmed that nearly every officer intends to retire upon their twenty-fifth employment anniversary. Other results found that there is a lack of awareness among department personnel of the current officer development outline, as well as a lack of

involvement from administration to prepare officer candidates. Only half of the department's personnel are currently pursuing educational opportunities to assist with promotion. Also, half of those interested in promotion have established a career development plan for themselves. Other results concluded that there are other fire departments that share a common interest in succession planning, but only a few have a program in place.

Based upon the research, the following recommendations were identified:

1. Enlist the support of Miami Township Fire and EMS administration to implement a succession plan.
2. Develop a calendar of projected departures for all positions based on the actual expected retirement dates for the individuals currently holding officer positions.
3. Perform a staffing needs analysis to take into account the expected retirements, the necessary promotions to fill the vacant officer positions and the openings that will result from the promotion of the current personnel into the vacated positions.
4. The interest and commitment of all personnel who are interested in applying for advancement should be determined. Those persons should be made aware of the projected openings and the requirements to qualify for promotional testing of each officer position. The qualifications should specify such factors as years of experience, technical training, fire/EMS certifications requirements and officer development educational requirements.
5. Identify those officers that will be retiring and who possess mission critical skills and have them serve as mentors for those persons who desire to prepare for advancement. These mentors can help to assure that candidates are on schedule and receiving career advice in preparation for promotion.

6. Adopt NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* for officer development.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Miami Township Fire and EMS (MTF&EMS) has 14 officers. All but one member of the officer staff will be eligible to retire within five to eight years. The problem is that there is no plan to assist in the replacement of these officers as they leave their posts. This study will investigate the need for MTF&EMS to implement a succession planning program with a focus on officer development.

Along with the departure of these officers, years of experience they have obtained during their tenure will go with them. The department may face the replacement of a qualified officer staff with those that are less practiced, less experienced and likely less prepared. A pool of candidates will be awaiting the opportunity for promotion to a position that they may not be prepared to occupy. About succession planning, Rothwell (2005) wrote, "Succession involves more than merely planning for the replacements at the top. It also involves thinking through what to do when the most experienced people at all levels depart – and take valuable institutional memory with them" (p. xviii). The department is in a position to take advantage of the time that exists before the exodus of the current officer staff begins. According to Rothwell (2005), "Organizations must take proactive steps to plan for future talent needs at all levels and implement programs designed to ensure that the right people are available for the right jobs in the right places and at the right times to meet organizational requirements" (p. xxii). Preparation is paramount and MTF&EMS must not hesitate to plan for the future.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this applied research project is to determine if succession planning is

needed within MTF&EMS by identifying the retirement intentions of the officer staff and assessing if the current department members within the ranks of firefighter/paramedic, lieutenant and captain are prepared to promote. The results of this research will be used to make recommendations to help assure organizational sustainability of the department.

Research Questions

Evaluative and action research methodologies will be used to investigate the following questions:

1. What are the retirement intentions of the full-time employees eligible to retire in ten years or less?
2. To what extent are the existing firefighters and officers aware of the requirements for promotion to the next rank?
3. In what ways has the department prepared to replace the officer position(s) of assistant chief, captain and lieutenant?
4. How are other fire departments similar to MTF&EMS addressing the issue of succession planning?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

MTF&EMS serves a population of approximately 43,000 people from three strategically located stations within a 32 square mile boundary. Each station houses a paramedic engine and a paramedic ambulance. The department consists of 43 career employees and is complimented by more than 40 part-time personnel. The career personnel include an administrative team of a chief and two assistant chiefs. There are five captains, three assigned to shifts, one assigned to fleet maintenance and the other assigned to the training division. There are six lieutenants who

serve as the company officers of the department. Twenty-eight firefighter/paramedics and one firefighter/EMT complete the roster of career personnel.

MTF&EMS is a young department of only 15 years. Before the present day department was formed, the residents of Miami Township were served by the Day Heights Volunteer Fire Department (VFD), the Miami East VFD, the Miamiville VFD and Milford-Miami Township EMS (MMT-EMS). Loveland-Symmes Fire Department and Milford Community Fire Department provided additional service via contracted agreements. In 1988, the Miami East VFD became the private department of Miami Central. In 1990, the private department of Miami Township Fire Service (MTFS) was created through the merger of the Miami Central and Miamiville VFD. The Day Heights VFD eventually dissolved and MMT-EMS continued to provide paramedic service to the residents of Miami Township. In 1992, MTFS released all property to the Miami Township governing body and became a public fire department. In 1994, MMT-EMS was absorbed by the Township to create the present day Miami Township Fire and EMS department.

The current chief of the department was hired from an external applicant pool in 1992. All but one of the remaining 13 other officers were former members of the volunteer and private EMS departments. Of the two assistant chiefs, one was the chief of the Day Heights VFD and then served as interim chief of MTFS. The other assistant chief was a member of the private EMS department (MMT-EMS) and has remained an assistant chief after the 1994 merger. Of the five captains, three were officers with MMT-EMS, one was an officer with the Day Heights VFD and the other an officer with the Miami East VFD. Four lieutenants were members of MMT-EMS, one was a member of the Miami East VFD and the other was hired after the 1994 merger.

Because the 12 officers were previously employed by private organizations, in which none paid into a public retirement system, their years of service, in terms of retirement, as defined by the State of Ohio's Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F), began in 1992 and 1994, respectively, when the public departments were originally formed. As a result each of them is now vested, having contributed 15 consecutive years to the public retirement system. Each will reach 25 years of service and will be greater than 48 years of age within a narrow period of time. The current fire chief is presently in an extended pre-retirement pension program and is expected to retire within three years. Based upon dates of hire, of the 12 officers nearing retirement, one captain will have the option to retire in July 2015. One assistant chief, two captains and one lieutenant will have the option in June 2017. The remaining assistant chief, two captains and four lieutenants will be eligible to retire in July 2019. These retirement dates reflect 25 years of service for each person which, at present time, represent a 60% retirement dividend. If each officer decides to attain a maximum retirement benefit of 72%, their service time will be extended an additional eight years.

Regarding MTF&EMS' officer staff, 56.2 years will be the mean age among the captains and lieutenants that will be eligible to retire with 25 years of service. An additional eight years to reach the maximum retirement entitlement will increase the age to 64.2 years. The ranks of captain and lieutenant are not entirely administrative. These positions still perform the duties required of the profession: responding on emergency details, performing task oriented functions, responding to alarms at any hour of the day and night, hands-on training activities, etc. Retirements do unexpectedly occur as indicated by Price (2005). The emotional, physical, and/or mental demands of the profession may have an impact on when a person retires, requiring them to do so before they expected, whether because of an unexpected injury, unforeseen illness,

or because there has been a change in judgment. In the past decade there have been six unexpected retirements of full-time personnel due to career changes, medical reasons and disciplinary actions. Recently, an experienced, senior full-time firefighter/paramedic decided to prematurely retire after becoming vested. Another senior full-time member is off-duty awaiting a medical review for retirement. Retirement dates can only be predicted, as circumstances may lead a person to retire prematurely. Therefore, a plan to manage such an event is a necessity.

There has been limited effort on part of administration to ensure that suitable candidates are prepared for promotion as well as enforcing that the current officers seek continuing education related to their position. A job description for each rank is available for personnel to review and is required to be read by every new employee or anyone testing for a promotion within the department. A category within the job descriptions of captain and lieutenant states the following, "Attend training seminars, staff and training meetings, and take licensing re-examinations as required to maintain Paramedic, EMTB, Fire Fighter and other related certifications" (MTF&EMS, n.d., Other Duties, Section A). Nowhere in the job description is there a mention of officer or career development as a means of preparation for an employee's current rank or for the possibility of upward mobility. An interim standard operating guideline (SOG) for training states the following about officer development, "These trainings are offered by the department to develop and enhance the officer staff and prepare others for supervisory responsibility" (MTF&EMS, 1996, Section 6.1). The training division produced a document in June 2006 titled *Officer Development Courses Criteria for Admission*. This document provided an outline of courses pertaining to officer development according to each rank within the department. This document was emailed to all department members, but not used as a tool for employee enrichment by the training division or administration as it pertains to officer

development or succession planning. Other than the original email there was no other formal reference to the document relating to its intended purpose. Within the document the phrase, “Miami Township Fire & EMS Training Division strongly supports developing not only current officers, but also our future officers” (MTF&EMS, 2006, p. 1). While year after year the department ensures adequate funding for training, there has been no monitoring of officer development. There has been no counseling between officers and their subordinates, nor any formal counseling between the training division and current officers or aspiring employees. Recently, in 2009, the department’s chief drafted a spreadsheet titled *Officer Development Program* (MTF&EMS, 2009) that provides, by rank, a list of courses within the categories of pre-requisite, required after promotion and highly recommended. To date, this document is still in draft form and has not been distributed to all department members. This author has had the opportunity to review the draft as part of this paper.

