TO:         Board of Directors, Orange County Fire Authority

FROM:       Keith Richter, Fire Chief

SUBJECT:    **Management Partners' Organizational Structure and Management System Review**

Summary:
This item is submitted to provide the final report regarding the Organizational Structure and Management System Review conducted by Management Partners (Attachment 1).

Recommended Actions:
1. Receive and file the submitted Management Partners final report.
2. Approve the submitted Implementation Action Plan and direct staff to provide monthly progress reports to the Executive Committee identifying steps taken each month to implement the recommendations contained in the Management Partners final report.

Background:
Management Partners was retained by the OCFA in November 2013, to review the current leadership structure and internal management systems and identify opportunities to improve oversight, accountability, communication, and performance. Its review involved analyzing documents, conducting interviews with OCFA staff, Executive Committee members (and other Board members who requested interviews), conducting two online surveys (one with Board members and one with OCFA employees), and conducting seven focus groups.

Management Partners' analysis identified numerous opportunities for improvement in the following areas: management systems and accountability, organizational structure, labor/management relations, leadership development and succession planning, and Board development. Specifically, its final report contains 29 recommendations for improvement.

OCFA's Executive Management team, working jointly with Management Partners, has developed an Implementation Action Plan to address the 29 recommendations (Attachment 2). The Action Plan includes implementation steps for each recommendation, planned completion dates, and assigned responsibility for completion of each action item. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, staff will provide monthly progress reports to the Executive Committee outlining the steps taken each month towards full implementation of the recommendations. In addition, periodic progress reports could be provided to the full Board of Directors, as desired.

Impact to Cities/County:
Not Applicable.

Fiscal Impact
None

Staff Contacts for Further Information:
Keith Richter, Fire Chief
keithrichter@ocfa.org
(714) 573-6010

Craig Kinoshita, Deputy Fire Chief
craigkinoshita@ocfa.org
(714) 573-6014

Attachments:
1.  Final Report from Management Partners
2.  Implementation Action Plan

# Orange County Fire Authority
# Organization Study

**May 2014**

Management
Partners

May 15, 2014

Mr. Steven Weinberg
Board Chair
Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Road
Irvine, CA  92602

and

Mr. Keith Richter
Fire Chief
Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Road
Irvine, CA 92602

Dear Mr. Weinberg and Chief Richter:

Management Partners is pleased to provide this report to the Orange County Fire Authority on the results of our organization study.  Our firm was retained to review the current leadership structure and internal management systems and identify opportunities to improve oversight, accountability, communication, and performance.

This report contains 29 recommendations for improvement.  Some can be implemented fairly quickly while others will require time to plan and schedule. When implemented, the recommendations in this report will help increase the effectiveness of the OCFA, both with policy makers and employees.

Management Partners has drafted an Implementation Action Plan to help OCFA execute the recommendations in this report and we will be available to provide support during implementation, as appropriate.

Sincerely,

Gerald E. Newfarmer
President and CEO

# Table of Contents

# Tables

# Figures

## Executive Summary

The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) is a well-known and highly respected fire agency. It was awarded accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) in March 2011, an honor held by approximately 300 other fire departments at that time. The accreditation process involves a rigorous self-assessment and signals a desire for continuous improvement.

Nonetheless, there are some serious issues that have evolved over the past several years that the Board felt merited examination. The downturn in the economy that affected OCFA and local government agencies across the country resulted in downsizing at the same time many key staff members were retiring. More recently, OCFA received media attention related to its handling of hazardous materials inspections, the renewal of ambulance provider contracts, and an incident involving on-duty sworn personnel who were not wearing seatbelts.

Management Partners was retained by the OCFA to review the current leadership structure and internal management systems and identify opportunities to improve oversight, accountability, communication, and performance. Our review involved analyzing documents, conducting interviews with OCFA staff, Executive Committee members (and other Board members who requested interviews), conducting two online surveys (one with Board members and one with OCFA employees), and conducting seven focus groups.

Our analysis identified numerous opportunities for improvement in the following areas: management systems and accountability, organizational structure, labor/management relations, leadership development and succession planning, and Board development.

While OCFA has all of the elements of an effective management system in place, they are not being used consistently and regularly throughout the organization to guide employee decision making or behavior. Accountability is lacking at all levels of the organization. It would be improved by establishing clear expectations as well as the consequences if expectations are not fulfilled. Establishing a professional standards unit

to ensure a consistent approach to investigating complaints, modernizing OCFA's antiquated performance evaluation system, and providing training to supervisors on how to provide meaningful positive and negative feedback would help improve accountability throughout the organization.

As an accredited agency, OCFA leaders recognize the importance of performance measurement. The organization is in the process of establishing measures for all internal and external programs and services. However, employees would benefit from training about the importance and use of performance measures so everyone understands their function and purpose. Current perceptions are that some measures do not add value, are not used to support management decisions, and exist only so people can "check off the box."

Communication could be improved between the Chief and Board members by having more frequent individual meetings. Identifying and communicating key messages from executive staff meetings, and increasing the use of video chats would improve the quality of internal communication and consistency in the information being shared.

With regard to organizational structure, Management Partners identified an opportunity to clarify the role of division chiefs to reconcile the different expectations by OCFA and the jurisdictions it serves. Procedures for rotating battalion chief positions should be more explicit and at least one rotational assignment (Corporate Communications) would be more effective if filled by a non-safety professional with public communications and media relations experience and credentials. Community relations/education specialists should be assigned to Corporate Communications to ensure they are representing OCFA to the widest reaches of the community and are effective ambassadors as the "face" of the organization.

OCFA's agreements with labor associations are unusually lengthy, with multiple side letters. Portions of language in some side letters are inconsistent and can be confusing, leading to incorrect interpretations by staff. Existing captain position vacancies create accountability and disciplinary issues, contribute to excessive overtime and should be filled as soon as possible. The current 24-hour shift schedule for dispatchers in the Emergency Command Center is not cost effective and should be renegotiated. Current contract negotiations provide an opportunity to address these and other labor/management issues.

Although 43% of OCFA's managers are currently eligible for retirement, with two-thirds becoming eligible by 2017, there is no formal succession plan. The selection/promotion process is perceived by many employees to be unfair and prone to favoritism. Our report contains several recommendations for ensuring OCFA has fair and effective promotional processes and that employees are adequately prepared to move into leadership positions.

Finally, 60% of OCFA's current Board members have served for two years or less, resulting in different perceptions about roles and responsibilities and different levels of understanding of OCFA Board policies and procedures. Having an annual discussion about Board roles and providing an in-depth orientation for new members within 30 days of appointment would position them for success as OCFA's policy makers. Board engagement could be improved by changing the manner by which committee appointments are made and by establishing Board norms for behavior to ensure business is conducted professionally and efficiently in public.

A summary of recommendations is provided as Attachment A.

## Background

The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) is a large, regional fire service agency serving 23 cities and the unincorporated areas of Orange County. OCFA provides fire and emergency medical services (EMS) response and fire prevention (community risk reduction) services to about 1.7 million residents. OCFA is governed by a 25-member Board of Directors, which provides oversight and policy direction to the Fire Chief. An Executive Committee of Board members is empowered to conduct the non-policy business of OCFA, including providing guidance to staff on the annual budget.

OCFA is a well-known and highly respected fire agency. In March 2011 it received accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). At that time, there were only 11 other departments in California that had achieved that honor and approximately 300 other fire departments nationally that had done so. The accreditation process involves a rigorous self-evaluation that leads to improved service delivery through assessing community risks and safety needs and evaluating departmental performance. As importantly, participation in the accreditation process signals a desire for continuous improvement. In addition, a fairly recent customer survey reinforced overwhelming community support and appreciation for OCFA's services.

In the past several years, OCFA has faced significant challenges. As with jurisdictions throughout the country, baby boomers are reaching retirement age and are leaving the public sector in droves. As a result, many government organizations are finding themselves at a loss in key management positions. OCFA is no different. As long-time leaders retired, many individuals were promoted simultaneously, resulting in a lack of experienced leadership. For example, of the seven division chiefs, two are still on probation and five have less than two years in their positions. Similarly, many battalion chiefs are newly promoted.

At the same time that many retirements were occurring, the economic downturn also affected OCFA. Fiscal challenges meant that the Authority had to continue to meet demands with fewer resources.

Positions were frozen when individuals retired, forcing all employees to "do more with less." This has contributed to morale issues in the department.

These and other challenges prompted OCFA to request an independent assessment of its leadership structure and management system, with the goal of identifying opportunities for improved effectiveness and accountability. Of particular interest was whether the current structure (see Figure 1) and management system effectively supports Board policy making, is useful for planning work and monitoring its execution, is understandable and easy to use for managers at all levels, and fits into systematic communications processes.

*Figure 1.   Current OCFA Organizational Structure*
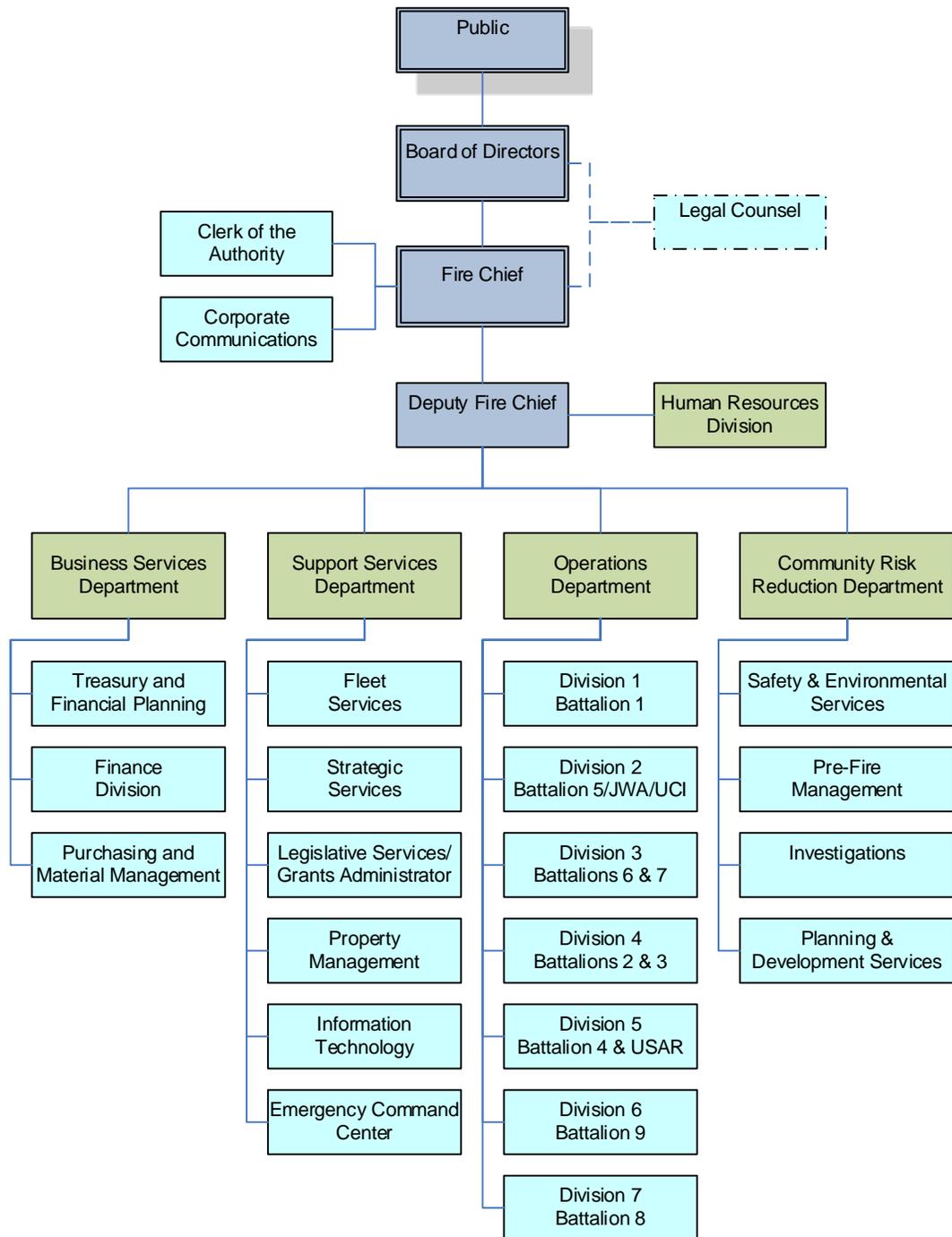
# Approach

Management Partners used a variety of analytical and management techniques as we completed this organization review. We examined numerous documents and conducted individual interviews with executive team members and other key staff as well as executive Board members and other Board members who requested interviews. We designed and implemented two online surveys, one for Board members and one for OCFA employees. We also conducted seven focus groups. Each major component of our work is described in more detail below.

