Lexington Professional Firefighters Local 526

Response to Management Partners, Inc Report

Pg. 244 of the report "Middle Management": The report refers to the six (6) Assistant Chiefs, as "Middle Management" which we contend is upper management within the Division of Fire, or referred to as Senior Staff. It appears the report fails to take into account the level of responsibility or work involved with these positions in their haste to reduce them. It also simply says they should be eliminated and their job duties be transferred elsewhere within the Division of Fire.

There is a reference to the "benchmark" cities that we were arbitrarily compared to (pg 245 paragraph four) which makes reference to those cities having three or fewer Assistant Chiefs. But there is no comparison to the duties of those Assistant Chiefs to how our department operates, nor to how many support personnel, sworn or civilian, they have to perform all those duties.

Problem: It is our contention that we are deficient on our staffing levels for our support staff and, while there may need to be a reclassification of certain positions, the total elimination of these jobs would severely harm the Divisions ability to provide its services to our members and the community.

Radio Coverage Pg 245: This section makes reference to incident(s) that may occur in areas of poor radio coverage, in which the Battalion Chief must "leave the scene" by car and drive until radio communications is established. We have yet to find anyone with any knowledge of this happening once, let alone on multiple occasions.

Problem: While we strongly agree that there are significant problems with our radio system, we ask how much of this effects the efficient operation of the Division of Fire. We see it as a safety issue. We support any efforts to improve radio system coverage from a safety standpoint.

Building Maintenance Pg 246: The first paragraph, last sentence states: "These duties are not commensurate for the skill level of sworn personnel; building maintenance is a specialized service better provided by General Services."

Problem: Where is it demonstrated that General Services is better at providing these services? There is a long history of firefighters with certifications and training in the "trades" field being used in the dual roles of building maintenance and fire suppression. (See Appendix A) The Division of fire currently maintains approximately 44 buildings. Now you are going to ask General Services to assume this role, on a 24-hour basis, with the addition of only three (3) civilian personnel. No guarantee we will keep 24-hour service. What is General Services ability to do this with the addition of just these three personnel?

False Alarm Fee Pg 246: First we question the accuracy of the percentages listed in this report. This may be a coding error in the reporting system or interpretation of the data, but we do not find them accurate. The statement is way to vague. The second sentence finds the Division of Fire does not "…charge a fee for false alarms, a common practice nation-wide which serves as an incentive for alarm companies and property owners to maintain their alarms…"

Problem: WHERE is this a common practice in the fire service? There is a trend to bill for service for motor vehicle accidents, for EMS response, and in some areas where there is a subscription fee, there are billed responses for those that do not pay the annual fee. However, this practice will do nothing but deter private homeowner's and businesses from connecting their alarm systems to a monitoring agency for reporting to the fire department. And what you call a "false alarm" are frequently accidental activations of a good, working system. That is, the system did what it should; there was simply no fire (smoking a cigarette near a detector, steam, dust) or a sudden drop in water pressure in a sprinkler system that activated a flow switch. If this happens, who pays? The water company, who's pressure dropped, or the company REQUIRED BY

STATE LAW AND LOCAL ORDINANCE to have the system in the first place? The creation of a nuisance ordinance, for a problem system where the occupant fails to comply and fix the system, is different. A policy to bill for false alarms will do nothing but cause increased fire loss and deaths by fires not being reported at their earliest level of detection.

Rotate Firefighter/Paramedics pg. 247: The first paragraph, third sentence states, "This is a high stress and high workload environment." Then in recommendation L32 suggests a rotation plan (we already have one in place). Eight recommendations later Management Partners Inc is suggesting cutting our staffing on the EC Units.

Problem: So here we say they are high stress and overworked, so let's CUT THE PERSONNEL and NOT INCREASE THE NUMBER OF EC UNITS. We fail to make the connection. No suggestion of a tiered response system, no other feedback, good or bad, on how our EMS system operates because THEY DID NOT PROPERLY EVALUATE how the Division of Fire delivers service. And there is no mention of the fact that the recent Human Resources survey of the community ranked the Division of Fire HIGHER THAN ANY OTHER DIVISION in our customer satisfaction. There is no comparison of our current mission to make all new firefighters paramedics, which has a significant price tag. There are many ways to make this system more cost efficient, none of which they explored.