Department administration and the training division are not entirely to blame. MTF&EMS officers represent the senior-most members of the department and have been in their position between 10 and 20 years, with the last promotional exam having taken place in 1998. None of the officers have changed rank, nor have they experienced lateral movements. There has also been a limited turn-over within the department. This may have contributed to stagnancy among officer and non-officer personnel due to the lack of opportunity for advancement. A review of the training records showed that few of the courses listed in the *Officer Development Courses Criteria for Admission* document have been attended by the department’s employees. Few non-ranking personnel have completed courses pertaining to career and officer development and even fewer officers have shown initiative for classes pertaining to their current position. Of the fourteen officers, only three have attended a Fire Officer One or Two course, with a

curriculum based upon NFPA 1021, for their current position or any higher position that could be sought.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) (2004) states, “we want our officers to have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in supervisory, management, administrative and executive positions” (p. 7). The IAFC discusses self-development and states that “it deals with your awareness, personal attributes and attitudes, which are individually developed and refined” (p. 8). Additionally, “the expectations listed...are based upon key indicators, activities and experiences that your self-development is at a place where you are prepared to assume the challenges of supervision and leadership” (p. 8). The IAFC handbook divides the officer rank into four progressive levels and provides a “systematic program of development for [a] professional service career” (p. 1). Each level includes the elements of learning, education, experience and self-development and within each of those elements are recommendations for career planning and competency development. Fire officers who align their career development with that suggested by the IAFC handbook will have prepared themselves for the duties required of current and successive ranks of the fire service profession.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1021 (2003), *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* identifies the objectives necessary to satisfy the requirements of each of the four fire officer levels. As the basis for the standard, the following is written: “Clear and concise job performance requirements that can be used to determine that an individual, when measured to the standard, possesses the skills and knowledge to perform as a fire officer” (p. 1021-1). While MTF&EMS has had job descriptions in place for each rank, there appears to be limited correlation to the 1021 standard. If the current job description were formulated to parallel that of the NFPA standard, there has been no practice to measure if an employee has fulfilled the job as defined. Performance evaluations are not used within the department to

measure an employee's performance per the job description and/or requirements of each respective rank. The need for up-to-date job descriptions as an ability to measure employee performance is an important component to a succession plan. Within the standard, the following is stated:

Succession planning or career pathing addresses the efficient placement of people into jobs in response to current needs and anticipated future needs. A career development path can be established for targeted individuals to prepare them for growth within the organizations. The JPRs and prerequisite knowledge and skills could then be used to develop an educational path to aid in the individual's advancement within the organization or profession. (NFPA, 2003, p. 1021-15)

A fire department has the option to require less or more than the standard recommends. The exact knowledge, skills and abilities required of an officer of a fire department are determined by that department. Any fire department can choose to adopt this standard as a component of career development for its officers, but it is not mandatory for them to do so.

Cook (2006), of the Colerain Township Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (CTDF&E) submitted an Executive Fire Officer Program paper about succession planning. Colerain Township is located approximately 30 minutes west of Miami Township. It has a multi-station operation, a similar population served, as well as a multi-rank staffing hierarchy. According to Battalion Chief Frank W. Cook, Colerain faced "a leadership vacuum within five to ten years" (p. 11) which emphasized his concern for determining how to replace an experienced officer staff. Cook stated, "Planning for succession is one those private initiatives that many fire department organizations either do inadequately or fail to do entirely" (p. 7).

Cook acquired data from various fire departments throughout Southwest Ohio and found that the

majority of respondents had “sometimes” given thought to advance planning for vacancies in key leadership positions. The data he collected also revealed that nearly half of the departments surveyed do not have a plan in place for use in the event of sudden loss of key leadership positions.

Price (2005) places focus on the need to prepare for the sudden, unexpected departure of people in key managerial positions. She wrote concerning the need for the roles and responsibilities of individuals within an organization to be known by others through effective cross-training. Price’s article “recommends that organizations have both an emergency succession plan, to prepare the organization for any unexpected circumstances, and develop a more thorough long-term succession plan, to ensure the organization will be sustainable beyond the tenure of the current executive” (para. 5). The need for succession planning is not entirely dependent upon the attrition of officers due to service credit retirement. Succession planning must also take into account position vacancies that unexpectedly occur. Price (2005) wrote, “When emergency circumstances do occur, there is an enormous level of stress experienced by an organization’s staff...and recipients of service” (para. 1). Price continued, “Without preparation, such a transition can throw the organization into turmoil and lead to disastrous consequences for...staff, populations served, and the community at large” (para. 2). Individuals may not reach their expected retirement date, but instead retire early due to injury, health or other unforeseen circumstances.

Rothwell (2005) focuses entirely on organizational succession planning practices. He states, “amid the twofold pressures of pending retirements in senior executive ranks and the increasing value of intellectual capital and knowledge management, it is more necessary than ever for organizations to plan for leadership continuity and employee advancement at all levels”

(p. xx). Rothwell also stated, “Organizational leaders should make the effort to determine the retirement plans of key officers. In that way, the organization is better able to identify developmental time spans for specific key positions” (p. 57). An assessment of an organization’s senior ranking personnel may determine that some wish to retire, while others do not. Having this data may identify the urgency of assuring there are sufficient personnel ready to assume leadership positions. Rothwell provides several recommendations of components required of a successful succession plan. Those identified as pertinent to a plan for MTF&EMS include:

- Align a succession planning program with the department’s strategic plan.
- Develop a mission statement for the succession planning program.
- Establish policy and procedures for the succession plan.
- Perform a risk analysis to determine the urgency of leadership development and to identify target groups of personnel to prepare for advancement.
- Establish individual development programs for employees at all levels within the organization.

McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) wrote about employee and leadership development that includes the topics of feedback, assignments and developmental programs. Both McCauley and Van Velsor are faculty of the Center for Creative Leadership, an organization who provides leadership education and research. The authors discuss what companies can do to improve their personnel so they are able to take on leadership roles within the organization. McCauley and Van Velsor also indicate that promotional opportunities, or the lack of, have an impact on an employee’s desire for professional development. The desire for personnel to attend classes in preparation for promotion may be largely dependent upon the perceived opportunity to advance. About organizational stagnancy, the authors wrote, “As long as conditions do not change, people

usually feel no need to move beyond their comfort zone to develop new ways of thinking and acting” (p. 7). A chapter by the author Craig T. Chappelow discussed the 360-Degree Feedback program pertaining to employee assessment and development. This program measures behaviors and competencies and provides feedback about an individual’s strengths and weaknesses. Based upon the feedback a development plan can be formulated for improvement. Chappelow suggested this program to be used as a developmental tool in which this author identified it as a component relevant to a succession/employee development plan for Miami Township officers and aspiring employees.

Pynes (2004) stated the following:

The internal pool of candidates is influenced by training and development and by transfer, promotion, and retirement policies. Assessing the incumbent staff competencies is crucial. Agencies should undertake an assessment of any employee’s competency levels. This will provide information for determining the number of people available for and capable of fulfilling future functional requirements. (p. 29)

Pynes suggests the promotion of internal candidates. “It...enables agencies to recoup the investment they have made in recruiting, selecting, training, and developing their current employees. Promoting qualified incumbent employees rewards them for their past performance and signals to other employees that the agency is committed to their development and advancement” (p. 170). There shouldn’t be a need to consider external candidates for promotion when a large internal candidate pool already exists.

Freyss (1999) focuses on employee development. According to his research, the most valuable asset of any organization, public or private, is its workforce. Supporting this Freyss wrote, “Developing and promoting a competent workforce creates the backbone for excellence in

service to the public” (Introduction, para. 4). An employee assessment must take place to determine where to focus on development. In the chapter about maintaining a high-performance workforce McCurdy and Lovrich (1999) wrote, “Once development needs are identified..., the organization must make a commitment to provide the employee with the opportunities required to fulfill them” (p. 69). According to Freyss, employees should be encouraged to attend trainings and a vested interest into the development of a company’s employees must take place. As part of a succession planning process, investment into employee development, “helps ensure that there is a ready supply of employees who have the requisite KSAs for successfully achieving the organization’s mission” (McCurdy & Lovrich, 1999, p. 73).

Aldisert (2002) places focus on the need for any organization to realize the worth of their people. A person may only reach their full potential when they are motivated to do so. The feeling of being valued by the organization can have a profound effect on an individual’s desire for personal development. Providing counseling to employees about career development is one way in which an organization can instill a sense of belonging among its employees. Stated by Aldisert, “Companies must provide an environment that gives their people the opportunity to develop and achieve their potential” (p. 114).