## *Document Review*

During the course of this study, Management Partners' team members reviewed many documents including the OCFA annual report, strategic plan, memoranda of understanding (MOU), organization charts, job descriptions, a performance evaluation form; selected standard operating procedures and general orders, the outlines of divisional responsibilities and projects from several divisions, project and tasks lists from the Communication Center, Finance Division, Treasurer, and Community Risk Reduction; budget documents; and copies of several relevant PowerPoint presentations.

## *Interviews*

Management Partners' project team members interviewed 22 staff. The purpose of the staff interviews was to understand the organizational structure, decision making and management systems, staffing, policies and procedures, and formal and informal communication mechanisms to identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition, we interviewed eight Executive Committee Board members as well as three other Board members who requested interviews. The purpose was to hear about what they felt was working well and what improvements they thought should be considered.

## *Surveys*

Two surveys were developed and implemented for this project: a Board survey and an employee survey. Results of each are described below.

### Board Survey

A survey was developed to help Management Partners' team members understand Board members' ideas about their roles, communication from OCFA and to obtain input about the issues they think are most important to address. A total of 19 Board members completed the survey for a 68% response rate. A summary of results is included as Attachment B.

### Employee Survey

The second survey was designed to encourage input from all OCFA employees. Of a possible 1,425 individuals who received a link to the survey a total of 532 responded (37% response rate). In addition, over half (283) of the respondents provided comments, which were read and considered by Management Partners' team members during follow up interviews and focus groups. Attachment C contains a summary of employee survey results.

## *Focus Groups*

Management Partners conducted seven focus groups during a two-day period with seven different groups of employees. A total of 38 OCFA employees and one representative from the Orange County Employees Association participated. The seven groups were:

- Division Chiefs
- Battalion Chiefs
- Captains
- Chief Officers Association
- Union 3631
- Administrative (non-safety)
- Orange County Employees Association

Participants were asked for their input about what is working well and what improvements they would suggest in the following areas:

- Organizational Structure
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Accountability
- Communication

- Succession Planning

They were also asked what outcomes they hoped would result from Management Partners' work. Many themes expressed by participants in each of the groups were similar.

Although the individual groups varied from one another in their organizational vantage points, themes that showed common occurrences and shared perceptions emerged. It is apparent that employees deeply care about OCFA and its future. They are committed to fulfilling their roles and serving the public good. They are also hopeful that OCFA will be able to be well-respected again in the future.

Many participants expressed they often feel they do not have day-to-day support from their leaders, and some feel that OCFA leadership is a hindrance to their success. At the leadership levels, many of the issues and concerns reported by employees are thought to be the result of misunderstanding, lack of insight, or unwillingness to comply with established policies or procedures.

The focus group discussions helped to clarify information that Management Partners heard through other efforts in this project, such as the online employee survey. The focus group facilitators provided their email addresses to participants so anyone who wished could provide additional information. A few employees submitted further comments, which were generally sensitive in nature and served as illustrations for the general themes heard throughout this process.

Participants in all groups indicated that improvements in communication from the top down are needed and that consistency in discipline is lacking. A high-level summary of the focus group results is provided below and a more complete summary is included as Attachment D.

## Organizational Structure

- Although many participants felt the organization is generally lacking leadership, the higher the level within the organization, the more pleased people are with leadership and the organizational structure.
- Spans of control are appropriate throughout the organization.
- Some participants expressed the view that rotating battalion chiefs through positions within the organization is flawed. For some positions, they are just "passing through." The positions are perceived as stepping stones and suffer too much turnover.

Battalion chiefs often do not have the expertise needed to be effective.
- Leadership is lacking throughout the organization, beginning with the chief and deputy chief.
- Many in leadership positions are not appropriately prepared for their duties.
- The organization has expanded in scope without comparable expansion in support positions.
- Expectations about leadership positions are unclear, making it difficult to say no to contract cities when too much is being asked.
- Messaging from one division to another is inconsistent
- There is a lack of consistency in management approach by division chiefs as well as by battalion chiefs.

## Roles and Responsibilities
- OCFA employees understand their job responsibilities and do a good job running their day-to-day responsibilities.
- The culture has veered toward micromanaging; individuals are not empowered to make their own decisions and fear "blowback" from managers.
- The management style is reactive (i.e., always responding to crisis), but a proactive style involving priorities and tactics would be more effective.
- Division chiefs should be focused on their geographical areas, but they have also been given other duties (mainly from the former operations division) that distract too much from this focus.
- Division chiefs need the authority necessary to react to the needs of their geographic areas.
- The normal responsibilities of individual positions are sometimes neglected due to data-driven mandates.
- People's daily schedules are mired with items that could be given more general deadlines.  They asked not to be micro-managed; instead provide general direction and they will get the job done.

## Communication
- Internal and external multimedia/video communication methods are effective.
- People in the field are good about communicating with one another.
- Staff is eager to hear more about organizational vision and direction.

- At times, leadership seeks staff input but it comes off as a formality, seldom resulting in action.
- Discussions at the higher levels are not consistently relayed to staff; different and sometimes conflicting messages get passed down. Although mixed messages about decisions are common, there is little effort to clear up misunderstandings when they occur.
- There are many layers in the chain of command, which breaks down the messages going up to leadership.
- Internal customer service is often lacking. Examples were that questions often do not get addressed and some people (or groups) do not answer their phones.
- Trust is a bigger problem than communication methods.
- Lack of transparency leads to rumors and misunderstandings.
- IT advances (e.g., electronic timesheets) would broadly benefit the efficiency of the department.

## Accountability

- OCFA is on track with reimbursing people for overcharges.
- Disciplinary action is inconsistent, particularly based on rank.
- Accountability at the executive level is lacking; they should lead by example.
- Those who attempt to discipline staff, even for simple matters, are often overruled by union influences.
- New policies often result from the actions of very few people who misbehave, resulting in inconvenience or even penalties for all staff. Issues are often generalized and addressed to everyone, rather than holding the individual accountable.
- Bullying, harassment and retaliation are perceived to commonly occur within the organization.

## Succession Planning

- The natural progression for moving up within the organization is fairly well understood, such as moving from battalion chief to division chief.
- Staff rotations through the organization are good for giving people the full organization perspective.
- The organization lacks strategic succession planning.
- Job shadowing is uncommon, but would be helpful for those wishing to advance.
- Promotions are given to those who fall in line with the chief, but not to those who exert different opinions.

- Advertising vacancies is inconsistent; some within the organization are prevented from indicating potential interest in moving to different positions.
- People are often chosen for leadership positions because they indicate interest, not because they are qualified.
- Many positions need thorough documentation in case there is unplanned turnover.
- For important or unique positions, provide overlap so the transition from one employee to the next goes more smoothly.

## Analysis and Recommendations

Management Partners' team members have conducted a high-level review of the OCFA's organization and management system with the goal of identifying improvements.  The results are organized in the following six sections of this report:

- Management Systems and Accountability
- Communication
- Organizational Structure
- Labor/Management Relations
- Leadership Development and Succession Planning
- Board Development

## Management Systems and Accountability

The management systems of well-run organizations are fully integrated. Each business process fits in a planned way into the whole, allowing it to seamlessly serve the interests of the overall organization. Building this kind of system and applying it consistently creates a culture of accountability and trust, leading to excellent operational results. Employees thrive in this kind of culture.  By knowing what is expected of them they are empowered to make good decisions and find ways to improve their own performance.

The management system includes the array of policies, practices, and techniques that are used to plan, manage, and communicate the work of the organization. It includes strategic planning, work planning, performance measurement, project management, the budget process, the performance review process and the fabric of regular meetings that managers use to discuss and decide upon the work of the enterprise.  It also includes processes used jointly by management and the governing body such as the Board agenda preparation process and the budget review and adoption process.

When asked about the management system, it was clear that OCFA has each of these elements in place.  For example, OCFA's 2010-2015 strategic plan (which articulates the vision, mission, guiding principles, goals and objectives), is available on the website and annual reports on progress are provided to the Board of Directors during the budget adoption process.

Executive level managers have good systems for planning and executing work to achieve established goals.  The other elements of an effective management system are also all in place.  However, during interviews and focus groups, it became clear that while each element exists, they are not being used on a regular basis by the majority of the employees in the organization to guide decision making or behavior.

## *Organizational Culture and Accountability*

Every organization has a culture that is unique and reflective of the environment and the team. Organizational culture can be deliberate or organic. Either way, it affects the way people and groups interact with each other, customers, Board members, and other stakeholders. It results in norms and behaviors that can be observed.

The organizational culture influences how employees work together and, in turn, how the organization delivers services within and across division or department boundaries. The public safety environment is somewhat unique because there is often a distinction between safety and non-safety employees. This adds another layer of complexity to the culture.

Organizational culture develops over time and changes slowly. Although the long-time chief of OCFA retired several years ago, it is clear that some organizational culture issues are not new. For example, participants in several focus groups reported a culture that accepts bullying, harassment, and retaliation. When asked if these are recent developments, the focus group facilitators were told that some of these issues have been part of the organization for a long time, but were better controlled in the past by an Operations Chief that "ruled with an iron fist." Nonetheless, the employee survey revealed that currently, morale is low. Only 17% agree with the statement "Morale in the department is good," while 81% disagree.

One of the areas that Management Partners' team members were asked to examine was accountability. Accountability comes from clear expectations for performance consistently applied throughout the organization, as well as consistent, predictable consequences when those expectations are not met. Survey data, interviews, and focus groups all pointed to the fact that accountability is lacking throughout OCFA. Numerous examples were provided by employees at all levels of the organization in interviews, focus groups and the employee survey. However, executive leaders, including the chief, reported that their efforts to implement greater accountability have been met with significant resistance. While efforts to improve performance may generate initial resistance, most employees appreciate the benefits of enhanced accountability when they understand why it is important and see it is being administered consistently throughout the organization.

## Discipline

One consistent theme is that discipline is not timely or consistent.  During interviews and focus groups, individuals provided many examples of this.  We were told that disciplinary issues are not dealt with swiftly, the degree of discipline is sometimes perceived to be inappropriate, and often when an individual is disciplined, the union is able to have the discipline overturned because standards have been inconsistently applied.  (Two specific examples were provided: the fire marshal was at first given only a week's suspension in response to the Hazardous Materials billing problem, but was ultimately fired; a captain was disciplined for consistently not wearing a uniform, but the ruling was overturned after it was grieved by the union on the basis of inconsistency.)

The survey data from employees underscored this issue. When survey respondents were given five choices (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or don't know) about several statements, over three-fourths (78%) of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, "Individuals are held accountable for their actions."  Similarly, 56% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, "Department policies support accountability."

Perceptions of inconsistent discipline are not uncommon, particularly in large organizations.  According to OCFA's legal counsel, management is required to consider and act upon extenuating circumstances in all issues dealing with accountability.  Often these extenuating circumstances may not be known by the rest of the organization, inasmuch as personnel regulations and laws may prohibit their disclosure.  Obviously, some accountability issues have more serious consequences than others, but overall, it is clear that consistency in holding individuals accountable is perceived to be needed.

> **Recommendation 1.   Develop clear expectations for accountability as well as the consequences if individuals do not fulfill expectations.**

In addition to the lack of consistency, another issue that was raised fairly often was that investigations are not carried out in a timely manner. Several examples were provided by both management and employees, including the length of time to investigate the seatbelt violations/accident. Once a serious disciplinary issue has been identified, a timely and fair process for investigations is important.

Some large fire departments in the country (e.g., Los Angeles and Sacramento, California; Columbus, Ohio) use a Professional Standards

Unit (PSU) to undertake such investigations. A PSU serves as an impartial fact-finding unit whose primary purpose is to safeguard and enhance the integrity of the agency.

The unit receives and processes complaints against agency employees or procedures, insuring that employees are afforded due process; to insure uniformity in their application; and identifying training and supervisory needs.

The primary function of this unit is to investigate serious allegations of misconduct involving agency employees. The PSU is also responsible for monitoring the progress of all agency complaint investigations to ensure the efficient and timely completion of reports and maintaining a central repository for all complaints and complaint investigations. Data from this repository are collected and evaluated in order to identify problem areas.

The Professional Standards Unit should receive its assignments from, report to, and be under the direct supervision of the Fire Chief, with support from the Human Resources Division.

> **Recommendation 2. Establish a professional standards unit for investigating complaints (and reviewing chain-of-command investigations), reports of rule violations and employee misconduct, including complaints by residents.** Two employees should be trained as investigators for the unit. They are likely to need support from an administrative assistant.

> **Recommendation 3. Ensure investigations are conducted expediently and consistent with the California Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights.**

> **Recommendation 4. Establish a database to track investigations, recommendations, and actions taken.** This will help ensure consistency in holding individuals accountable and in the consequent disciplinary actions taken.

