

Agenda Summary

December 13, 2013

Agenda No. A-3

Fire/EMS Merger Follow Up

Summary: At the Selectboard's 8/23/23 meeting, the Town Manager indicated that he would follow up with the Selectboard on steps and a timeline to merge the EMS and Fire Departments.

Based on the recommendations of the Fire and EMS Chiefs and input from departmental personnel, I am going to merge the departments effective 7/1/24 but defer hiring a full-time Fire/EMS Chief until 7/1/25. Steps between now and 7/1/24 will include, but are not limited to, merging the budgets and putting all full-time employees under the IBEW Agreement as EMS/Firefighters. All part-time employees (aka volunteers) will be incorporated into the Personnel Rules. Chief Reeves and Chief Brinkman will be co-chiefs during this initial transition period. This stepped approach is to enable the departments to adapt to changes overtime rather than all at once. For your reference, attached is a memo from the Chiefs along with an interim departmental org chart.

It should be understood that full-time employees will be cross-trained and required to serve in both EMS and firefighting capacities. Part-time employees (aka volunteers) will not be required to do so. Both Stowe's full-time and part-time employees (aka volunteers) are vital to helping Stowe EMS/Fire accomplish its public safety mission. The service and leadership of Chief Reeves and Chief Brinkman is very much appreciated as we continue to evolve our organizational structure to meet Stowe's growing public safety needs.

Town Plan Impact: N/A

Fiscal Impact: N/A

Recommendation: Move to approve the plan of merger with the understanding that should it become necessary sooner than planned, the Town Manager reserves the right to move forward with hiring an EMS/Fire Chief with input from the current Stowe Public Safety Chiefs and employees.

To: Charles Safford, Town Manager

From: Scott Brinkman, EMS Chief

Scott Reeves, Fire Chief

Date: 12/6/2023

EMS/Fire Transition Plan

For the last several years the Town has required both EMS and Fire employees to be cross trained. Some part-time employees (aka volunteers) have also chosen to do so. The intent of the cross-training was to ensure support for each other's agencies and with an eye towards merging to make efficient use of our personnel resources and help with coverage. The AP Triton study recommended merger with the hiring of a Fire/EMS Chief. We recommend the Town merge the FY'25 Fire & EMS Budgets and merge the personnel, with the understanding that only full-time employees will be responsible for serving in both capacities while part-time employees (aka volunteers) will not. However, we do not recommend hiring a new full-time Fire/EMS Chief until 7/1/25 in order to provide more time to adapt to the aforementioned changes before bringing on new leadership.

In the interim, Scott Reeves and Scott Brinkman work each within their own areas of expertise and experience, answering to the Town Manager. Scott Reeves remains the top-level decision maker for firefighting related matters, Scott Brinkman remains the top-level decision maker for EMS related matters.

Assisting the Co-Chiefs with the administrative burden is a member of full-time staff who's area of responsibility in addition to being a responder to calls as a cross trained Fire/EMS staff member will be administrative duties, up to and including processing payroll, managing the schedule, coordinating on-boarding/new-member orientation, compliance related matters (OSHA, Blood Borne Pathogen/Respiratory protection program, etc.) The primary duty of the person in this role is administrative support of the Co-Chiefs; this position is not intended to be in a role of supervision of other staff members directly.

All staff are now recognized as employees: per diem, part time, or full time. Our Emergency Service Workers (ESW) having varying degrees of experience and certification. Firefighters/Engineers/Line Officers answer to the Fire Chief for matters related to Fighting Fire or Fire related responses. EMT's/AEMT's/Paramedics answer to the EMS Chief for matters related to the provision of Emergency medical services. When performance evaluations are needed for a non cross-trained FF, that responsibility lies with the Fire Chief, when performance evaluations are needed for non cross-trained EMS personnel that responsibility lies with the EMS Chief. Cross-trained Emergency Service Workers will be evaluated collaboratively by the Fire and EMS Chief.

- Leading the day staff will be a Shift Supervisor who will direct the work of the day. A shift supervisor is most likely a FT employee, but also needs to have the development and experience to operate in this way. Assigning roles for the day staff and making decisions on initial response/mustering priorities. The shift supervisor is not necessarily in charge on a working incident. On working incidents of a Fire nature, the highest ranking line officer may assume command, or may delegate that to someone else. On working incidents of an EMS nature the highest certified responder is in charge of the response unless the EMS Chief is on scene. - The day shift is proposed to have budgeted three full-time employees and one part-time employee. However, there may be instances when this varies due to vacations, etc.