Truelove (1995) suggested that not everyone may desire to promote, but prefer to remain at their current level:

...it is impossible for any individual to control the development of others. They can help, they can provide resources, and they can encourage. But they cannot force people to learn. More and more it is recognized that individuals have to be responsible for their own development, and that they can do a lot for themselves. (pp. 302-303)

For those that wish to promote, an organization must “maximize opportunities for learning and growth by setting up monitoring systems and showing an interest in individual’s development” (p. 305). Career development monitoring, as part of succession planning, will assist those who wish to advance by providing a means for them to obtain what is required to promote as well as ensure on-going employee development.

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2006) produced a white paper that focused on succession planning activities of federal government agencies and the pending crisis of filling vacant leadership positions due to mass retirement. Through their research, several agencies were identified that had adequate succession planning practices in place as well as other agencies that were in need of a succession planning program. Relating to Miami Township the white paper stated, “Succession planning can no longer be a back-burner project. It is a pressing issue that demands immediate attention” (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2006, p. 21). The authors elaborated on federal agencies that were facing an exodus of organizational leadership similar to that of MTF&EMS.

Culp (2008) wrote,

Fire and rescue organizations are known for preparing their members for the tasks encountered during emergencies. However, they are less prepared for the process involved with replacing people who occupy key positions if they retire, transfer or take permanent medical leave. Leaving employee development to chance places the organization in a reactionary mode when looking for eligible candidates to fill key positions (para. 1).

Culp’s article illustrates that vacancies can unexpectedly occur and organizations cannot rely upon having people adequately prepared to assume leadership positions if they are not

adequately trained. In order to ensure suitable candidates are available for promotion, an organization must put a plan into place for employee development and succession.

General Accounting Office (GAO), (2001) provided a report regarding the retirement of federal employees. Within the report the GAO wrote, "One important element that agencies must consider in their workforce planning is the number and kinds of employees they will lose to retirement. This consideration is important because retirees often represent an agency's most experienced and knowledgeable staff." The authors continued, "If large numbers of employees retire over a relatively short period and agencies are not effective in replacing them with the appropriate number of employees possessing the needed skills, the resulting loss of institutional knowledge and expertise could adversely affect mission achievement" (p. 3).

The fire service has been in a transitional period for the past several years. There has been a push toward professionalism within the industry and it is continuing to gain momentum. This has been evident with numerous articles in trade journals about higher education and most notably through the United States Fire Administration (USFA) with the implementation of the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FEHSEP) Program. The mission of this program is to provide more recognition of the fire service as a profession. Along with post-secondary education, the concept of accreditation and credentialing are also on the horizon of professionalism for the fire service and have a focus on career development and succession planning in which the following material was found.

Naum (2010) posted an article on commandsafety.com about fire officers having the right training to adequately function in a command or administrative position. He listed the following question in his post: "Do you know what is expected of you? Does your organization provide you with the road map? Is it defined, is it part of the recognized national standard process?" (p.

2). Naum identified that officer credentialing is not new. In fact, NFPA 1021 was published in 1976 to “develop an interrelated set of performance standards specifically for the fire service” (p.

3). Because the NFPA standards are not uniformly enforced, the use of 1021 is a case-by-case basis. As it applies to MTF&EMS, the NFPA 1021 standard is not used as a model for career development. Naum’s comments support using the NFPA standard as a pathway for consistent officer development which the department should consider as a tool for its own employees.

Poulin (2009) discussed the professional image of the fire service. He stated that “credentials and licenses provide a form of regulatory professional oversight” (para. 6) in which the fire service is limited. He identified that training is different than education because education is better identified with professionalism. Poulin discussed standards of performance by professions, such as the healthcare industry, are measured. While the fire service can use NFPA 1021 as a standard of performance, Poulin states that within 1021, the standard “permits customization” (para. 11) though the fire service “needs to eliminate all forms of territoriality and agree on some standardized best practices” (para. 17). Standardization of MTF&EMS officer development will ensure that each individual has been trained to a similar level and a monitoring process will oversee an individual’s progression throughout their career development.

Onondaga County Fire Advisory Board (OCFAB) (2009) produced a document that focused on the “challenges for fire officer development” (p. 2). The document describes a credentialing program adopted by the fire advisory board to be used as guide for officer development. OCFAB recognized that “inconsistencies in training levels, skills and operational proficiencies exist in the county’s emergency services organizations related to fire officer qualifications” (p. 3). The purpose of the program was to provide uniform training, education

and knowledge for officer development. A matrix was formulated for a systematic development of an officer in which each individual is tracked to ensure uniformity and is managed by the fire advisory board. This type of credentialing program has merit and corresponds to the already existing training and education documents within MTF&EMS that are not currently used as an outline for officer development. The implementation of a similar system may be beneficial to the career development of the department's employees as it relates to the purpose of succession planning.

In summary, the literature review identified that succession planning is a common practice among private sector organizations and is an important consideration for public sector agencies, such as fire departments, which often do not have a plan in place. It was found that succession planning involves several components to ensure adequate development of future leadership candidates. Currently MTF&EMS has no succession plan in place and has done little in way of preparing its employees for promotion. Insight was gained from the literature review as to the various components that should be included in a succession plan for the department. The development of a succession plan is a significant, challenging investment that can be aligned with an organization's strategic plan.

PROCEDURES

This project began with the *Research Project Identification – Proposal* assignment of the Ohio Fire Executive (OFE) Program.

The first component of research began with a Boolean search of the Internet. The terms selected for the search included “succession planning,” “fire department,” “career development,” and “public.” The results of the search were reviewed for resources pertaining to the research topic.

An alternate search was conducted, via Amazon.com, to identify books and other related material that have been written on succession planning. Several books were selected from the result of this search and retrieved from The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Other material found within the library’s database was selected for review.

Other literature, such as fire service trade publications, industry standards, the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) research projects, and sources cited from bibliographies of publications were reviewed for this project.

Succession planning is common among private industry corporations. An attempt was made to obtain succession planning and career development information from a local Fortune 500 company in the Cincinnati area. An email was received from a representative of the company stating that the “information [was] either confidential or unavailable” (Karen, P&G Team, personal communication, July 9, 2009).

The Miami Township Police Department has been in service since 1965 and has a similar rank structure as the fire department. The Chief of Police was asked about succession planning used for career development and promotional practices within the police department (S. Bailey,

personal communication, June 15, 2009). Based upon a conversation between the police chief and author, no plan was indentified to exist and no further correspondence took place.

Pertaining to Miami Township Fire and EMS, progressive steps toward development of a succession plan can begin with forecasting to determine who will be leaving. The next step will be an employee development program to begin preparing individuals for promotion and lastly a continuous career planning program throughout an employee's tenure. In order to identify the level of urgency in regard to future vacancies at Miami Township, to obtain an assessment of the level of preparation for promotion of the department's personnel to promote and to estimate to what extent the department has participated in employee development, two surveys were given to MTF&EMS employees. A third survey was administered to other fire departments about succession planning and employee development practices. It was used to gain an idea of the importance of succession planning and employee development by the departments that responded to the survey.

The survey, titled *Miami Township Fire and EMS Personnel Retirement Survey* was administered to the department's full-time members to determine the retirement intentions of the full-time rank and file personnel. Forty-one full-time employees, including the ranks of assistant chief, captain, lieutenant and firefighter/paramedic were surveyed. The fire chief was not surveyed as that position is appointed by the government officials of Miami Township and is not solely managed by fire department policy. The survey was hand-delivered to each employee along with an explanation of the research. All of the personnel voluntarily responded. No names were recorded and the data was compiled only after all surveys were returned.

A second survey was administered to the full-time staff of MTF&EMS. This survey, titled *Career Development of Miami Township Fire and EMS Employees*, was utilized to

determine the level of preparation among the current employees for promotion. This survey was administered to the 39 full-time captains, lieutenants and firefighter/paramedics of the department. These positions fall within the current promotional practice of the department. The fire chief and two assistant chiefs were not surveyed; the fire chief position, as well as the appointment of an assistant chief to a higher position, is determined by the Miami Township government officials. The hand-delivery method was employed to administer this survey along with an explanation of the research. Thirty-eight personnel voluntarily responded. No names were recorded and the data was compiled only after all surveys were returned.

A third survey, titled *Succession Planning and Career Development*, was developed to collect data from other fire departments about their succession planning and employee development practices. The data collected intended to show if MTF&EMS was common or dissimilar to other Southwest Ohio agencies in terms of succession planning and employee development. Twenty four fire departments throughout the counties of Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren were surveyed. The sample population included the fire chief or designee of a fire department with all career or combination staffing and a corresponding rank structure to MTF&EMS. Departments with a multi-station operation and/or a multi-officer hierarchy were included in the sample population. No paid-on-call, totally volunteer or privately funded departments were surveyed due to the opinion of the author that succession planning and career development practices may differ from that of a career or combination public fire department. A cover letter and questionnaire was mailed, via the United States Postal Service, to each department. Sixteen (67%) responses were returned and data was compiled once every survey was received.