The unit should also establish procedures for the receipt and processing of compliments for programs and exceptional performance by employees that may prove worthy of an official commendation. Compliments received should be forwarded to the appropriate supervisor and in turn shared with the employee. Based on survey results, there is room for improvement in this area. Over two-thirds of survey respondents (69%)

disagree with the statement, "Quality performance is recognized and rewarded."

> **Recommendation 5.   Provide training to all supervisors about how to give positive and negative feedback to employees.** This could be done in conjunction with Recommendation 6, but should not be postponed for long.

## Performance Evaluation

Individual performance is directly related to accountability.  Best practices in personnel management require meaningful evaluations on a regular basis.  Performance evaluations are important for ensuring individuals understand expectations and helping them develop the skills necessary to be good employees.

At OCFA performance evaluations are not being done consistently, nor is state of the art methodology being used.  The data shows disparity in the organization with respect to how often individual performance is evaluated.  For example, some individuals in interviews and focus groups indicated that evaluations are "hit and miss." Over one quarter (29%) of the survey respondents disagreed with the statement, "My performance is evaluated regularly."

In addition, only 59% agreed that, "My performance evaluations provide constructive feedback for my professional development."  Several issues account for these survey results.  First, Management Partners' team members were told that the current performance evaluation form is 20 years old.  We reviewed the form and verified it is an outdated tool that definitely needs to be updated to encourage constructive feedback and help supervisors identify areas where employees excel and where improvements are needed.  Second, it is possible that some supervisors need training about how to provide constructive feedback.  The interim human resources director is well-aware of these needs and is working to identify a new performance evaluation system.

> **Recommendation 6.   Develop a timeline for choosing and implementing a new performance evaluation system.**

## Performance Measurement

In addition to measuring individual performance, evaluating whether programs are meeting intended goals and assessing efficiency and effectiveness through a performance measurement system is also

important. OCFA is collecting performance measurement data. However, based on interviews and focus groups, it is clear that performance data are not being shared and used effectively throughout the department. Several focus group participants indicated that some measures are not adding value or providing data to support important management information and decision making.  One comment brings the issue into focus, "Because so many activities are data-driven, people will do anything to be able to check a box."

Objective 1-A of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan is to "develop a comprehensive set of performance measures and targets for all internal and external services and programs delivered by the OCFA."  In follow-up discussions with OCFA management, it was acknowledged that some performance measures are not fully developed and are still being addressed.  The Fire Chief indicated that a dashboard is in the process of being developed. A "CompStat" style meeting to be held every Monday will focus on reviewing data.

Using measures to manage operations is a best practice.  However, best practices also dictate that performance measures should be meaningful and understandable to internal and external stakeholders. It is important to devote time to help employees understand the performance measurement system, the reasons data are being collected, and why continuous improvement is a goal of the OCFA.

> **Recommendation 7.   Provide training on the importance and use of performance measures so that everyone in the organization understands their function and purpose.**

To affect accountability, it is critical that management communicate with employees.  The next section of the report discusses communication.

# Communication

Communication was a major topic of conversation during interviews, focus groups, and on both the employee and Board surveys. Some of the issues relating to it were already acknowledged by OCFA executives and the Board. As a recent Board agenda item conveyed:

> *In our efforts to improve communications with a variety of audiences, from the public, to the Board, to our employees and our member agencies, the Executive Committee approved an agreement for strategic communications consulting with SAE Communications. SAE has worked with the OCFA from November 2013 through the end of January 2014, providing training, assisting with media relations, directing the communications aspects of numerous projects/issues, and preparing a comprehensive Work Program.*

Therefore it is important to note that some of the issues identified by Management Partners were also identified by SAE Communications and are part of their work plan. However, given our commitment to discussing all identified areas of concern, we provide the following observations and recommendations about internal communication with the Board and Executive Committee members as well as with OCFA staff.

## Board and Executive Committee Communication

The Chief meets regularly with the Board Chair and Vice Chair, but is less consistent in meeting individually with other members of the Executive Committee. An opportunity exists to improve communication by having regular individual meetings between the Chief and Executive Committee members. In fact, during interviews several Executive Committee members stated they would prefer more frequent meetings with the Chief. Similarly, some Board members would like to have more personal outreach and better communication from the Chief.

Responses to the Board survey question that asked, "What information do you find most valuable in facilitating good policy making and decision making?" mostly deal with communication. Reoccurring themes include:

- Well-written staff reports, data and projections
- Ability to communicate with staff directly regarding clarifications in reports and data
- Summaries highlighting the main findings of detailed reports and data
- Information provided to directors prior to Board meetings so that they may have time to read and take-in all information
- Complete budget and financial analysis

Some Board members also mentioned that they want to be notified in advance of OCFA-related events occurring in their jurisdiction. And, they want to be notified of significant issues or events before they are communicated to the media.

Several Board members we interviewed have had prior experience serving on other regional boards and drew comparisons about communication with OCFA executives. They reported that the engagement of the Chief in fostering Board/staff relationships is poor in comparison to level of involvement/contact they experience with executives of other regional governance bodies.

> **Recommendation 8.   Hold regular monthly one-on-one meetings with Executive Committee members and with other Board members at their request.** Doing so will help foster better relationships and will enable OCFA to be more attentive to the needs of the jurisdictions they serve**.**

## *Internal Communication with Staff*

Survey and focus group comments alike indicated that there is much room to improve communication. Over the course of this project, Management Partners' team members heard from many different individuals that the newspaper is the way they hear about important OCFA information instead of learning about things internally. Employees also rely on meetings and emails from their direct supervisors for information.

Survey results indicate that only 23% of the respondents agreed with the statement, "Department-wide communications are good," while 77% disagreed. Even fewer respondents (16%) agreed with the statement,

"Communication from management to safety staff is good." A total of 19% indicated they did not know, leaving 64% who disagreed. Similarly, 15% of respondents agreed with the statement, "Communication from management to non-safety staff is good." However, 51% indicated "Don't know/not applicable," which reflects the characteristics of the survey respondents.

As mentioned earlier, SAE Communications developed recommendations and a work plan, which should help improve internal communications. We offer the two ideas below because they relate directly to suggestions from focus groups, interviews, and/or survey comments.

**Recommendation 9.   Utilize video chats from the chief on a regular basis to convey important information.**

**Recommendation 10. Develop a written list of key messages to be shared following executive staff meetings, so all division chiefs and battalion chiefs have the same talking points and deliver the same message.**

# Organizational Structure

Management Partners' team members conducted a high-level review of the OCFA's organizational structure. The Fire Prevention Department was in flux at the time we began our work. Now called the Community Risk Reduction Department, the duties have been divided among several divisions and we agree with the organizational structure that has been implemented.

One area of concern expressed by both Board members and employees in focus groups and through surveys relates to the roles and responsibilities of the division chiefs. During focus groups, some expressed the opinion there are too many division chiefs. Although Management Partners does not agree with that assessment, we do agree that the role of a division chief warrants clarification. There are different interpretations about the role of the division chief internally and externally by the jurisdictions they serve, elected and appointed officials in those jurisdictions, and some OCFA Board members.

Division chiefs have vastly different spans of control, based on the number of stations, battalions, and special operations responsibilities they are assigned. In the past, special operations were not under the purview of division chiefs. Downsizing resulted in the assignments shown in Table 1.

Table 1.  *Division Responsibilities*

| Division | Number of Stations | Special Operations |
|---|---|---|
| Division 1  (Cities of Los Alamitos, Seal Beach, and Westminster) | 8 Stations (1 Battalion) | Responsible for Air Ops (Station 41) |
| Division 2 (City of Irvine) | 9 Stations (1 Battalion) | Responsible for Hazmat, Heavy Rescue 6 and the Airport (Station 33) One reserve station (Station 11, Emerald Bay) |
| Division 3  (Cities of Dana Point, Mission Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano) | 18 Stations (2 Battalions) | Responsible for Staffing and transfers Responsible for Handcrew (Station 18) One reserve station (Station 16) |
| Division 4  (Cities of Placentia, Tustin, Villa Park, and Yorba Linda) | 14 Stations (2 Battalions) | Responsible for Community Services and Training One reserve station (Station14) |

| Division | Number of Stations | Special Operations |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Division 5 (Cities of Aliso Viejo, Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest) | 6 Stations (1 Battalion) | Responsible for US&R, Swift Water and California Task Force 5 (CATF5) |
| Division 6 (City of Santa Ana) | 10 Stations (1 Battalion) | Responsible for EMS (1 MD, EMS coordinator and 6 Nurse Educators) |
| Division 7 (Cities of Buena Park, Cypress, La Palma, and Stanton) | 7 Stations (1 Battalion) | Responsible for CAL FIRE Agreements and Ops Budget |

**Recommendation 11. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the division chiefs.** This is important both inside OCFA and to the jurisdictions being served. Some cities expect that division chiefs will be at staff meetings and City Council meetings. Many division chiefs serve more than one jurisdiction and have conflicting meetings. If OCFA's expectations are consistent with the cities' expectations, implement Recommendation 12.

According to OCFA management, it is current practice for the on-duty battalion chief to attend City Council meetings or other jurisdictional events in the absence of the assigned division chief. Designating a specific battalion chief as an additional liaison with the jurisdiction would provide better continuity, however.

**Recommendation 12. When a division chief serves more than one jurisdiction, assign a battalion chief as an additional liaison for each jurisdiction.**

## *Specific Positions/Organizational Placement*

Battalion chief rotation emerged as a recurring theme from interviews and focus groups. Concerns were expressed about the length of rotations, whether certain battalion chief assignments should rotate at all, and how assignments are made, particularly for some staff positions considered to be "less desirable."

The memorandum of understanding (MOU) and the side letters with the Fire Management Unit (OCFA-COA) are completely silent on how rotations, assignments, and transfers to staff positions for battalion chiefs are to be handled. There also are no general orders or standard operating procedures for management rotation or assignment. Procedures for handling rotations and assignments should either be established or made more explicit.

> **Recommendation 13. Establish or make more explicit the procedures for rotating battalion chief positions.** This will ensure a fair and equitable system that meets department needs while providing opportunities for employee development.

A best practice for efficiency and effectiveness is to utilize non-sworn professionals for functions that do not require sworn credentials.  At least one position currently filled on a rotating basis by safety personnel (corporate communications) should be filled on a permanent basis by a professional with the appropriate credentials and experience.  Although OCFA is obligated to meet and confer with the OCFA-COA on the impacts, it should convert responsibility for corporate communications to a non-safety position. Other agencies, such as the City of Los Angeles Fire Department, are implementing similar changes for their communications functions.

> **Recommendation 14. Hire a communications professional to head the corporate communications function.**

It remains common, however, for public safety agencies to designate and train sworn personnel to function as public information officers during significant incidents or events.  Currently this responsibility falls on a single individual.  To ensure appropriate responsiveness to media inquiries without creating burnout, one sworn position per shift should be trained to respond to media inquiries.

> **Recommendation 15. Assign and train three captains (one per shift) with good communication skills to assist the head of corporate communications as PIOs when needed.**

It is our understanding that the community relations/education specialists were once part of the corporate communications function. They were moved out of communications into the Community Risk Reduction Department in the recent past. The job descriptions of the community relations/education specialists are appropriate; their work should be directed by the head of the division to ensure they are spending time on the right subjects and representing OCFA to the widest possible reaches of the community. The community educators should serve as ambassadors to the community and should help be the face of the department. Based on their job descriptions and OCFA's needs, it is more appropriate for them to be part of Corporate Communications.

**Recommendation 16. Assign the community relations/education specialists to the Corporate Communications Division.**

**Recommendation 17. Develop a corporate communications calendar that details the community risk reduction strategy of the department.**

# Labor/Management Relations

Management Partners' team members conducted a high-level review of several MOUs and found them to be unusually lengthy with numerous side letters. During focus groups, interviews, and in comments on some surveys, individuals indicated that many policies are union-driven and that management rights have been given up over the years. Lack of experience in upper management, combined with strength of the union is seen as a limitation/weakness by the Board. OCFA has hired an outside labor negotiator for the first time in its history, which is seen as positive by Board members, but negative by some staff.

We have found that portions of the language in some side letters are inconsistent and can be confusing. As a result, some interpretations, which get discussed among staff, are incorrect. For example, a side letter to the MOU with the Orange County Professional Firefighters Association (OCPFA) allows a total of 15 vacancies for captains, engineers and for firefighters. Yet, some individuals in OCFA believe the agreement requires vacancies in each category. Regardless, it is clear that the captain vacancies create accountability issues and disciplinary issues.

> **Recommendation 18. Fill the vacant captain positions as soon as possible.** Doing so will strengthen leadership and help add consistency with discipline.