Fire Services Software System pg. 248:

Fire Prevention Plan Review Software pg. 248:

There was no mention of the fact that the Division of Fire has no way of signing off or rejecting a plan. If the fire department thinks a plan is bad, we can't stop it.

Engine Company Staffing: Recommendation L37 very strongly states **"Do not change engine company staffing".** There is no indicated improvement in functioning or public safety by increasing the minimum staffing level and doing so has significant ongoing costs to the city."

Problem: There are many. First, Management Partners Inc. cites NO study to support their position. **No indicated improvement in functioning or public safety?** Let me start by showing you the INDEPENDENT studies that show there IS SIGNIFICANT improvement when staffing is increased. 1) The Dallas Study, 1984. 2) The Seattle Study, 1982 demonstrated that firefighter injuries were **54% greater for Engine Companies staffed with three (3) firefighters as compared with four (4) firefighters.** It also indicated that the average hours of disability were **50% greater** on Engine Companies staffed with three (3) firefighters verses four (4) or five (5) firefighters. 3) ICMA Recommendation 1988. 4) International Association of Fire Chiefs 1992 (it should be noted that Management Partners used the International Association of Chiefs of Police in the police report, but not fire groups in the fire report). 5) Crowley Report, Colorado Springs, CO 2004. These are simply five of several that are easily available for review. The CEO of this company, Gerald Newfarmer, who is past CEO for the City of Cincinnati, at that time was a part of the agreement with the Cincinnati Professional Firefighters to make four (4) person manning on Engine and Ladder Companies a reality.

A 1994 study of the Providence, RI Fire Department found "The significant effect that increasing staffing from three (3) to four (4) can have on the rate of firefighter injuries is apparent from a recent trial experience in Providence, RI." The study showed that the resulting "…***55.4% drop in firefighter injuries*** was so dramatic that the Mayor entered into an agreement with the Local Union to extend the four (4) firefighter minimum staffing levels to all fifteen (15) of the Providence Fire Departments fire suppression units."

Ambulance Staffing Levels pg. 250: The report's Recommendation L40 recommends reducing our EC Unit staffing by twenty-seven (27)

firefighters. It is fully opinionated and lacks any factual data to support that recommendation.

Problem: The Division of Fire has a MODEL EMS delivery system, which is fully supported by our physicians and our medical director. They are opposed to any reduction in our EC Unit staffing. We have more equipment to carry, more skills to be performed to properly evaluate and treat patients with critical medical conditions such as heart attacks and strokes (in fact, the American Heart Association states that three (3) person staffing IS better, a direct contrast to what Management Partners Inc. stated in their report). There is also added safety when transporting juveniles and females by having two paramedics rendering care rather than one.

Our Emergency Medical Advisory Board (EMAB) sets our medical care protocols and guidelines. This panel, comprised of a representative from each Lexington hospital, is the one that guides our care and is in support of our three (3) person staffing. They see first hand the difference in care a patient receives from our service, as opposed to the area services that provide only one paramedic to treat a patient.

On pg. 251, last paragraph, states "Based on industry practices that are nearly universal in our experience and developed to assure the best medical care protocols, staffing three persons per ambulance is a needless expense, adding nothing to the quality of patient care." How in the world can they quantify the word "nothing"? If you are having a heart attack, do you honestly think that one paramedic can give you the same level of care as two can? Most of these protocols that Management Partners Inc. attempts to cite are developed out of financial restraints, NOT what is in the best interest of our community or patients. And since the report earlier states how our EC Units are overworked and in a high stress environment, it is troubling to see they made NO recommendation to place more EC Units, even if they were staffed with two paramedics as they call for, into service. Our EC Units make more runs per day on average then National recommendations call

for, and we exceed the burnout rate. Did they even look at that, know that those studies were out there, or simply chose to ignore it? How many ambulances, per capita, do these other communities we were compared to have? With the fact it takes us almost two years to get a fire/paramedic recruit trained and functioning on their own. With the 2010 World Equestrian Games coming, do we really want to be that understaffed? Give thought to 150 more police officers by then, and 30 less firefighters and EC Units riding with two.