Historical archives relating to the development of MTF&EMS were very limited. To acquire information about how the department was formed, as it pertains to the appointment of the current officers of MTF&EMS, interviews took place with two former Trustees of Miami Township as well as with several members of the former departments that served the community. There was no organized set of questions used for any of the interviews. Each participant was informed about the research topic and the reason for the interview: to obtain data of historical significance about the establishment of MTF&EMS for the reason of establishing dates of public appointment as it relates to attrition of the department's current officer staff. During the interview sessions, notes were recorded in relation to the information sought. The trustee interviews took approximately one hour each. Questioning of the fire department members lasted no more than one half hour each.

An interview with Arthur Price took place on October 28, 2009. Mr. Price was a trustee between the years 1983 and 1989. During his tenure efforts began to consolidate fire services within the community. Prior to his withdrawal from office, the first fire station was built.

Edward Humphrey, who served as a Miami Township trustee for 18 years, was interviewed on November 4, 2009. During Mr. Humphrey's term, 1990 through 2008, Miami Township's first private fire department became the present day public fire department. Also, two additional fire stations were built and a new fire chief was hired that presently presides over the current department.

Two assistant chiefs, three captains, and two firefighter/paramedics, who were former members of the various departments that served Miami Township prior to the merger, were also interviewed. Each of the volunteer departments, as well as the private EMS department, was represented among the interview participants.

Definition of Terms

Career or combination staffing – for the purpose of this paper, defined as any department staffed with all career personnel, or a majority of career personnel that is supplemented by on-station, part-time personnel. Volunteer staffing and paid-on-call staffing is exempt from this definition.

Job Performance Requirement (JPR) – defined within NFPA 1021, a statement that describes a specific job task, lists the items necessary to complete the task, and defines measurable or observable outcomes and evaluation areas for the specific task.

Knowledge, skills, ability (KSA) – a cluster of competencies required to do a job.

Private fire company – “Means a nonprofit group or organization owning and operating firefighting equipment not controlled by a firefighting agency” (Ohio Revised Code [OAC], 2003, 9.60 Contracts for firefighting agency, private fire company, or emergency medical service organization, para. 6).

Pro Board – an international system used to recognize professional achievement in the fire service and provides accreditation of agencies and organizations that use the NFPA’s professional qualification standards.

Public employee – “Any person who is an employee of a public employer, notwithstanding that the person’s compensation for that employment is derived from funds of a person or entity other than the employer” (Ohio Revised Code [OAC], 2009, 145.01 Public employees retirement system definitions, para. 4).

Service credit – “Years of service and years of active service shall mean years of full-time service, including a full-time appointment to the position as a police officer or firefighter” (Ohio Revised Code [OAC], 2009, 742-5-01 Definition of service credit, para. 2).

Vested – Having been a public employee for 15 consecutive years while contributing to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund.

White paper – a white paper is an article that states an organization's position or philosophy about a social, political, or other subject, or a not-too-detailed technical explanation of an architecture, framework, or product technology. Typically, a white paper explains the results, conclusions, or construction resulting from some organized committee or research collaboration or design and development effort.

Limitations of the Study

The fire service operates, in many ways, like a private sector business. It has a defined budget, provides goods and services, and includes the dynamics of employee relations; therefore published material relating to private sector practices was relevant. While a great deal of information was available for both public and private entities, no published text specifically written for succession planning within the fire service was discovered. As a result, any material distributed by other fire departments or any available material related to fire service succession planning was reviewed.

The career development survey administered to the department's full-time staff was not focused on work-related experience, but rather on education relating to career development and promotional preparedness. The author assumed that work related experience would be a significant element of a promotional process and questions pertaining to that topic were not included.

The succession planning and career development survey distributed to other fire departments was limited to 24 organizations. The few departments that were selected may have limited the results or not have provided an adequate representation of other departments in the

surrounding area. A larger sample population may have been more insightful. Secondly, the survey did not question the retirement intentions of officers on other fire departments, nor did it seek to determine how quickly each department would be faced with replacing its current officer staff. The author decided that those questions may have been too personal and required too much effort to answer on the part of the respondent, which may have had an impact on the amount of surveys returned. Overall, the results of the survey could not provide how closely MTF&EMS compared to other fire departments in terms of the importance of succession planning due to mass officer attrition.

RESULTS

A literature review and three survey instruments were used to obtain answers to the research questions. The results are discussed in this section.

Research Question 1: What are the retirement intentions of the full-time employees eligible to retire in ten years or less?

Results of the retirement survey indicated that nearly every officer, 10 of 12 (83%) plan to retire upon their twenty-fifth anniversary date. One captain is anticipating retiring in 2015. One assistant chief, one captain and one lieutenant plan to retire in 2017. An assistant chief, two captains and three lieutenants expect to retire in 2019. Only two officers intend to work beyond their twenty-fifth anniversary. One captain plans to stay on an additional three years until 2020 and the other lieutenant expects to work an additional eight years (25+8) to reach his maximum retirement benefit. Of the ten officers planning to retire with twenty-five years, four were not aware that thirty three years of service is required to obtain the maximum retirement benefit of 72%.

Among the 18 non-ranking personnel with greater than 16 years of service, fifteen indicated that they plan to retire upon their twenty-fifth anniversary. Only two have intentions to work for thirty three years. The expected earned retirement benefit among the 12 firefighter/paramedics with greater than twenty years of service was also discerning. Four (33%) of this group were also unaware that 33 service years entitles them to a maximum retirement benefit. Only four of the remaining eleven employees with fifteen years or less intends to work a maximum of 33 years. The importance of the data obtained through the assessment of the retirement intentions of each employee directly relates to the position taken by Rothwell (2005) where an organization must determine who is going to retire and when. Every officer intends to retire within the next 10 years and several of the non-ranking personnel intend to retire as soon as they are able to. A significant observation from the data is that clusters of officers will be leaving due to similar retirement dates. In 2017 three officers will retire and in 2019 another 6 will retire. Clusters of non-ranking personnel will also be able to retire within 10 years, but in groups no larger than three personnel at a time.

Evidence was also gathered from the retirement survey about the experience level of the respondents. The department can expect to lose greater than 320 years of combined experience with the departure of its current officer staff and senior, rank and file members which represents 30 personnel. The eleven remaining rank and file members with fifteen years or less have 120 years of combined work-related experience.

Research Question 2: To what extent are the existing firefighters and officers aware of the requirements for promotion to the next rank?

The survey addressed the opinion of department personnel, not including the two assistant chiefs, about the level of education required of officer positions. For lieutenant, 11 of

38 (29%) responded “High School Diploma or GED”, 14 of 38 (37%) responded “Associates Degree”, 1 of 38 (2%) responded “Bachelors Degree”, and 12 of 38 (32%) responded “Other”. For captain, 2 of 38 (5%) responded “High School Diploma or GED”, 19 of 38 (50%) responded “Associates Degree”, 8 of 38 (21%) responded “Bachelors Degree”, and 9 of 38 (24%) responded “Other”. For the position of assistant chief, 1 of 38 (2%) responded “High School Diploma or GED”, 6 of 38 (16%) responded “Associates Degree”, 22 of 38 (58%) responded “Bachelors Degree”, and 9 of 38 (24%) responded “Other”.

The responses for the level of education among the department’s employees indicated that few members have a college degree, but most have been exposed to collegiate level courses at some point in their life. Only 12 of the 38 members interviewed have a college degree. Six have an Associate’s degree and six others have a Bachelor’s degree. Twenty six or 68% have had some college, but have not obtained a degree. Based upon the responses for required education of an officer, it appears that the opinion of post-secondary education is considered necessary and dependent upon the position sought. Fourteen of the 38 responses indicated that a lieutenant should have an Associate’s degree while only one respondent indicated that a Bachelor’s degree for that position is necessary. Regarding the position of captain, 27 of the 38 indicated the requirement of a degree. Nineteen of the 27 (70%) stated an Associate’s degree is required, while eight or 30% stated that a Bachelor’s degree is necessary. As indicated by the greater need for a captain to have a Bachelor’s degree than a lieutenant, the higher the rank, the higher the suggested level of education for an officer position among the department’s employees. Only six of the 38 respondents stated that an Associate’s degree is suitable for an assistant chief, while 22 or 58% suggested that position to have a Bachelor’s degree. The survey

responses showed that the department's employees think a college education is needed for an officer which corresponds to the push for higher education within the fire service.