The Emergency Command Center staffing schedule and deployment, combined with lack of clarity in MOU language governing sleep and rest time, allows overtime to be manipulated. According to the General and Supervisory Management Unit MOU, staff at the Command Center work a 24-hour shift, of which 17 hours are paid. One of the paid hours is for meal time (although the MOU further states that "sleep time and meal time shall not be paid unless interrupted"). Employees are entitled to 90 minutes of paid rest or break time per day ("15 minutes for each four consecutive hours of work"). The practice is for employees to have six hours of sleep time per shift, although the exact number of sleep hours is unspecified in the MOU. The lack of clarity in the MOU results in members being able to take one hour of vacation or sick leave and get

seven hours off duty.  This in turn results in seven hours of overtime backfill.  A more cost-effective staffing arrangement should be negotiated.

> **Recommendation 19. Negotiate a more cost-effective shift schedule for employees in the Emergency Command Center.  Clarify language in the MOU.**

The existing MOU with the General and Supervisory Management Unit (Orange County Employees Association) establishes a "Joint Labor-Management Committee" whose purpose is to "discuss, explore, study, and resolve problems" referred by either labor or management.  This is a common practice for enhancing labor-management relations that is missing from the other MOUs.

> **Recommendation 20. Establish joint labor-management committees for all labor associations.**

The cost of labor and unfunded pension liabilities represent a significant concern to Board members.  It is appropriate for these concerns to be discussed with the City's negotiator as part of an overall labor negotiations strategy.

## Leadership Development and Succession Planning

In government agencies throughout the country, baby boomers have been retiring in record numbers.  The recent economic recession and resulting fiscal constraints have compounded the problem. Local government agencies have had to reduce personnel to adjust their budgets. The result for many is a lack of "bench strength" at the upper and middle management levels.  Yet, customers expect the same high quality service from these agencies and OCFA is no different.

For example, significant retirements at the top levels have left a void in OCFA's institutional memory and have resulted in some changes in executive leadership.  Of the executive team members, two have been in their position less than three years.  In addition, two of seven division chiefs are on probation and have served for less than two years as division chiefs.  Lower ranks have also suffered.

During interviews and in focus groups, a recurring theme was that good people do not want to be promoted, particularly above the rank of captain.  This is not a problem unique to OCFA.  However a contributing factor is the significant amount of overtime available.  It was pointed out that captains make more money with less responsibility because of overtime pay.  However, if OCFA fills all vacant captain positions as detailed in Recommendation 18 of this report, less overtime will be required to provide adequate coverage, which in turn will reduce opportunities to earn excessive amounts of overtime.  This may make promotions more desirable.

As of February 2014, the Orange County Fire Authority employed 281 division chiefs, battalion chiefs, and captains. To help assess the succession planning needs, Management Partners asked OCFA staff to provide data detailing the age and years of employment for every chief and captain currently employed. Safety employees in the OCFA are eligible for retirement by age 50.  Table 2 shows the number and percentage of division chiefs, battalion chiefs, and captains eligible for retirement in the next four years.  As of February 2014, approximately 43% of these managers are eligible for retirement. Based on current data,

by 2017 almost two-thirds of current management (64%) will be eligible for retirement.

Table 2.  *Percentage of Fire Managers Eligible for Retirement from 2014 to 2017*

| Rank | Current Total | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | | 2017 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| **Division Chief** | 7 | 4 | 57% | 5 | 71% | 5 | 71% | 6 | 86% |
| **Battalion Chief** | 36 | 14 | 39% | 24 | 67% | 29 | 81% | 32 | 89% |
| **Captain** | 238 | 103 | 43% | 116 | 49% | 125 | 53% | 142 | 60% |
| **Total** | 281 | 121 | 43% | 145 | 52% | 159 | 57% | 180 | 64% |

OCFA does not have a formal succession plan.  This is of concern to the Board, particularly for the executive level positions.  For most administrative positions, past succession has been insular and traditional, mainly "rising through the ranks."  One exception has been new staff incorporated from Santa Ana, which some described as positive because they have added a different perspective and the ability to identify and implement improvements.

Many survey participants commented on the "good old boy network," citing favoritism in promotions.  It was reported that "skipping of ranks" has occurred with some being promoted to captain without being an engineer. This has caused problems and perceptions of favoritism, even though the job specification for captain does not require service as an engineer. Similarly, focus group participants consistently mentioned favoritism in promoting individuals and in some cases, detailed cases where individuals were "prohibited" from applying for open positions. Obviously, such practices should not be tolerated.

According to executive management, all open positions are posted on NeoGov and on OCFA's SharePoint site.  Both of these resources are accessible to any employee.  Consequently, while employees may have been discouraged from applying for promotional opportunities, supervisors do not have the authority to prohibit someone from submitting an application.

**Recommendation 21. Evaluate the selection and promotion process to ensure all hiring practices are nondiscriminatory and fair.** This will help reduce the perceptions of favoritism and ensure the best applicants are hired.

One of the side letters with the General and Supervisory Management Employees Unit establishes an "Advisory Promotional Process Review Committee" that met in 2011 to review promotional selection procedures and submit mutually agreeable recommendations to the Fire Chief. A similar approach could be taken to address concerns with the promotional process for safety members.

**Recommendation 22. Establish an Advisory Promotional Process Review Committee to develop recommendations for improving the promotional selection process for safety positions.**

With large numbers of retirements on the horizon, developing a succession plan to address the future is critical to support the ability of those not retiring to have the skills needed for promotion or lateral moves into other positions. Elements of a good succession plan include:

- Developing a corporate-wide framework that is understood, supported and accessible;
- Assessing organizational needs on a regular basis;
- Identifying job requirements and competencies that are needed for each critical position;
- Creating training and professional development opportunities that allow existing staff to acquire the skills and competencies to compete for promotional opportunities;
- Identifying critical positions in the organization (including those with special certifications or positions that are particularly hard to fill) for special attention regarding training and development;
- Assessing and identifying talent;
- Supporting change and knowledge transfer as the organization changes; and
- Funding and coordinating an implementation strategy through Human Resources so that succession planning aligns with overall OCFA objectives.

The traditional approach of filling positions is the "just in time" method of beginning a recruitment process once someone has announced his/her retirement. The best practice approach is to engage employees several

years before they expect to retire in the process of planning for their succession. This allows time to cultivate competencies within the existing workforce and can prevent significant institutional knowledge from disappearing as larger numbers of people leave in a compressed period of time. Organizations are also documenting institutional knowledge where possible, providing for overlap from the incumbent to the new person in a position, and mentoring candidates in advance so they will be ready to take on higher-level responsibilities. Doing so minimizes the uncertainty experienced by staff and helps achieve the goal of seamless delivery of quality services.

> **Recommendation 23. Develop a formal succession plan for executive and senior management positions.**

> **Recommendation 24. Create opportunities for cross-training, job shadowing, officer training, professional development, and mentoring.** Providing overlap is also important to ensure continuity of programming and management.

OCFA used to provide a Leadership Institute to prepare staff for management and supervisory positions. Reports are that it was effective in developing staff for future leadership. The Institute was discontinued in 2008 due to budget concerns. A similar curriculum is now available through the International Leadership and Ethics Institute (ILEI). However, it is not clear how individuals were chosen to participate (due to loss of institutional memory). Guidelines for participation should be developed if this resource is made available to OCFA managers.

Within the past year a leadership training program provided by Foxhole Leadership has been implemented. Because space is limited, individuals must apply to participate. According to executive management, the intent is to continue this program as long as funding remains available.

> **Recommendation 25. Explore the feasibility of providing additional leadership development.** Offering leadership development opportunities such as the curriculum from the former OCFA Leadership Institute is a key element of an effective succession plan.

# Board Development

Similar to the tenure of OCFA executives, the OCFA Board does not have the benefit of years of continuity. In fact, currently 60% of the Board has served for two years or less. Because of the way Board members are appointed, turnover has resulted in a lack of knowledge by some about OCFA policies and procedures and differences in perceived roles and responsibilities.

Based on survey results, Board members agree that their role is to represent the interests of all communities being served by OCFA, in addition to their own community. However, one-third (33.4%) disagree that their role is to be an advocate for OCFA and the services it provides and 16% believe their role is to be involved in OCFA operations. These results indicate there is a need to clarify Board roles.

During interviews, Management Partners heard that chief executives of other regional agencies are more proactive in helping board members understand their roles and responsibilities. Two strategies, a more robust board orientation and offering one-on-one meetings to discuss board member concerns or OCFA policies, would be helpful to board members.

Although 82% of the respondents agreed with the statement, "The information I received during my orientation as a Board member helped me understand the expectations of a Board member," interviews revealed that this is not the case. Some Board members reported they had not received any orientation or briefing. They mentioned it would be good to have an overview of the budget and strategic plan, as well as a discussion about board-level policies and procedures. Even though Board members may serve for more than one year, it is a best practice to review roles and responsibilities annually.

> **Recommendation 26. Review information with Board members on an annual basis that stresses their roles and responsibilities, including Board norms for behavior.**

> **Recommendation 27. Provide an in-depth orientation for new Board members within 30 days of appointment.**

A common theme from interviews is that Board members should be more empowered and engaged in their policy-making role. Suggestions include:

- More frequent Board meetings (meeting once per month instead of once every two months)
- Distribution of committee appointments to more Board members, so they have a reason to be more engaged. (Currently only 11 out of 25 Board members have committee appointments. Five additional Board members are identified as alternates to the Executive Committee.)

Committee appointments are made solely by the Chair. The perception is that the Chair appoints people he likes and feels comfortable with.

**Recommendation 28. Authorize the Chair to make recommendations to Committee appointments, with ratification by the full Board.**

One last theme from Board surveys and interviews was a desire expressed by OCFA Board members for better Board member behavior during meetings. Specifically, individuals mentioned concerns about unprofessional and rude behavior. Lack of civility and respect in public meetings erodes public confidence and trust. Many boards have discussions about norms to gain consensus about the "dos and don'ts" of conduct during meetings to ensure their business is conducted professionally and efficiently.

**Recommendation 29. Establish Board norms for behavior.**

## Conclusion

The Orange County Fire Authority is an organization dedicated to continuous improvement. As this study highlighted, although OCFA has the elements of an effective management system in place, they are not being used consistently and regularly throughout the organization to guide employee decision making or behavior.

The recommendations contained in this report suggest improvements to improve accountability, the organizational structure, labor/management relations, leadership development and succession planning, and Board development. Thoughtful implementation of the recommendations will have a positive impact on the organization and benefit the local governments, customers, and employees alike.

# Attachment A – List of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.**    Develop clear expectations for accountability as well as the consequences if individuals do not fulfill expectations.

**Recommendation 2.**    Establish a professional standards unit for investigating complaints (and reviewing chain-of-command investigations), reports of rule violations and employee misconduct, including complaints by residents.

**Recommendation 3.**    Ensure investigations are conducted expediently and consistent with the California Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights.

**Recommendation 4.**    Establish a database to track investigations, recommendations, and actions taken.

**Recommendation 5.**    Provide training to all supervisors about how to give positive and negative feedback to employees.

**Recommendation 6.**    Develop a timeline for choosing and implementing a new performance evaluation system.

**Recommendation 7.**    Provide training on the importance and use of performance measures so that everyone in the organization understands their function and purpose.

**Recommendation 8.**    Hold regular monthly one-on-one meetings with Executive Committee members and with other Board members at their request.

**Recommendation 9.**    Utilize video chats from the chief on a regular basis to convey important information.

**Recommendation 10.**    Develop a written list of key messages to be shared following executive staff meetings, so all division chiefs and battalion chiefs have the same talking points and deliver the same message.

**Recommendation 11.**    Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the division chiefs.

**Recommendation 12.**    When a division chief serves more than one jurisdiction, assign a battalion chief as an additional liaison for each jurisdiction.

**Recommendation 13.**    Establish or make more explicit the procedures for rotating battalion chief positions.

**Recommendation 14.**    Hire a communications professional to head the corporate communications function.

**Recommendation 15.**    Assign and train three captains (one per shift) with good communication skills to assist the head of corporate communications as PIOs when needed.

**Recommendation 16.**    Assign the community relations/education specialists to the Corporate Communications Division.

**Recommendation 17.**    Develop a corporate communications calendar that details the community risk reduction strategy of the department.

**Recommendation 18.**    Fill the vacant captain positions as soon as possible.  Doing so will strengthen leadership and help add consistency with discipline.