The night shift is proposed to continue to have two employees who are either cross-trained or EMS certified. There will be four part-time fire fighters on call. One will be an officer, one an engineer, and two fire fighters.

Although the budget and personnel are s merging, - Chief Brinkman will be responsible for approving EMS related bills and Chief Reeves will be responsible for the fire bills The full-time personnel payroll and the Fire Chief for the part-time firefighters. Chief Brinkman will attend the Department Meetings to stay up to date on organizational policy changes to relay to the Fire/EMS Department. Also, to work with the other Town Manager and other departments on inter-departmental issues.

12/6/2023

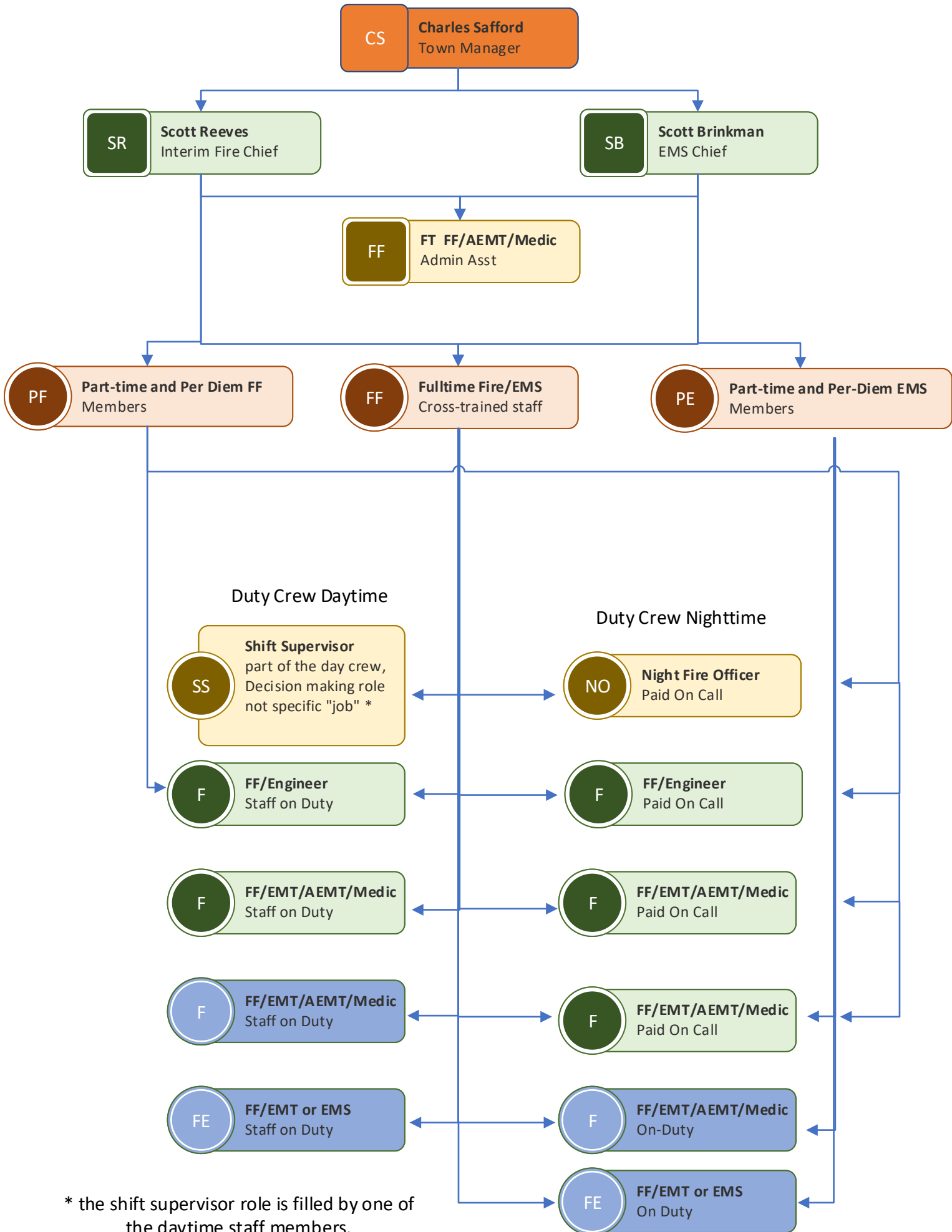
X Scott Brinkman

Scott Brinkman
EMS Chief

Signed by: 0e3cfb3-9040-40ab-932b-f7d09aa08e19

X

Scott Reeves
Fire Chief



* the shift supervisor role is filled by one of the daytime staff members.