The survey also asked about the interest of department personnel in promoting. None of the captains wish to promote. Three of the five lieutenants desire to promote and 75 % (21 of 28) non-ranking members indicated an interest in promoting. Of the 24 employees interested in promoting, the same number stated they would participate in a promotional exam if one were offered. All 24 of those employees stated they are familiar with the job descriptions defined by the department, but only 58% (14 of 24) believe they are currently qualified for a promotion to a higher rank based upon the current job descriptions.

Other survey questions focused on promotional qualifications and professional development of department personnel. All but one of the 38 respondents indicated that career development is important in preparation for promotion and 41% (15 of 37) have established a career development plan for themselves. One hundred percent (24 of 24) of those interested in promoting indicated that they are willing to take classes related to professional enrichment and 83% (20 of 24) are willing to attend college if a degree were required to promote. Forty-six percent (11 of 24) are currently pursuing educational opportunities that may assist them with promotion. Eighteen department members (five officers and thirteen non-officers) are aware of the career development guidelines available from the International Association of Fire Chiefs and United States Fire Administration. Of those personnel, only five have referred to those guidelines as a reference to their career development. This data corresponds to the findings noted by McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) which refer to the lack of interest among employees to prepare for advancement if there is not opportunity for advancement in sight. The survey results indicate that the department's personnel are interested in promoting and are willing to

take classes to prepare for a promotion. Not all individuals have made plans for career development, but this may be due to that there is no forecast on when the next promotional opportunity will be available. The next projected opening, according to the survey results, will be in 2015. Few employees may be aware of this potential vacancy and opportunity for advancement.

Research Question 3: In what ways has the department prepared to replace the officer position(s) of assistant chief, captain and lieutenant?

Job descriptions for each rank have always been available for review, but never updated nor referred to for promotional preparation. An interim training SOG was produced and a document that lists officer development courses was distributed, but neither were used in a formal officer development program. Most recently a draft officer development spreadsheet was formulated, but not yet adopted and distributed to department members as a map for career development. At this time there are no identifiable actions on the part of the department for employee development and succession planning. The results of this survey concluded this observation. Seventy-four percent (28 of 38) of the department's employees are aware of the outline of criteria for officer development with 59% (16 of 28) indicating they have reviewed the outline. Only one of the 38 respondents stated that the department does effectively advertise its officer development criteria. Eighty-two percent (31 of 38) of the respondents stated that the department has not established clear expectations of required experience and educational requirements for advancement. The research also found that of the 24 employees interested in promoting only two indicated that the department has assisted them with career development. The assistance given to one of those individuals was the advice to seek higher education and the other was given a list of suggested classes to attend as a newly hired full-time employee of the

department. While the survey data showed that the department's employees are interested in promoting and have a willingness to participate in career development, the lack of clear direction and expectations from the organization are counter to the findings by McCauley and Van Velsor (2004), Aldisert (2002), McCurdy and Lovrich (1999) and Fryess (1999).

Research Question 4: How are other fire departments similar to MTF&EMS addressing the issue of succession planning?

Fifteen of the sixteen respondents stated that a succession plan is important for fire departments to have, but only three of the surveyed fire departments have a succession plan in place. Funding, time and not recognizing the need were listed as reasons for departments to not have a succession plan. Of the three with a succession plan, one department felt that their succession plan adequately prepares individuals for promotion. The second stated that their plan is too new and the third stated that their plan was inadequate. Of the 13 departments without a succession plan, there is also no plan in place for the replacement of key leadership positions in the event of an unexpected or sudden loss. Though the majority of surveyed departments do not have a succession plan, 14 of the 16 departments think their organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current captain, lieutenant or similar officer level positions and 11 of the 16 departments think their organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current chief officers.

All 16 departments have job descriptions in place that include knowledge, skills and abilities for each position level. Ten of the respondents indicated that they have an officer development program in place, in which eight think their officer development plan adequately prepares individuals for promotion. Those same 10 departments allow non-ranking members to participate in the officer development program. Eleven of the sixteen departments agreed that

they provide an adequate investment in their employees' education, such as covering training expenses and facilitating the opportunity to attend courses, as well as encouraging their employees to participate in career development programs. Only eight departments stated that a formal education is required for promotion. Five respondents stated that a formal education is dependent upon the position sought and three stated one is not required. Although there has been a push for higher education in the fire service as indicated by the FESHE, the findings of this survey indicating that higher education was necessary per the position sought were similar to the responses of MTF&EMS personnel.

Only three of the surveyed departments have a formal process to monitor career development for succession purposes. Each respondent stated that career development is a collaborative responsibility between the employee and department, but 12 of 16 stated that it is up to the employee to manage their own career development. This finding corresponds to statements made by Truelove (1995), but differs to those suggested by Aldisert (2002) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2006). Of those departments that stated they provide an adequate investment in the development of their employees, there appears to be limited coaching or career tracking of an employee's development process. The data received did not provide any further information about each department's officer development program.

The data obtained from the survey administered to various local fire departments reflects similar data found by Cook (2006) in which it is not common for a fire department to have a succession plan in place. In fact, many of the same departments that were surveyed for this research were also surveyed by Cook five years ago. Few of those same departments have instituted a succession plan or have put into practice a system of career development for their employees as it relates to succession planning.

DISCUSSION

The review of literature suggests that succession planning is a component critical to the sustainability of any organization. Multiple agencies throughout the fire service are seeing the importance of such a process. Organizations which include the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence and The National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications, or Pro Board, have provided meaningful attention to fire officer development through standardization of educational and certification programs. Fire officer development programs are valuable, but succession planning is more inclusive. There is yet to be a standardized approach to succession planning in the fire service, but there are many resources available because succession planning is so widely prevalent in private industry. Numerous private-sector organizations, many of which have been cited in the literature, have successful succession plans in place. Although the fire service is not for-profit, it does share many business similarities to private, for-profit entities. Therefore, reference to those common practices regarding succession, as they can be related to the fire service, should be considered.

The literature review provided evidence to the importance of a succession plan and employee development. Authors such as Culp (2008) and Poulin (2009) discussed the need for succession planning and employee development programs within a fire department. It appears that MTF&EMS is not in a state of desperation regarding a succession plan, but this does not mean that the department should not consider the importance of having a plan. Many fire departments have no succession plan in place, yet have been able to function sufficiently and have been promoting individuals to succeed others who have left their positions. It may be that succession planning components are embedded in the job descriptions and hiring practices of the fire departments surveyed and among others across the country. For example, during

promotional processes it is common for the promotional candidates to be given a study guide for a written test. This study guide often includes text books, policy and procedure manual(s), standard operating guidelines and other material that the candidate must review prior to the exam. The survey of other fire departments indicated that 63% (10 of 16) of them have an officer development program which may include a list of classes and suggested material required of a current position or of a position sought and place emphasis on their program for promotional consideration.

The review of the survey responses from the department's personnel indicated that career development is important. Also promising was the identification of the need for a college education for an officer and several of the department members already have degrees. Several others are currently enrolled in college and taking advantage of the township's tuition reimbursement program. Once a required college course is satisfactorily completed, the employee is reimbursed the cost of the course. The move for the department to include certain degree levels dependent upon a position sought may not be as problematic as once thought. Requiring a degree to promote may provide more initiative for the department's members to pursue higher education which will have a two-fold benefit. Those who wish to earn a degree will participate in an enrichment endeavor as well as participate in career development which may someday assist them in a promotional process.

Although nearly every employee thinks career development is important, indicated by the majority of respondents stated they are willing to take classes and/or attend college for promotion, few members have established a career development plan for themselves and even less are pursuing educational opportunities that may assist with promotion. Though the involvement of the department in career development of its employees is important and

necessary, there should be some sort of interest among each individual for personal enrichment. It appears that the only education sought by the department's employees is that specifically required for specific for a position and/or required to maintain a certification. This type of minimum training is the only type that is required and mandated by the fire department of its employees. Currently, there is no required mandatory training for the department's officers. The lack of initiative among the department's employees may not be because there has not been the opportunity to advance or because there has been limited personal involvement from the organization, but instead there may be a lack of interest and no desire to participate in career development as mentioned by Truelove (1995). For those 24 of 38 employees that do have an interest the lack of self-development is concerning. The specific reason will need to be determined. Without the establishment of a career development program that lists courses required for a position and without enforcement of the program to individuals who desire to promote, it is likely that the lack of initiative will continue. The foundation of such a program already exists within the department in the officer development program draft document. Within this draft document are the four officer levels of NFPA 1021. Because NFPA 1021 covers the various components of an officer position, in which each of the four officer levels are successive upon one another, the inclusion of the NFPA recommendations are absolutely pertinent. The attendance of an individual in a fire officer 1-4 course that is designed to meet or exceed NFPA 1021 provides exposure to various responsibilities of an officer that the department can build upon to meet the needs of the organization.