**Recommendation 19.    Negotiate a more cost-effective shift schedule for employees in the Emergency Command Center.**

**Recommendation 20.    Establish joint labor-management committees for all labor associations.**

**Recommendation 21.    Evaluate the selection and promotion process to ensure all hiring practices are nondiscriminatory and fair.**

**Recommendation 22.    Establish an Advisory Promotional Process Review Committee to develop recommendations for improving the promotional selection process for safety positions.**

**Recommendation 23.    Develop a formal succession plan for executive and senior management positions.**

**Recommendation 24.    Create opportunities for cross-training, job shadowing, officer training, professional development, and mentoring.**

**Recommendation 25.    Explore the feasibility of providing additional leadership development.**

**Recommendation 26.    Review information with Board members on an annual basis that stresses their roles and responsibilities, including Board norms for behavior.**

**Recommendation 27.    Provide an in-depth orientation for new Board members within 30 days of appointment.**

**Recommendation 28.    Authorize the Chair to make recommendations to Committee appointments, with ratification by the full Board.**

**Recommendation 29.    Establish Board norms for behavior.**

# Attachment B – OCFA Board of Directors Survey Results

In January 2014 OCFA Board members were asked to complete Management Partners' survey via Survey Monkey. Of the 25 Board members, 21 began filling out the survey while 19 finished the survey in its entirety.

## Question 1: How long have you served on the OCFA Board of Directors?

Table 3.    *Length of Service on the Board of Directors*

| How long have you served on the OCFA Board of Directors? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | Response Percent | Response Count |
| **Less than 1 year** | 15% | 3 |
| **One to two years** | 45% | 9 |
| **Three or more years** | 40% | 8 |
| *answered question* | | 20 |
| *skipped question* | | 1 |

Of the directors who responded, 60% have been on the Board for two years or less.

## Question 2: Thinking about the OCFA, what are its organizational strengths as a regional agency?

Of the 21 survey participants, 18 answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding OCFA's organizational strengths include:

- Great economies of scale for the resources needed when it comes to manpower, training, equipment, routine fire/EMS calls, and mutual aid
- Great recognition and respect for providing first-rate fire/EMS services
- Representative of the diverse community

Other responses regarding OCFA's organizational strengths include:

- Good community relationships
- Experienced and well-managed administration

## Question 3: What are the limitations or weaknesses of the OCFA?

Out of the 21 participants, 18 answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding OCFA's limitations and weaknesses include:

- Lack of adequate succession planning and employee development to replace the loss of knowledge and experience from retirements
- Lack of clear corporate communication between Board, management, and line staff
- Large size of the Board increases bureaucracy, redundancy from work already done in committees and makes decision making more difficult
- Lack of investment in technology – automated and computerized systems are antiquated or missing from a modern fire department

Other responses regarding OCFA's limitations and weaknesses include:

- Some member cities would like their own municipal fire departments
- OCFA fails to establish itself as a regional public safety entity, not just fire
- Administration is understaffed
- Committee assignments are limited to the favor of the Chair
- Influence of the labor unions restricts ability of management to better operate and staff the organization

## Question 4: What opportunities exist for the future? What should OCFA be concentrating on as an organization?

Out of the 21 participants, 18 answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding OCFA's limitations and weaknesses include:

- Determining how to improve corporate communication within the organization, the media, and the general public
- Identifying ways to decrease debt, the budget deficit, and retirement costs
- Working with the labor unions to lower labor costs
- Use the OCFA's great reputation to seek an increase in membership with other cities and agencies
- Need to better improve succession planning to maintain quality management and leadership
- Establishing a long-term plan with goals and performance standards to measure annual performance of the Board and administration

Other responses regarding OCFA's limitations and weaknesses include:

- How to better improve fire/EMS field services with advanced technology
- Evaluate administrative needs of the organization and their impact on fire service

## Question 5: What issues threaten the OCFA?

Out of the 21 participants, 18 answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding threatening issues include:

- Pension liability
- Personnel costs reducing the availability of resources needed for present and future equipment, facility, and infrastructure needs
- Labor MOU obligations
- Poor management of staff which has led to poor communication, teamwork, and morale

Other responses regarding threatening issues include:

- Increased costs to members
- Conflict between Board members and their direction to the Chief and his administration
- Anti-public agency sentiments and perception from the County, media, and public
- Lack of engagement and accountability for certain Board members
- Lack of administrative support and resources

## Question 6: Board Roles and Responsibilities

Table 4. *Degree of Agreement or Disagreement*

| For each of the following statements please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree. | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree or Agree | % | Strongly Disagree or Disagree | % | Response Count |
| I believe one of my duties as an OCFA Board member is to represent the interests of my community. | 19 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| I believe one of my duties as a Board member is to represent the interests of all communities being served by OCFA. | 19 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| OCFA provides me with information that I need to fulfill my role as a Board member. | 14 | 78% | 4 | 22% | 18 |
| The information I received during my orientation as a Board member helped me understand the expectations of a Board member. | 14 | 82% | 3 | 18% | 17 |
| The information I receive from OCFA staff supports my ability to provide effective policy direction and decision making as a Board member. | 14 | 78% | 4 | 22% | 18 |
| My role is to be an advocate for OCFA and the services it provides. | 12 | 67% | 6 | 33% | 18 |
| My role is to be involved in the OCFA operations. | 3 | 17% | 15 | 83% | 18 |
| *answered question* | | | | | 19 |
| *skipped question* | | | | | 2 |

Statements that the majority of the Board agreed with include:

- 100% agree that one of their duties is to represent the interests of their respective communities
- 100% agree that one of their duties is to represent the interests of all communities served by the OCFA
- 78% agree that the OCFA provides information necessary to fulfill the role of a Board member
- 82% agree that the information received during orientation helped to understand the expectations of a Board member
- 78% agree that the information received from OCFA staff supports effective policy and decision making as a Board member
- 67% agree that one of their duties is to be an advocate for OCFA

Statements that the majority of the Board disagreed with include:

- 83% disagree that their role is to be involved in the OCFA operations


## Question 7: What information do you find most valuable in facilitating good policy making and decision making?

Out of the 21 participants, 17 answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding vital information in decision making include:

- Well-written staff reports, data and projections
- Ability to communicate with staff directly regarding clarifications in reports and data
- Summaries highlighting the main findings of detailed reports and data
- Information provided to directors prior to Board meetings so that they may have time to read and take-in all information

Other responses regarding vital information in decision making include:

- Roundtable discussion with all departments within the OCFA
- Notification of media involvement
- Complete budget and financial analysis
- Updates from the legal and administrative staff
- Financial background for recommendations; scientific background for decisions
- Opportunities for field/hands-on experience to better understand issues regarding equipment, stations/facilities

**Question 8: If there is information that you are not currently receiving that you would like to have to facilitate good policy making and decision making, please describe it.**

Out of the 21 participants, 14 answered this question.

Most responses indicated they do not need additional information aside from what they receive already from the Chief and staff.

Other general requests include:

- Comprehensive analysis of pension liability projected out
- Calendar of events as a part of every Agenda Packet
- Copies of every contract that Board members are asked to approve

**Question 9: Is there information about OCFA activities in your community that you would like to receive that you are not currently receiving?**

Table 5.    *Additional Information on OCFA Community Activities*

| Is there information about OCFA activities in your community that you would like to receive that you are not currently receiving? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | Response Percent | Response Count |
| **Yes** | 32% | 6 |
| **No** | 68% | 13 |
| *answered question* | | 19 |
| *skipped question* | | 2 |

The majority of respondents indicated there is no additional information they would like to receive regarding OCFA community activities.

**Question 10: What kinds of information would you like to receive that you do not currently receive?**

Out of the 21 participants, seven answered this question.

Reoccurring responses regarding other desired information include:

- Information and detail regarding emergency and high-profile incidents

Other responses regarding other desired information include:

- Advanced notice of monthly events and presentations involving OCFA participation, preferably events listed by district so that Board members can especially anticipate attending events in their own district
- Workers' compensation claims
- Overtime compensation information

## Question 11: Please provide any suggestions you have for improving the effectiveness of decision making by the OCFA Board of Directors.

Out of the 21 participants, 17 answered this question.

Reoccurring suggestions for improvement include:

- Stronger structure and guidelines (Roberts Rules of Order) for running Board and committee meetings so as to use time more efficiently
- Keep discussions on topic
- Maintain civility, and
- Manage meeting time

Other suggestions for improvement include:

- Team building workshops or retreat
- Board needs to practice staying on policy matters and not to attend to every minor media or political sentiment or issue
- Having the Board stray from micro management and focus on policy decisions
- Committee assignments should be determined based upon qualifications rather than Chair's preference (five Board members have four or more committee assignments while 14 have none)

## Question 12: How often would you like to meet with the Chief and/or other senior OCFA staff? What length of time would you want to spend in this meeting?

Out of the 21 participants, 18 answered this question.

Reoccurring suggestions for frequency of meetings with the Chief/senior staff include:

- Monthly, for 30 to 60 minutes, or as needed
- Twice a year with the Chief and/or his Leadership Team, for an hour, or as needed
- Flexibility to host meetings as frequently or as long as necessary depending on the activity and topic
- No suggestions to change the status quo due to the availability of the Chief and his senior staff to answer questions when they arise

Other suggestions for frequency of meetings with the Chief/senior staff include:

- Quarterly, 30 to 60 minutes

# Attachment C – OCFA Employee Survey Results

Through the month of January 2014, OCFA employees were asked to complete a survey via Survey Monkey. Of 1,425 possible responses, 532 employees responded (37% response rate). The survey asked participants about their opinions on a wide range of issues related to staffing, supervision, accountability and communication.

As Table 6 shows, positive responses regarding how employees view staffing issues include:

- 52% agree that the department performs a good job recruiting safety staff
- 67% agree that the department performs a good job retaining safety staff
- 70% agree that the department has sufficient promotional opportunities

Negative responses regarding how employees view staffing issues include:

- 58% disagree that supervisory staffing is the right size
- 65% disagree that their department recognizes employees appropriately
- 81% disagree that employee morale is good
- 75% disagree that succession planning meets the department's needs

Table 6.   *OCFA Staffing Issues*

| Please review the following list of statements about OCFA staffing issues and indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.  If you don't know, you can indicate that as well. | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Don't Know / Not Applicable** | **Response Count** |
| **1. Supervisory staffing is the right size to meet department needs.** | 5.9% (31) | 31.5% (165) | 30.7% (161) | 26.9% (141) | 5.0% (26) | 524 |
| **2. Our department does a good job recruiting safety staff.** | 7.7% (40) | 44.6% (233) | 19.9% (104) | 12.6% (66) | 15.1% (79) | 522 |
| **3. Our department does a good job recruiting non-safety staff.** | 1.9% (10) | 31.4% (164) | 21.4% (112) | 15.3% (80) | 30.0% (157) | 523 |
| **4. Our department does a good job retaining safety staff.** | 18.1% (94) | 48.5% (251) | 10.6% (55) | 7.9% (41) | 14.9% (77) | 518 |
| **5. Our department does a good job retaining non-safety staff.** | 6.7% (35) | 35.1% (182) | 16.2% (84) | 8.5% (44) | 33.5% (174) | 519 |
| **6. Our department has sufficient promotional opportunities.** | 18.6% (97) | 51.7% (270) | 12.5% (65) | 14.6% (76) | 2.7% (14) | 522 |
| **7. Our department recognizes employees appropriately.** | 3.5% (18) | 27.6% (144) | 34.2% (178) | 30.9% (161) | 3.8% (20) | 521 |
| **8. Employee morale in the department is good.** | 0.4% (2) | 16.8% (88) | 36.5% (191) | 45.0% (236) | 1.3% (7) | 524 |
| **9. Succession planning meets the needs of our department.** | 0.4% (2) | 11.5% (60) | 36.5% (191) | 38.0% (199) | 13.6% (71) | 523 |
| *answered question* | | | | | | *530* |
| *skipped question* | | | | | | 2 |

As Table 7 shows, 54% agree that their department policies and procedures are clear. However, the negative responses regarding how employees view the OCFA organization far outweighed the positive.  These include:
- 54% disagree that teamwork within OCFA is good
- 77% disagree that department-wide communications are good
- 68% disagree that employees are empowered to make decisions
- 64% disagree that communication from management to safety staff is good

Table 7.    *Organization, Communication, and Support Services*

| Please review the following list of statements about OCFA organization, communication and support services and indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. If you don't know, you can indicate that as well. | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't Know / Not Applicable | Response Count |
| 1. Teamwork within OCFA is good. | 3.9% (20) | 41.1% (209) | 34.8% (177) | 18.9% (96) | 1.2% (6) | 508 |
| 2. Department-wide communications are good. | 1.2% (6) | 21.4% (109) | 45.8% (233) | 31.2% (159) | 0.4% (2) | 509 |
| 3. Employees are empowered to make decisions. | 2.0% (10) | 28.3% (143) | 40.8% (206) | 27.3% (138) | 1.6% (8) | 505 |
| 4. Communication from management to safety staff is good. | 1.0% (5) | 15.2% (77) | 32.7% (166) | 31.8% (161) | 19.3% (98) | 507 |
| 5. Communication from management to non-safety staff is good. | 1.0% (5) | 14.1% (72) | 18.8% (96) | 15.3% (78) | 50.8% (259) | 510 |
| 6. Department policies and procedures are clear. | 4.1% (21) | 49.9% (253) | 31.2% (158) | 14.2% (72) | 0.6% (3) | 507 |
| 7. New employee orientation is adequate. | 5.3% (27) | 35.0% (178) | 20.6% (105) | 15.5% (79) | 23.6% (120) | 509 |
| *answered question* | | | | | | 513 |
| *skipped question* | | | | | | 19 |

As Table 8 shows, the majority of respondents agree that emails from their supervisor, emails from the Fire Chief, meetings with their supervisors, and internal announcements were the most common forms of communication.

Table 8.    *Formal Methods of Communication*

| What formal methods of communication are used to convey important information about OCFA? (Check all that apply.) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Email from my supervisor | 79% | 407 |
| Meeting with my supervisor | 61% | 311 |

| What formal methods of communication are used to convey important information about OCFA? (Check all that apply.) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Email from the Fire Chief | 69% | 356 |
| All hands department meetings or briefings | 25% | 130 |
| Division meetings or briefings | 21% | 106 |
| Communication from Labor association leadership | 38% | 196 |
| Internal newsletter/announcements | 50% | 258 |
| Other (please specify) | 16% | 84 |
| answered question | | 513 |
| skipped question | | 19 |

Table 9 shows that the top three preferred means of communication are:

- Meeting with my supervisor (41%)
- All hands department meetings or briefings (17%)
- Email from my supervisor (13%)

Table 9.    *Preferred Methods of Communication*

| Of the formal communication mechanisms listed below, which do you prefer? (Please select one.) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Email from my supervisor | 13% | 68 |
| Meeting with my supervisor | 41% | 208 |
| Email from the Fire Chief | 8% | 42 |
| All hands department meetings or briefings | 17% | 84 |
| Division meetings or briefings | 8% | 38 |
| Communication from Labor association leadership | 4% | 20 |
| Internal newsletter/announcements | 4% | 19 |
| Other (please specify) | 5% | 27 |
| *answered question* | | 506 |
| *skipped question* | | 26 |

Table 10 shows the following positive responses regarding how employees view accountability and performance:

- 88% agree that they understand what is expected of them in their day-to-day duties
- 71% agree that their performance is evaluated regularly
- 59% agree that their performance evaluations provide constructive feedback for their professional development

Negative responses regarding how employees view accountability and performance include:

- 78% disagree that individuals are held accountable for their actions
- 56% disagree that department policies support accountability
- 69% disagree that quality performance is recognized and rewarded

Table 10.  *Accountability and Performance Issues*

| Please review the following list of statements about OCFA accountability and performance issue areas and indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. If you don't know, you can indicate that as well. | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Don't Know/ Not Applicable** | **Response Count** |
| **1. Individuals are held accountable for their actions.** | 0.8% (4) | 18.6% (95) | 37.7% (193) | 40.4% (207) | 2.5% (13) | 512 |
| **2. Department policies support accountability.** | 1.4% (7) | 39.9% (204) | 32.9% (168) | 22.7% (116) | 3.1% (16) | 511 |
| **3. Quality performance is recognized and rewarded.** | 1.4% (7) | 27.1% (138) | 43.9% (224) | 24.9% (127) | 2.7% (14) | 510 |
| **4. I understand what is expected of me in my day-to-day duties.** | 23.7% (121) | 64.1% (327) | 8.6% (44) | 3.3% (17) | 0.2% (1) | 510 |
| **5. My performance is evaluated regularly.** | 13.1% (67) | 57.7% (295) | 16.2% (83) | 10.2% (52) | 2.7% (14) | 511 |
| **6. My performance evaluations provide constructive feedback for my professional development.** | 10.8% (55) | 48.1% (245) | 22.8% (116) | 14.1% (72) | 4.1% (21) | 509 |
| *answered question* | | | | | | 513 |
| *skipped question* | | | | | | 19 |

As Figure 2 shows, almost one-fourth of respondents (23%) have been with OCFA for six to ten years, followed by 11 to 15 years (19%), and one to five years (13%). Overall, approximately 58% of employees have been with OCFA for 15 years or less.

*Figure 2.    Length of Employment*
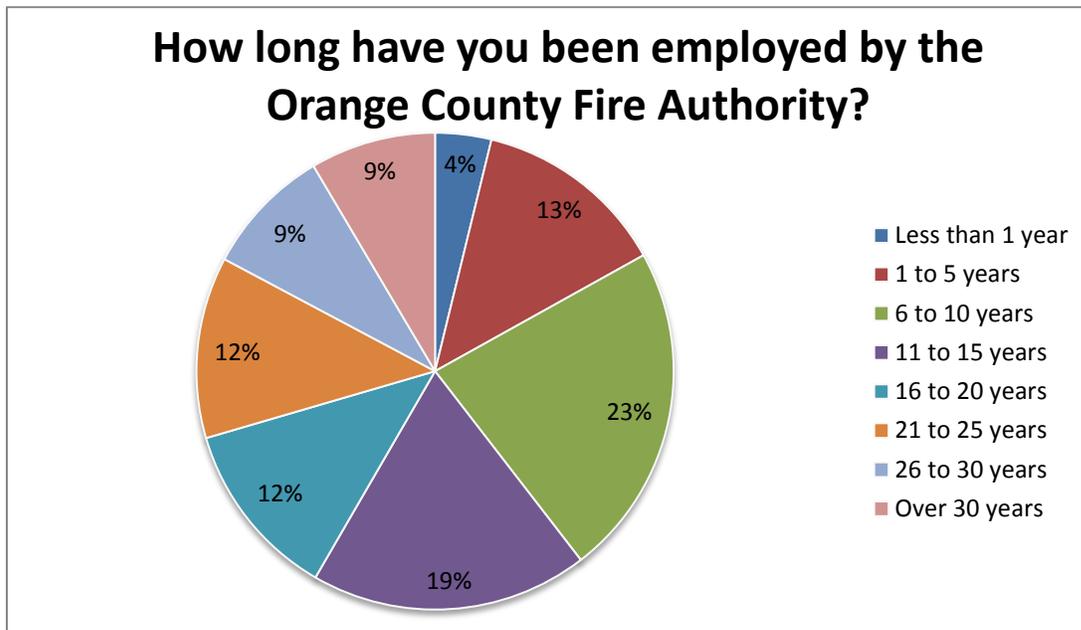


*Table 11.  Employee Job Classification*

| Which of the following describe your position with the OCFA? (Please check all that apply.) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | Response Percent | Response Count |
| **Firefighter** | 24% | 116 |
| **Engineer** | 13% | 62 |
| **Captain** | 25% | 121 |
| **Battalion or Division Chief** | 7% | 34 |
| **Any other Chief level title** | 1% | 5 |
| **Non-safety staff member** | 23% | 110 |
| **Non-safety manager or supervisor** | 10% | 47 |
| **Other** | 4% | 19 |
| *answered question* | | 486 |
| *skipped question* | | 46 |

*Note: Respondents could check more than one option, which is why data total more than 100%.*

Over half (283) of the respondents provided comments in addition to completing the questions on the survey.  Comments were quite varied, ranging from suggested improvements to complaints about past issues to illustrate a survey response.  All were considered as Management Partners' team members completed their work on this project.

## Attachment D – Focus Group Summary

Seven employee focus groups were held on January 29 and 30.  A total of 38 employees and one representative from the Orange County Employees Association participated.  The seven groups were:

- Division Chiefs
- Battalion Chiefs
- Captains
- Chief Officers Association
- Union 3631
- Administrative (non-safety)
- Orange County Employees Association

Each group was asked for their input about what is working well and what needs to be improved. A plus sign (+) indicates comments about what is working well. Bullets (•) reflect opportunities or suggestions for improvement.  The intent of the focus groups was not to strive for consensus, but to capture as many perspectives as possible.  This summary does not include duplicative comments, i.e., comments that were mentioned in multiple groups have been listed only once.

### Organizational Structure

- + Everyone pulls together in bad times
- + Leadership is strong; good span of control
- + Chief is doing a good job with making the changes he was hired to do
- + Dynamic team in Service Center
- + Chief has good presence for administrative staff
- + Spans of control in OCFA are appropriate
- + BCs reporting to DCs = good span of control
- + Fire chief and executive management structure is solid
- + Biggest battalions have 10 stations (this is the max and it is fine)
- + Fire Chief has stated that DCs are the local fire chiefs – positive, empowerment
- + Fire prevention – improved greatly in past four months (slow but obvious)
- + Overall department structure works
- + USAR team is a success; this is a complex area, but captain running it is doing a great job

### Leadership

- + Assistant Chief for Business Services – honest, integrity, no games and the only competent one
- • Lack of leadership

- There are more managers than leaders for some BC positions, people either aren't a good fit or are obviously just passing through
- Union runs more of the department than it should – more than hours, wages, etc. They weigh in on every decision
- Chief style = business
    - Results in misunderstanding
    - "Harmony in the ranks" wasn't really true, it was circumstance during good financial times – no one said "NO"
- Chief puts a wedge between divisions, e.g., between Ops and Dispatch
- Deputy chief not a leader, not active
- Turnover in executive operations (Assistant Chief?) = three years and out
- Lack of support from upper management
- Misplaced trust in leaders without appropriate knowledge (e.g., gave Fire Prevention Chief the job of writing task book for Ops – No ops experience – chosen because she "raised her hand," not for knowledge)
- Used to have committees that allowed buy-in – abolished them


**General Comments Relating to the OCFA Organization**
- Previously OCFA was a best practice organization, but no longer
- We had a customer services emphasis 15-18 years ago
- Fewer resources, but adding programs
- Fire Prevention couldn't handle inspections, so it went to BCs – no workload adaptation
- Organization has become data-driven, but there is no support for non-data-driven factors (e.g., training)
- Santa Ana increased OCFA by 25% but there was no increase in support
- In training, reporting should be directly to an Ops Chief, not Division Chief (roadblock)
- Lack of IT expertise to support critical systems and too many contractors – e.g., Banner - expert is a contractor, only one person
- Too many job classifications – lots of dead ends in some jobs; no career ladders
- Should not need to only follow chain of command to put forth good ideas
- Too many managers in some areas
- Keep staff rotations – needed to understand the organization and develop relationships; provides the balance
- As you go down the chart, some things don't make sense (e.g., educators in IT; supervisors with no one to supervise)

- Pre-fire group at loose ends, but those people are needed – reassign some of the groups, increase their value
- We're down to three educators, not enough; one was just given change in duties; this affects on-call staff/events

## Comments relating to Division Chiefs (DC) and Battalion Chiefs (BC)

- Division Chief responsibility should be just for their geographic areas, not other specialties
- Division Chiefs' messaging is not consistent
  - They are all doing things differently
  - They make their own decisions
  - People are looking for direction and they are not giving it
- Should restore admin. captains for every DC (Note: no consensus on this)
- Most DC's are responsible for multiple cities; many city council meetings on same night
  - Vested in these areas
  - City expectation of customer service includes the high level liaison
  - Some regions/contracts pay more for more support (not every DC has admin support)
- Used to be six divisions + one ops support division
  - Now ops is spread out among DCs
  - Model is good and bad
  - Waters down local fire chief model
- Used to be physically located in city halls
  - Set the staff for expectations from cities
  - Worked well for one-city DCs; not so well for multiples
- Structure falls apart below DC level
  - Div. chiefs = local fire chiefs
  - BCs and DCs have a seat in the city
  - Drawback – customers add admin responsibilities and have greater expectations
    - Admin aid to DCs ("cabin boys") reduced/eliminated
    - But, there is no letup on expectations
- DCs can't be everywhere at once
  - Small city or big city, expectations are the same
  - Model is DCs = Fire Chief of City
- Division Chiefs too focused on micro issues, e.g., who hasn't signed drug log; paying department credit card bills

- Structure – more division chiefs than LA Fire
  - Too many division chiefs
  - Too many assistant chiefs
- Unions want fewer DCs; they compare OCFA to other agencies BUT – their models aren't local fire chief and customer service oriented organization
- BC promotions are a stepping stone and they don't do well in some important areas
- Turnover with BCs (e.g., PIO)
  - Some positions should be permanent
  - Some positions need specialization, training
- Media shouldn't be a BC position (Safety staff doesn't like media – 1 PIO is a 24-hr position)
- The 24-hr PIO position is too hard, no one wants it – burn out
- Continue to rotate BC for corporate communications position
- Examine BC rotation longevity – if two years is minimum and that's all you get, make minimum longer. Eliminate some rotations and replace with permanent positions ( e.g., comm. risk reduction)
- Some BCs do not want to come to HQ – often they get put where they don't want to be
- BCs are being asked to attend more and more meetings in cities
  - Have to find a way to say no to some of these cities, but (at least one) Division Chief always says yes
  - Customer Service  - we're contractors and we need to keep customer service in mind