Largely, the fire service is an on-the-job training type of occupation in which experience is a person's best educator. The experience and lessons learned while serving as a firefighter certainly are of benefit to serving in the next successive position of an officer and the experience

and lessons learned while serving as an officer are of benefit to other succeeding officer levels. The greatest deficit likely to face the department is that of the experience that will be lost. The experience of these individuals must be passed on to those who will be leading the department in the future. Equally important are those position-specific functions essential for operations beyond the fire ground and mentioned by Rothwell (2005) and Culp (2008). Though the department cannot replace the experience of those personnel soon to retire, it can make reasonable effort to prepare those for future advancement. There are many employees interested in promotion. Whether or not a plan is put into practice, it is likely that the department will continue to succeed because of those people who will move into the vacant positions. They will likely bring with them less experience than their successors, but enough to support the organization and its service capability. This does not mean that a plan is not necessary, rather it underscores that there is a pool of capable candidates deserving of investment which corresponds to the writings of Aldisert (2002) and Pynes (2004). MTF&EMS is a progressive service in both fire and EMS functions. It is now time to progress with human capital functions to ensure the department's continued success for its members and the community it serves.

Based upon the retirement survey, the expected rate of attrition and corresponding rate of replacement may result in the same rate of departure among the next officer staff in the future. This problem was identified in federal government agencies by the GOA (2001) and also discussed by Pynes (2004). If officer position vacancies are filled at the rate in which personnel are expected to retire, the dilemma that currently faces the department can be expected to occur again in the future. Although the survey indicated that the majority of the department's officers plan to retire at their earliest opportunity, a retention strategy may need to be part of a succession

plan which is not uncommon. Determining a way to retain some of the officers may assist in staggering the rate of attrition, thus encouraging the continuity of the fire department.

The need for MTF&EMS to begin the process of succession planning and career development has been identified. Evidence from the survey data and EFOP research papers, has showed that Miami Township, like other fire departments, is nearing a point when there will be a large turn-over of its officer staff. Although retirements are not expected to occur for five to eight years, this does not mean that the department's administration should delay in preparing for the future. Personnel with potential must be developed. Attention must be focused on the five to eight year window that is available, pending the potential retirement of the current officer staff, to prepare hopeful recruits to be future officers of the department. The findings of this research project may compel the department's administration to consider succession planning as a critical measure that will ensure the future success of the department by having employees who are prepared for advancement. Employees who are not only proficient in strategy and tactics, but also in the administrative areas of leadership, communications, performance appraisals, ethics, discipline, individual and group dynamics, budgeting and department policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The future will bring a great change to Miami Township Fire and EMS. New employees have emerged from past hiring processes which have produced persons capable of leadership continuity within the department. In order for the department to sustain under the direction of new leaders, a smooth transition must be managed rather than an abrupt, uncoordinated change. Based upon the research, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. Enlist the support of Miami Township Fire and EMS administration to implement a succession plan.

First and foremost, the department's administration must support and find beneficial the idea of succession planning or at a minimum career development of its employees. This is illustrated in the white paper about succession planning within the federal government by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2006). Employee buy-in to career development and succession planning will be greater if they know that management is in support of such programs and that they have an interest in the betterment of their people. The components of a succession plan will be dependent upon the needs identified by the department's administration. The literature review showed that succession planning can be highly complex. The survey results of this paper can help to begin the process which can be further expanded as the needs and urgency of a plan are identified.

2. Develop a calendar of projected departures for all positions based on the actual expected retirement dates for the individuals currently holding officer positions.

A plan for the replacement of key positions must begin with determining when individuals are planning to leave. Since retirement of the department's officer staff will begin in 2015, a calendar of departures should be established. This measure will help identify when to begin preparing interested individuals for advancement. If the department's administration is aware of when its current officer staff will retire, it can begin the process of preparing for their replacement especially as it relates to specialty skills required of the positions that will be vacated.

3. **Perform a staffing needs analysis to take into account the expected retirements, the necessary promotions to fill the vacant officer positions and the openings that will result from the promotion of the current personnel into the vacated positions.**

The survey results indicate the retirement intentions of department personnel, especially those people who are officers. Rothwell (2005) and Pynes (2004) suggest this measure as a means to determine what it will take to replace the individuals who are leaving the organization. It is not enough to simply know who is leaving; an organization must also determine what impact those departures will have and how deep it will affect a promotional process. For example, in 2015 a captain is expected to retire from MTF&EMS. This departure will affect several levels of the department. A testing process will be required to promote a lieutenant to a captain, a firefighter to lieutenant and there will also be a need to fill the vacant firefighter position. A staffing needs analysis will help determine a needs replacement plan as the vacancies occur within the department's hierarchy.

4. **The interest and commitment of all personnel who are interested in applying for advancement should be determined. Those persons should be made aware of the projected openings and the requirements to qualify for promotional testing of each officer position. The qualifications should specify such factors as years of experience, technical training, fire/EMS certifications requirements and officer development educational requirements.**

The survey results of this paper indicated that many of the department's employees are interested in promotion. A more thorough assessment will be needed to determine exactly who wishes to promote and is interested in taking the necessary steps for career advancement that will be necessary for promotion. The currently existing career development program flow sheet can

be used as a foundation for employee development as it lists the pre-requisite, required and highly recommended courses that identify preliminary requirements and expectations of the department's administration about the level of training and education for officer positions. As deemed appropriate by administration, the flow sheet can be expanded upon to include other components pertinent to career development.

5. **Identify those officers that will be retiring and who possess mission critical skills and have them serve as mentors for those persons who desire to prepare for advancement. These mentors can help to assure that candidates are on schedule and receiving career advice in preparation for promotion.**

Each officer of the department has different responsibilities specific to some operational function. These responsibilities are beyond fire ground and EMS operations in which each officer is similarly trained. Mission critical skills such as scheduling, fleet maintenance, training, and personnel matters, among many others, are the responsibility of one or a few individuals and are not widely shared among the officer staff. Those officers who have specialty skills and/or responsibilities should be used as mentors to those who may fill their position in the future. Enlisting their assistance in a mentoring program will help to ensure some level of continuity when new persons fill positions that include mission critical skills.

6. **Adopt NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* for officer development.**

The distinguished panel of NFPA 1021 has identified the necessary educational criteria of officer development. The reference to this standard, in concert with the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, is an appropriate related reference guide to assist with officer development of MTF&EMS personnel. The levels within this standard are applicable to all

officer ranks within the department and also apply to the firefighter/paramedic position as a preparatory measure for advancement. Within the IAFC handbook, the recommendations of the standard are broken down into segments per each of the four officer levels serving as a guide for development.

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APPENDIX 1 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #1**Ohio Fire Executive, Class 9****Miami Township Fire and EMS Personnel Retirement Survey**

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an “X” next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked () symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. How many years do you have in the fire service?
 - Less than 5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - Greater than 20 years

2. How many years do you have as a full-time employee of MTF&EMS?
 - Less than 5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - Greater than 20 years

3. What is your current rank?
 - Firefighter/paramedic
 - Lieutenant
 - Captain
 - Assistant Chief

4. How many years until you become vested with 15 years of service in the public retirement system?
 - I am currently vested. How many years have you been vested? _____ years.
 - I am not currently vested. _____ years until I am vested.

5. How many years until you have 25 years of service in the public retirement system and are at least 48 years of age?
_____ Years

APPENDIX 1 Continued

6. Are you aware that 25 years of service credit entitles you to a 60% retirement benefit?

Yes

No

7. Are you aware that 33 years of service (25 years + 8 additional years) will yield a 72% retirement benefit?

Yes

No

8. When do you plan to retire?

With 25 years of service (60% retirement benefit).

With 33 years of service (72% retirement benefit).

9. At what age will you be with 25 years of service in the public retirement system?

_____ years of age.

* This question will determine the mean age of Miami Township Fire and EMS personnel upon 25 years of service in the public retirement system.

10. At what age will you be with 33 years of service in the public retirement system?

_____ years of age

* This question will determine the mean age of Miami Township Fire and EMS personnel upon 33 years of service in the public retirement system.

APPENDIX 2 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #1 - RESULTS

Ohio Fire Executive, Class 9

Miami Township Fire and EMS Personnel Retirement Survey

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an “X” next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked (☐) symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. How many years do you have in the fire service?
 - ☐ Less than 5 years0
 - ☐ 6-10 years3
 - ☐ 11-15 years8
 - ☐ 16-20 years6
 - ☐ Greater than 20 years.....24

2. How many years do you have as a full-time employee of MTF&EMS?
 - ☐ Less than 5 years2
 - ☐ 6-10 years11
 - ☐ 11-15 years11
 - ☐ 16-20 years6
 - ☐ Greater than 20 years.....11

3. What is your current rank?
 - ☐ Firefighter/paramedic29
 - ☐ Lieutenant.....5
 - ☐ Captain.....5
 - ☐ Assistant Chief.....2

4. How many years until you become vested with 15 years of service in the public retirement system?
 - ☐ I am currently vested.18
 - ☐ I am not currently vested.23

5. How many years until you have 25 years of service in the public retirement system and are at least 48 years of age?

Responses ranged between four months and twenty two years.