## Comments Related to Board
- Executive management's relationship with current Board is not good
  - Board members insert themselves into organization
  - Lots of turnover; need to educate Board about role
  - Some drive executive direction by being outspoken
  - Past leadership wouldn't have allowed this to go on
- Board won't allow negotiations to be handled internally but want to hire their own negotiator
  - First time since 1980
  - No confidence in executive management
- BOD turnover – takes a while to learn
  - Better now, they ask more questions
  - Politically driven, separate agendas

## Roles and Responsibilities

+ Good job running the calls and accomplishing day-to-day workload
+ Crews know what they need to do
+ Roles and responsibilities are well-defined in some areas (e.g., Clerk Department)
+ Critical responsibilities are well documented (not all agreed)
+ Some BCs are well-rounded and beneficial to the organization
+ Rank and file know how to do their jobs, good customer satisfaction
+ "We Care Team" – mixed group to talk about what is working with group of mentors – ability to talk to managers and rotate people every six months
+ Roles and responsibilities used to be blurry, better in last few months. Know who to go to now
+ In some sections, roles and responsibilities are well defined (e.g., Clerk's office, admin. divisions)


## Comments about Decision Making and Management

- Individuals are not empowered to make decisions
- Inconsistency leads to variability in the field and confusion
- Lots of micro-managing – used to be more freedom to make decisions
- People are afraid to manage
- Negative management style
- Management by crisis; No strategy for priorities/tactics
- Chief not strong; aggressive, but has to react to BOD (often in the paper)
    - o Some BOD from small towns, little experience
    - o Board members need more education, discussion, oversight
    - o Need to remind Board they set policy, get them to stop micromanaging operations
- Farming out to consultants to determine operations/policy – erodes confidence, especially since staff often provides all the work
- Motives are not good – want people to fail; then they promote upward
- DCs don't have chief-style authority to deploy resources; need to have authority for management decisions that affect their area
- Need to better manage expectations of cities
- Deputy chief used to deal with labor  - does not now
- Managers should manage (don't micromanage) , let staff do what they need to

- Adversarial relationship between union and management wasn't there in previous administration. (This administration expects that, but kicks union down so as to not seem weak.)

**Comments about Confusion in Roles**
- What is our role? Fire fighters? Inspectors? Admin? It has been unclear, especially in the last year; Lost focus on why we're here
- We're trying to be too many things , e.g., Home smoke detector program
  - Can't do all things well – need to do fewer things and do them really well
  - No attempts to evaluate programs
- Need better defined roles for BCs (procedures spelled out)
- BCs used to be able to focus more on operations – administrative burden now too high
- BCs want to make their mark and change things
- Lack of clarity results in blame (e.g., the process is flawed or someone was unclear)
- Business needs are often not met – some don't have the business skills
- Individuals recently promoted are awful – no operational experience
- Because so many activities are data-driven, people will do anything to be able to check a box, not useful acts
- Difficult to get people on board with fire prevention duties
  - People weren't into it, so it trailed off
  - Now roles are unclear
  - That group put guys on the defensive (positive – now guys do their own data entry, don't get blamed for errors someone else makes)
- Lack of training for most staff
- Don't dictate individual schedules – people know what needs to be done
- Perception that union gets people off – it's really about mishandling of investigations, bad HR processes
- No incentive to improve – running joke is "you better do something wrong if you want to promote"
- Lately, command experience is deemphasized because leadership doesn't have it
- People get used to doing what they wanted to, don't want to hear any rules now (e.g., no red zone parking)
- Empower Ops chief to make final decisions based on input – too much "what do you think?" (e.g., workout issue – held two meetings, no decision)
- Note: DCs don't have to deal with politics/unions when decisions are made
- Managers sometimes come in to do line work – makes people unclear

- HR "not my job" attitude – kick downhill
- Supervisors not clear on roles and expectations
- Need efficiency, technology
  - Payroll still on paper time slips (only staff/non-safety on this system)
  - Efficiencies are based on favoritism
  - They use labor instead of invest in equipment because perception is that labor is free

## Communication

- \+ Good video newsletter
- \+ Good briefing binder
- \+ Multimedia has done a good job
- \+ Know who to call for support
- \+ SharePoint – good for info access, dispersal (+ new division portal, IT help desk)
- \+ Good that we now get conference call debrief before new rollouts
- \+ Better at getting input from the line staff
- \+ Good turnaround on more face-to-face communication in the divisions instead of one-way delivery method
- \+ Communication is not an issue in the field

### Comments about Lack of Communication

- People are anxious for information
- No idea of vision/direction for organization
- Not a lot of direct communication from Division Chiefs and above
- Lots of decisions made at Division Chief meeting without input from program managers; sometimes bring in people for discussion/presentation; seems like they are asking for that as a formality, not because they want input
- Big organization – we need better communication
- We see minutes from Ops meetings, never exec. meetings
- Communicating up the chain of command breaks down – lot of layers
- Chief's blog on SharePoint not well used
- Division chief/Ops chief communication not happening.-- Div. chief makes own plans in opposition with other divisions;  Ops chief should take care of it and does nothing
- Communication is non-existent from captain level
  - Or messages drastically change before getting to the field – 180 degrees
  - No corrections to misinformation

- Gaps in internal communication; need to work on consistency
- Chief had focus group one year ago
  - He's heard all of these comments
  - Not one thing has been addressed yet
- We're asked our priorities, but what comes back isn't reflected – why ask?  Just for lip service/placate
- COA makes ourselves available to help problem solve – not involved from beginning enough
- 90% of rank and file interactions are bad but 95% of them are doing a great job

## Comments about How Decisions Are Conveyed

- Communication about plans always has a negative message – back to generalizing the issues
- Division chiefs make decisions about how to run their division; messages from fire chief down is not consistent
- CYA attitude – everyone gets emails about every potential issue (right or wrong)
- They seek input and then do the opposite
- Messages are not consistent (lied regarding Feb. 1 implementation)
- DCs now are strongest the group has been – working on better communication
- Communication methods aren't our problem; no one knows how to communicate properly
- Need to vet ideas before deploying, they don't and things go wrong and then there is a credibility gap
- Disconnect between 'meet and confer' and 'meet and discuss'
- People get frustrated when they think we're not listening, but they just don't agree with decision
- Mixed messages during the vetting process – 40 people weighing in all at once
- Training info goes out without follow-up
  - Just check boxes, get through it
  - No team mentality, all individual
  - Need open and clear discussion

## Other Comments

- Large-scale overreaction to seat belt incident – should have been handled in the division
- Too much lip service about making improvements
- No meetings with division chief – no help, no support, no answers to questions

- People don't answer phones (Finance is good); Culture change, budget cuts, people relaxed
- New tools are not well communicated e.g., Help Desk didn't know Div. Portal
- Need to harness technology better
  - Some things are low cost, useful  (e.g., GIS, records management system)
  - Redundant data, not compatible
- People don't want to share knowledge; they worry about losing power/clout
- Managers should request improvement ideas – promote the "open door policy" and make it a reality
- Integrity issues at every level  (some are motivated to lie)
- Equipment recommendations ignored  (e.g., Navy seal gave input about ballistic equipment and it was ignored)
- Active action shooter reported
  - Probationary chiefs got out of it
  - Should have been publicized for learning purposes
  - If firefighters had done it, there would have been 1,000 emails
- Messages start with "don't shoot the messenger"
- Strong union – takes misinformation and makes a big deal with others
- Unresponsiveness – people not helpful (e.g., HR questions may not be addressed)
- Method not the issue – need TRUST

## Accountability
+ Fire prevention now on track with laws/state mandates, paying people back for overcharges
+ Accountability getting payroll out on time
+ Service center works well
+ Finance very attentive and helpful
+ There is accountability within running incidents
+ It's been this way for years (not just current chief)

## Comments about Consistency with Discipline
- Hard to be consistent
- Inconsistent disciplinary actions  (e.g., some people get sent home and others don't for the same issue)
- Have had cases overturned due to inconsistencies in discipline – they (unions) appeal hard enough, and BC becomes neutered

- Rank and file are accountable for actions in the field (only this level)
- BCs are not well supported, but they still want BCs to enforce policy
- Have to fight for support/it's a hassle to implement discipline even for simple policy matters
- A handful of people misbehaving results in new policies for all; they don't deal with individuals
- Single incident resulted in two staff being sent home but nothing happening to DC who was also responsible
- Issues are generalized rather than holding individuals accountable (e.g., everyone is told to be on time when one person is late.  One person not in uniform and everyone overreacts about the whole department.)
- BCs won't act on obvious disciplinary issues
- Threat of severe discipline, e.g., parking rig in red zone, yet chief parks in handicap spot and when firefighters tried to help, he didn't take the help
- Lack of consistency in addressing issues/solving problems throughout headquarters
- DCs are working on consistency in the area of accountability
  - o Perception is that it depends on DC
  - o Group is discussing it more
  - o Realize past inconsistencies
- This was the #1 issue in 2008 strategic planning survey
- One of the labor groups doesn't want consistency
- People used to get away with a lot, even when ops chief was "iron fist"
- Chief Officers Association is tasked with owning and selling bad directives to the organization
- Old Ops chief ruled with an iron fist – he was respected
- Now, lack of trust – lots of manipulation

## General Comments about Accountability
- Favoritism and bullying are widespread throughout HQ
  - o It's being allowed and managers are not stopping it
  - o Managers and executives don't address the negatives
  - o Harassment – retaliation – not addressed
- Accountability is lacking at executive level – don't hold themselves accountable
- Accountability needs to start at the top; Chief and executives should lead by example
- Captains not held accountable enough
  - o BCs blamed for captain's responsibilities

- o  They (captains) have hard time disciplining their friends
- Micro-management – if you go outside your chain of command you get hammered
- Mistakes are not allowed; if you make one, there is retribution
- No one is empowered to decide what needs to be done
- Investigations where many rank and file report the same thing; they believe them, but believe one executive
- Major personnel files "missing" showing problems, incidents – HR has not been accountable for managing records
- Messengers: dishonest, bad behavior
- Self-interest at heart, not OCFA
- Lots of scrutiny in our jobs – people are hesitant to act
- Org culture often shuts down new ideas (depends on supervisor)
- Some managers don't have enough to do (others are busy – frustrating)
- Lack of transparency – e.g., new HR director hire went wrong, they wouldn't own up to it and didn't communicate anything
- Too much blow back from when we make mistakes; need to learn from mistakes
- Management - very little big incident ability (is also happening in other areas of the org. and is succession planning issue)
- Will lose accreditation next year
    - o  We're not following direction of accreditation board
    - o  Executive management are too scared to decide and enforce what's needed
- Investigations can happen quickly; Union always attacks
- Leadership allows some things to continue by not taking a position
- Labor continues to destabilize organization
- A lot to improve on
    - o  HR questions sometimes not answered
    - o  General responsiveness
    - o  Consistency all over the map from battalion to battalion
- Annual recruitment – HR not prepared
- HazMat issue – staff raised red flags for years; Some staff were petitioned by managers to leave union
- Whistleblower investigation (harassment) split in two so one of them could close, be clean (small scope) – other investigation ongoing, but no one knows about it  (Note: there are different opinions on this)
- Performance evaluations sometimes used to convey negatives in work, but it's really personal retaliation

- Many supervisors don't support their staff  (want to be friends as supervisors, don't assume their role properly)

## Succession Planning

+ Training/professional development is available
+ BC to DC is a natural progression
+ Not all BCs want to promote up, but it's common and can result in instability at BC level
- Succession planning is not done strategically
  - Not sure where OCFA is headed, so it's hard to prepare people
  - We do a bad job getting people from firefighter to captain
  - Qualified number of guys is shrinking
  - Need to address at entry level
- Have a captain academy, BC academy
- Would like a program where you take a captain (from list of those who want to promote) out to show various opportunities
  - Would help us, would be great for them
  - Makes their first year as BC easier
- Have people spend time working up to see what others' jobs are like – would be hard here (union, culture)
  - Try job shadowing
  - Work out kinks, share task books when done (new rolling out)
- People are put in charge of duties without the proper background
- Promotions given to those who tell the Chief what he wants to hear
- Senior captains are not interested in promoting up
  - Hassle, job is frustrating
  - Too many cliques
  - Too much politics
  - Too much micro-managing discourages succession planning
- "Cabin boy" = guaranteed promotion
- Some spots are hand-picked – not as well qualified, and then they're promoted again
- No consistency advertising vacancies for recruitments – some people are chosen for promotions, some are advertised; some are told they aren't "eligible to apply."
- Succession planning needed in IT –There is no one on staff who knows Banner (and other systems)
- Can't take a step down to move to another area (notices go to only a small group)
- Wrong people getting hired
  - Become a "cabin boy" sit with chief and do paperwork