APPENDIX 2 Continued

6. Are you aware that 25 years of service credit entitles you to a 60% retirement benefit?

- Yes.....34
- No7

7. Are you aware that 33 years of service (25 years + 8 additional years) will yield a 72% retirement benefit?

- Yes.....28
- No13

8. When do you plan to retire?

- With 25 years of service (60% retirement benefit).28
- With 33 years of service (72% retirement benefit).6
- Other6
- No Response1

9. At what age will you be with 25 years of service in the public retirement system?

Years of age.44, 46, 48, 48, 49, 49, 50, 50, 51, 51, 51, 52, 52, 53, 53, 53, 53, 54, 54, 55, 55, 55, 55, 56, 57, 57, 58, 58, 58, 59, 59, 59, 60, 61, 61, 61, 62, 62, 62, 63

* This question will determine the mean age of Miami Township Fire and EMS personnel upon 25 years of service in the public retirement system.

10. At what age will you be with 33 years of service in the public retirement system?

Years of age.52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 57, 58, 58, 59, 59, 59, 60, 60, 61, 61, 61, 61, 61, 62, 62, 62, 63, 63, 63, 63, 65, 65, 66, 66, 66, 67, 67, 67, 68, 69, 69, 69, 70, 70, 71,

Dead

* This question will determine the mean age of Miami Township Fire and EMS personnel upon 33 years of service in the public retirement system.

APPENDIX 3 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #2**Ohio Fire Executive, Class 9****Career Development of Miami Township Fire and EMS Employees**

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an “X” next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked () symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. What is your current rank?
 - Firefighter/paramedic
 - Lieutenant
 - Captain

2. What is your highest level of education?
 - High School Diploma or GED
 - Some College
 - Associates Degree
 - Bachelors Degree
 - Masters Degree
 - Doctorate

3. Are you familiar with the job descriptions, as defined by MTF&EMS, for lieutenant, captain and assistant chief?
 - Yes
 - No

4. Do you think MTF&EMS has established clear expectations of required experience and educational requirements for advancement?
 - Yes
 - No

5. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for a lieutenant?
 - High School Diploma or GED
 - Associates Degree
 - Bachelors Degree
 - Other. Please describe: _____

APPENDIX 3 Continued

6. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for a captain?
- High School Diploma or GED
 - Associates Degree
 - Bachelors Degree
 - Other. Please describe: _____
7. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for an assistant chief?
- High School Diploma or GED
 - Associates Degree
 - Bachelors Degree
 - Other. Please describe: _____
8. Are you interested in promoting to a higher position within MTF&EMS?
- Yes, I am interested in promoting.
 - No, I am not interested in promoting. Please skip questions #9 and #10. Answer questions #11 and #12 only.
9. Do you think that you are currently qualified for a promotion to a higher rank based only on the job descriptions as defined by MTF&EMS?
- Yes
 - No
10. If a promotional exam were offered at MTF&EMS that you were qualified for, would you participate?
- Yes
 - No
11. Are you aware that the department has an outline of criteria for officer development?
- Yes
 - No. Skip to question #14.
12. If you answered yes to question #11, do you think that MTF&EMS effectively advertises its officer development criteria to the department members?
- Yes
 - No

APPENDIX 3 Continued

13. Have you reviewed the officer development outline?
- Yes
 - No
14. Are you willing to take classes to prepare yourself for promotion?
- Yes
 - No
15. Are you willing to attend college in order to obtain a degree if one were required to promote?
- Yes
 - No
16. Are you aware that the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and United States Fire Administration (USFA) have guidelines in place to aid fire service personnel in career development?
- Yes
 - No. Skip to question #18.
17. Have you used the IAFC and/or USFA guidelines as a reference in your career development?
- Yes
 - No
18. Do you think career development is important in preparation for promotion?
- Yes
 - No
19. Have you established a career development plan for yourself?
- Yes
 - No
20. Are you currently pursuing educational opportunities that may assist you with promotion?
- Yes
 - No

APPENDIX 3 Continued

21. Has MTF&EMS administration and/or training division assisted you with career development to prepare you for a future promotion?

Yes. In what ways? _____

No

APPENDIX 4 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #2 – RESULTS

Ohio Fire Executive, Class 9

Career Development of Miami Township Fire and EMS Employees

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an “X” next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked (☐) symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. What is your current rank?
 - Firefighter/paramedic28
 - Lieutenant5
 - Captain.....5

2. What is your highest level of education?
 - High School Diploma or GED
 - Some College.....26
 - Associates Degree6
 - Bachelors Degree.....6
 - Masters Degree
 - Doctorate

3. Are you familiar with the job descriptions, as defined by MTF&EMS, for lieutenant, captain and assistant chief?
 - Yes.....25
 - No12
 - No Response1

4. Do you think MTF&EMS has established clear expectations of required experience and educational requirements for advancement?
 - Yes.....5
 - No31
 - No Response2

5. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for a lieutenant?
 - High School Diploma or GED11
 - Associates Degree14
 - Bachelors Degree.....1
 - Other:12

APPENDIX 4 Continued

6. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for a captain?
- High School Diploma or GED2
 - Associates Degree19
 - Bachelors Degree.....8
 - Other. Please describe:9
7. What do you think the minimum level of education should be for an assistant chief?
- High School Diploma or GED1
 - Associates Degree6
 - Bachelors Degree.....22
 - Other. Please describe:9
8. Are you interested in promoting to a higher position within MTF&EMS?
- Yes, I am interested in promoting.24
 - No, I am not interested in promoting. Please skip questions #9 and #10. Answer questions #11 and #12 only.....14
9. Do you think that you are currently qualified for a promotion to a higher rank based solely on the job descriptions as defined by MTF&EMS?
- Yes.....14
 - No5
 - Other1
 - No Response4
10. If a promotional exam were offered at MTF&EMS that you were qualified for, would you participate?
- Yes.....24
 - No
11. Are you aware that the department has an outline of criteria for officer development?
- Yes.....28
 - No. Skip to question #14.10
12. If you answered yes to question #11, do you think that MTF&EMS effectively advertises its officer development criteria to the department members?
- Yes.....1
 - No27

APPENDIX 4 Continued

13. Have you reviewed the officer development outline?
- Yes.....16
 - No11
14. Are you willing to take classes to prepare yourself for promotion?
- Yes.....31
 - No6
 - No Response1
15. Are you willing to attend college in order to obtain a degree if one were required to promote?
- Yes.....23
 - No14
 - Other1
16. Are you aware that the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and United States Fire Administration (USFA) have guidelines in place to aid fire service personnel in career development?
- Yes.....18
 - No. Skip to question #18.20
17. Have you used the IAFC and/or USFA guidelines as a reference in your career development?
- Yes.....5
 - No13
18. Do you think career development is important in preparation for promotion?
- Yes.....37
 - No1
19. Have you established a career development plan for yourself?
- Yes.....16
 - No21
 - Other1
20. Are you currently pursuing educational opportunities that may assist you with promotion?
- Yes.....12
 - No23
 - Other3

APPENDIX 4 Continued

21. Has MTF&EMS administration and/or training division assisted you with career development to prepare you for a future promotion?

Yes. In what ways?10

No25

Other1

No Response2

APPENDIX 5 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #3

Ohio Fire Executive Program, Class 9

Succession Planning and Career Development

Organization Name: _____

Name and Title of Person Completing Questionnaire: _____

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an "X" next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked (□) symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. In the spaces below, please fill-in the information about your department.

Square miles covered: _____

Population served: _____

Number of stations: _____

Full-time personnel: _____

2. On the lines below, please list the rank structure of your organization and include how many personnel fill each position.

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

Rank: _____ Quantity: _____

3. Does your department have a succession plan to aid in the replacement of officers?

□ Yes. Please continue to question #6.

□ No

4. If you answered no to question #3, how does your department replace vacancies in its officer staff? Please describe.

APPENDIX 5 Continued

5. What factors, if any, has prevented your department from developing a succession plan?

Please list:

6. Does your department have an officer development program whether it is a part of your succession plan or not?
- Yes
- No
7. Do you think your succession plan adequately prepares individuals in the fire department for promotion?
- Yes
- No
- My department has no such program in place
8. Do you think your officer development program adequately prepares individuals in the fire department for promotion?
- Yes
- No
- My department has no such program in place
9. Who do you think is responsible for career development of your personnel?
- The fire department
- The employee
- A combination between the fire department and employee
10. Please check the box that most accurately describes your department's process of career counseling?
- We have a formal process that assists and monitors the career development of department members
- We have NO formal process in place. It is up to the employee to manage their own career development

APPENDIX 5 Continued

11. Do you think your department provides an adequate investment in education and training of its employees to prepare them for promotion?
- Yes
 No
12. Do you think your department encourages its employees to participate in career development programs (leadership programs, technical programs, college, etc.)?
- Yes
 No
13. What positions are included in your succession plan and/or officer development program?
- Lieutenant
 Captain
 Assistant Chief
 Other. Please list: _____
14. Does your department allow personnel who are not yet officers to participate in an officer development program?
- Yes
 No
15. Does your department have job descriptions that include certain knowledge, skills and abilities for each position level within the organization?
- Yes
 No
16. Do you think a formal education is required for promotion?
- Yes
 No
 It depends upon the position sought
17. Do you have a plan in place for the replacement of your organization's key leadership positions in the event of an unexpected or sudden loss?
- Yes
 No

APPENDIX 5 Continued

18. Do you think that, as of today, your organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current captain, lieutenant or similar officer level positions within your organization?
- Yes
- No
19. Do you think that, as of today, your organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current chief officers or individuals who are prepared to assume the administrative duties required of those positions?
- Yes
- No
20. Do you think a succession plan and an officer development program are important for fire departments to have?
- Yes
- No

APPENDIX 6 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #3 – RESULTS

Ohio Fire Executive Program, Class 9

Succession Planning and Career Development

Organization Name: _____

Name and Title of Person Completing Questionnaire: _____

Directions: Please read each statement below. Place an "X" next to the appropriate response on questions with a blocked (☐) symbol, and/or provide a short fill-in answer to questions that require more detailed information.

1. In the spaces below, please fill-in the information about your department.

- Square miles covered: _____
- Population served: _____
- Number of stations: _____
- Full-time personnel: _____

2. On the lines below, please list the rank structure of your organization and include how many personnel fill each position.

Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____
Rank: _____	Quantity: _____

3. Does your department have a succession plan to aid in the replacement of officers?

- Yes3
- No13

4. If you answered no to question #3, how does your department replace vacancies in its officer staff? Please describe.

5. What factors, if any, has prevented your department from developing a succession plan? Please list:

APPENDIX 6 – SAMPLE SURVEY INSTRUMENT #3 – RESULTS

6. Does your department have an officer development program whether it is a part of your succession plan or not?
- Yes10
- No6
7. Do you think your succession plan adequately prepares individuals in the fire department for promotion?
- Yes2
- No1
- My department has no such program in place.....12
- Other1
8. Do you think your officer development program adequately prepares individuals in the fire department for promotion?
- Yes.....8
- No2
- My department has no such program in place.....5
- Other1
9. Who do you think is responsible for career development of your personnel?
- The fire department
- The employee
- A combination between the fire department and employee16
10. Please check the box that most accurately describes your department's process of career counseling?
- We have a formal process that assists and monitors the career development of department members.....3
- We have NO formal process in place. It is up to the employee to manage their own career development.....13
11. Do you think your department provides an adequate investment in education and training of its employees to prepare them for promotion?
- Yes12
- No4

APPENDIX 6 Continued

12. Do you think your department encourages its employees to participate in career development programs (leadership programs, technical programs, college, etc.)?
- Yes13
- No3
13. What positions are included in your succession plan and/or officer development program?
- Lieutenant
- Captain
- Assistant Chief
- Other. Please list: _____
14. Does your department allow personnel who are not yet officers to participate in an officer development program?
- Yes14
- No1
- No Response1
15. Does your department have job descriptions that include certain knowledge, skills and abilities for each position level within the organization?
- Yes16
- No
16. Do you think a formal education is required for promotion?
- Yes8
- No3
- It depends upon the position sought5
17. Do you have a plan in place for the replacement of your organization's key leadership positions in the event of an unexpected or sudden loss?
- Yes3
- No13
18. Do you think that, as of today, your organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current captain, lieutenant or similar officer level positions within your organization?
- Yes14
- No2

APPENDIX 6 Continued

19. Do you think that, as of today, your organization has qualified individuals who can succeed the current chief officers or individuals who are prepared to assume the administrative duties required of those positions?

- Yes.....11
- No5

20. Do you think a succession plan and an officer development program are important for fire departments to have?

- Yes.....15
- No
- Other1

APPENDIX 7 – SURVEYED FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Chief Mark Ober
Anderson Township Fire & Rescue
7850 Five Mile Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45230

Chief Kevin L. Riley
Central Joint Fire - EMS District
2401 Old State Route 32
Batavia, OH 45103

Chief G. Bruce Smith
Colerain Township
Department of Fire & EMS
3251 Springdale Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45251

Chief William J. Zoz
Delhi Township Fire Department
697 Neeb Road
Cincinnati, OH 45233

Chief Trish Brooks
Forest Park Fire Department
1201 West Kemper Road
Forest Park, Ohio 45240

Chief Joseph Schutte
Hamilton Fire Department
77 Pershing Avenue
Hamilton, Ohio 45011

Chief Michael Hannigan
Lebanon Fire Division
20 West Silver Street
Lebanon, Ohio 45036

Chief Steve Ashbrock
Madeira-Indian Hill Fire Department
7205 Miami Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45243

Chief Richard R. Brown
Blue Ash Fire Department
10647 Kenwood Road
Blue Ash, Ohio 45242

Chief Robert Kidd
Clearcreek Fire District
825 South Main Street
Springboro, Ohio 45066

Chief Chris Eisele
Deerfield Township Fire Rescue
4900 Parkway Drive
Deerfield Township, Ohio 45040

Chief Donald Bennett
Fairfield Fire Department
375 Niles Road
Fairfield, Ohio 45014

Chief Douglas J. Witsken
Green Township Fire & EMS
6303 Harrison Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247

Chief William R. Hursong Sr.
City of Harrison Fire Department
200 Harrison Avenue
Harrison, Ohio 45030

Chief Paul Stumph
Liberty Township Fire Department
6682 Princeton-Glendale Road
Liberty Township, Ohio 45011

Chief John Moore
City of Mason Fire Department
6000 Mason-Montgomery Road
Mason, Ohio 45040

APPENDIX 7 Continued

Chief Steve Botts
Middletown Division of Fire
2300 Roosevelt Boulevard
Middletown, Ohio 45044

Chief Aaron Boggs
Pierce Township Fire Department
950 Locust Corner Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45245

Chief Rob Leininger
Springfield Township Fire Department
9150 Winton Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45231

Chief Stanley G. Deimling
Union Township Fire Department
860 Clough Pike
Cincinnati, Ohio 45245

Chief Curt Goodman
Norwood Fire Department
4275 Montgomery Road
Norwood, Ohio 45212

Chief Ralph Hammonds
Sharonville Fire Department
11637 Chester Road
Sharonville, Ohio 45246

Chief William A. Jetter
Sycamore Township
EMS & Fire Department
8540 Kenwood Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

Chief Tony Goller
West Chester Fire Department
9119 Cincinnati-Dayton Road
West Chester, Ohio 45069

APPENDIX 8 – SAMPLE SURVEY COVER LETTER

[Date]

[Name of Fire Chief]

[Fire Department Name]

[Fire Department Address]

[Department City, State, Zip Code]

Chief [Last Name]:

My name is Dave Jetter and I am a lieutenant with Miami Township Fire and EMS, Clermont County, Ohio. I am a student in class nine of the Ohio Fire Executive Program and am in the process of acquiring data for my applied research project. I am researching the practice of succession planning with the purpose of making recommendations that will allow our department to continue its current level of service despite the attrition of key department personnel.

I request you or your designee to respond to the enclosed survey regarding your department's practice of officer development and succession planning.

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed self-addressed envelope to me by April 30, 2010.

If you would like to contact me I can be reached via email at dave.jetter@miamitwpoh.gov or by phone at (513) 253-5850.

Your assistance with this project will aid in the success of my research project, as well as contribute to the preparedness of Miami Township Fire and EMS personnel.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

David P. Jetter, Lieutenant

APPENDIX 9 – SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

[Date]

[Name of Fire Chief]

[Fire Department Name]

[Fire Department Address]

[Department City, State, Zip Code]

Chief [Last Name]:

Thank you for your quick response to the survey associated with my Ohio Fire Executive Applied Research Project. The survey is a vital part of my research and your assistance will contribute to a more thorough and complete report.

Respectfully,

David P. Jetter, Lieutenant