- o No balance between ops and staff positions
- People who are promoted have not had enough experience in ops
- Chief ineffective, people beneath him incompetent, people promoted this way
- People chosen to lead (projects) because they "raise their hand," not because they're capable
- PIO promoted even though people knew he'd be an issue
- Policies against firefighters are demoralizing, keep people from wanting to be a part of higher positions
- Chief admits "I don't have a very deep bench"  (We can all agree on that)
- Many retirements because of disappointment with exec. management
- "Yes" men only now; dissenters were pushed out or demoted
- Most of the qualified people (e.g., captains) who would do a good job, don't want the promotions
- Even people who fail the test, or in one case didn't finish, still get promoted
- Share with us what happens in the field – visibility to the larger org.
- Chief surrounded by incompetents and people who tell him what he wants to hear
- Perception that DCs are just admins who got in good with Chief – (getting better)
- Dissenters demoted
- Forces competent people to keep their heads down
- Stigma of promotions (worse now than before)
- Retirements – no depth on the list
- Unqualified promotions
- Good people don't want the job
- DC not enticing position (e.g., 4/10 schedules not available)
- BC rotations to staff positions have too much turnover –administrative positions with previous chief were difficult to get, more competition, more admin understanding. Rotations good, but hiring/process not handled well
- Two years and out is a bad idea
- Need to adequately prepare for BC positions
- BC staff rotation is good – need the org. perspective; BC shouldn't be a "super captain"
- Numerical promotion list is a negative because it makes it appear you don't need to prepare for position; no incentive to work staff
- It's still "who you know"
- Hard to get traction on creating career development plans; need clear policy
- Don't understand role's purpose (support and respect – not about being buddies)
- Lacking in planning and development/comm. risk reduction

- Upcoming retirements – starting in March  (80% of staff will retire in next 10 years)

**Suggestions for Improvement**
- Document processes
- Reinstitute flex time to encourage promotions (needs to be supported by management)
- Negative perception of moving up;  think they can't fight fires anymore
- Supervisor training needed (especially about performance evaluations, expectations)
- Need a mentoring program (this is mentioned in the strategic plan)
- Gauge interest first, have a useful handoff (e.g., 6 months lead time)
- Informal planning – shadowing with people who have raised their hand
- Admin captains are a good way to make sure there is succession planning
- New people coming in need tools, role understanding, something to improve on
- Provide overlap – Now, retirements announced, position not open until the person leaves
- Focus on promoting from within
- Lack of mentoring – no sit-down to transfer duties  (e.g., BCs or new managers don't know expectations of new positions, hired without needed expertise
- Those interested in promoting should proactively learn about upcoming positions
- Non-safety positions often have few opportunities to move up
- Need good employee orientation
    - Handbook
    - Walk-around
- Need 360 degree reviews of everyone, especially managers
- They need to hear the truth from employees, those doing the work
- Evaluations not standardized
- Open it up, let people know special training opportunities – all, not just one
- Should not be afraid to pick someone for job shadowing; plan for succession

**Desired Outcomes**
- Communicate vision/direction
- Make this a fun place to work again
- Recognize the good work being done, less focus on checking the boxes/what we're not doing
- Regain sense of purpose, fundamentals, camaraderie
- Decision-making ability

- Deal with individuals who aren't doing their responsibility – it's the captain's job to handle isolated issues – not broad solutions (e.g., seat belt issue)
- Stop micro-managing
- People in wrong positions who are otherwise qualified – make changes of job rather than stripping core job duties (result of promoting unqualified people)
- Make recruiting fair (outside vs. hand-picked vs. public advertising varies by position, ops/non-safety)
- Opportunity for development/training (e.g., spend a day with another department)
- Implement the study/recommendations
- Be open to listening, improving
- Make employees a part of change, improvements by tapping into employee expertise, energy
- A true open door policy (it is stated, but it is not happening)
- Better recognition of non-safety employees
- With implementation, communicate changes more effectively
- Make the Board aware of what is happening so they understand what is happening
- Reorganize executive management to include new leaders
- Honest, open assessment of the organization
- This place is broken and with current leadership it can't be fixed – we have tried to fix it over the last two years
- Identify need for organizational support to get back to a class A organization – starts with the BOD level, on down
- Get back to planning, not reacting
- Fire Chief needs to lead
- Stop putting out info from "Office of the Fire Chief"
- Create a new Strategic Plan (one that's meaningful, streamlined)
- Emphasize that we need more time – still working on plan coming together (new group dynamic)
- DCs are moving in the right direction
- Strong leadership from top
    - Use chain of command for strong communication
    - "Stay in your lane"
- Acknowledge organizational complexity
- Define clear direction, and then let DCs come to decide how to get there
- Make Management Partners report available to staff
- Blowback against dissenters needs to stop.

- Focus on organization structure <u>function</u> over the personality (e.g., not who likes who); put right function in right area
- Show follow-up to this report – progress
- Written procedures
    - Old SOPs got chopped down
    - Need one on reporting/prohibiting bullying
- Help the department believe in itself again

**O R A N G E   C O U N T Y   F I R E   A U T H O R I T Y**

P.O. Box 57115, Irvine, CA 92619-7115 · 1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA 92602

**Keith Richter, Fire Chief**          **(714) 573-6000**          **www.ocfa.org**

**Management Partners Report**
**Fire Chief Richter's Responses: Executive Summary**

Management Partners recently completed a full management review of our agency and found the Orange County Fire Authority is a respected agency with a rich history and an incredible mission to protect the residents of Orange County. It's one of the reasons I'm so proud of the men and women of the OCFA. Together, my team consistently receives a 97 percent positive approval rating from the residents of Orange County. In fact, of the more than 26,000 fire departments in the U.S., the OCFA is one of only 192 fire agencies to receive international accreditation, which demonstrates that public safety - the life and health of our residents – is our highest mission.

Our consultant identified some administrative areas where we as an agency need to do better, and as the Fire Chief, I accept full responsibility for any shortcomings – and the full responsibility to make permanent and positive change. Below are some of the items identified in the Management Partners report.

**Management Systems and Accountability:**
The report identified breakdowns in accountability and found that some employees felt a culture of harassment or retaliation exists. Let me be clear: harassment or retaliation has no place at the OCFA and will not be tolerated. Any employee who feels harassed may report this directly to me, and we will deal with it.

**Communications and Board Relations:**
The report found that some OCFA employees and Board members felt that they did not receive information on agency activities or that agency efforts were communicated inconsistently. In response, we will hire a civilian director of communications to assist the leadership team and me in better communicating with our employees, Board members, and stakeholders.

**Organizational Structure, Labor/Management Relations, Leadership & Board Development:**
The report found we must become more efficient, including clarifying our roles and responsibility, as well as leadership development and opportunities for advancement. We will provide our leaders additional training, and we'll also immediately begin evaluating options for greater efficiency on this and other areas.

Attached to this summary are 29 recommendations by Management Partners accompanied by my plan to implement each one. Eight of these recommendations have already been implemented and are noted as such. As we implement these recommendations, we will provide continuous updates to the Board.

Serving the Cities of: Aliso Viejo • Buena Park • Cypress • Dana Point • Irvine • Laguna Hills • Laguna Niguel • Laguna Woods • Lake Forest • La Palma
Los Alamitos • Mission Viejo • Placentia • Rancho Santa Margarita •San Clemente • San Juan Capistrano • Santa Ana • Seal Beach • Stanton • Tustin • Villa Park
Westminster • Yorba Linda • and Unincorporated Areas of Orange County

**RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS AND SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES**

# Orange County Fire Authority

# Implementation Action Plan

May 2014

# Making the Most of the Implementation Action Plan

This Implementation Action Plan is intended to guide the implementation by OCFA staff of Management Partners' 29 recommendations. The work involved in implementing the recommendations must be integrated into the other work of the organization, with appropriate assignments of responsibility for implementation and with the identification of specific planned completion dates. The Action Plan begins that process with guidance about the length of time that might be required to complete an individual recommendation (estimated total task time).

Prudent implementation of most recommendations requires "circling back" after implementation and fine-tuning the result based on experience. The step to do that is not spelled out for each recommendation in this document on the assumption that it would be part of our normal management system for any newly implemented change.

Orange County Fire Authority
Implementation Action Plan

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Develop clear expectations for accountability as well as the consequences, if individuals do not fulfill expectations. | · Draft an outline of core expectations for employee accountability, including consequences | June 30, 2014 | Deputy Chief | |
| | | · Develop and execute strategy for communicating expectations and consequences throughout the organization (i.e., Chief's video chat, blast emails, station visits) | June 30, 2014 | Fire Chief | Assistance from Communications Lab |
| | | · Establish a process to reinforce expectations through training, corrective action and if necessary, discipline | June 30, 2014 | Deputy Chief | Includes reinforcement by managers and supervisors in the organization |
| 2 | Establish a professional standards unit for investigating complaints (and reviewing chain-of-command investigations), reports of rule violations and employee misconduct, including complaints by residents. | · Obtain information about how existing units in Los Angeles and Sacramento were established | June 30, 2014 | Human Resources (HR) Director | |
| | | · Confer with legal counsel about meet and confer requirements, if any | June 30, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | · Determine whether unit could be staffed with existing personnel or if new resources are required | July 31, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | · Obtain approvals to establish unit | Aug. 28, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | · Recruit and/or train staff for unit | Oct. 31, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | · Communicate full implementation | Nov. 30, 2014 | HR Director | |
| 3 | Ensure investigations are conducted expediently and consistent with the California Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights (FFBOR). | · Review established protocols for handling investigations and modify as needed | June 30, 2014 | Deputy Chief | Support from HR Director |
| | | · Establish a reporting process to monitor status of each investigation to ensure compliance | July 31, 2014 | Deputy Chief | Support from HR Director |
| 4 | Establish a database to track investigations, recommendations, and actions taken. | · Work with Information Technology Division to establish database | Completed | HR Director | |
| | | · Provide training on the use of the database | June 30, 2014 | HR Director | Support from IT as needed |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 5 | Provide training to all supervisors about how to give positive and negative feedback to employees. | • Review training modules for delivering positive and negative feedback in Battalion Chief and Fire Captain academies and update as needed | Sept. 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | • Develop refresher training for supervisors to coincide with rollout of new performance evaluation system | Nov. 30, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | • Communicate the importance of providing regular verbal feedback to all supervisors, along with simple tips for doing so through video chats, email blasts and station visits | July 31, 2015 | Fire Chief | Assistance from Communications Lab |
| 6 | Develop a timeline for choosing and implementing a new performance evaluation system. | • Confirm the current schedule for procuring and implementing the system | June 30, 2014 | HR Director | Assistance from IT Division |
| | | • Complete the RFP evaluation | July 31, 2014 | HR Director | |
| | | • Award contract | Aug. 21, 2014 | Board of Directors | |
| | | • Customize, populate and test system | Nov. 30, 2014 | IT Manager | Assistance from vendor |
| | | • Train supervisors on the use of the system | Dec. 31, 2014 | HR Director | Assistance from vendor |
| | | • Meet with labor associations to preview system. | Jan. 1, 2015 | HR Director | |
| | | • Announce system implementation and how it will affect the delivery of performance-related feedback to employees | | Fire Chief | Assistance from Communications Lab |
| 7 | Provide training on the importance and use of organizational performance measures so that everyone in the organization understands their function and purpose. | • Develop training on what organizational performance measurement is, how to effectively monitor and report performance data, and how to use results to aid decision making and continuous improvement | Jan. 31, 2015 | Asst. Chief of Support Services (SS) | May require outside help to develop and execute training |
| | | • Identify participants for training | Jan. 31, 2015 | Deputy Chief | |
| | | • Conduct training | Mar. 30, 2015 | Asst. Chief of SS | |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 8 | Hold regular monthly one-on-one meetings with Executive Committee members and with other Board members at their request. | · Establish a standing meeting schedule for each Executive Committee member<br>· Identify other Board members desiring monthly one-on-one meetings<br>· Establish a standing meeting schedule for each Board member wanting a monthly meeting | June 19, 2014<br><br>June 19, 2014<br><br>June 30, 2014 | Fire Chief<br><br>Fire Chief<br><br>Fire Chief | |
| 9 | Utilize video chats from the Fire Chief on a regular basis to convey important information. | · Continue the monthly video newsletter<br>· Evaluate opportunities to expand the use of video chats and/or videoconferencing to share information in real time | Ongoing<br>Sept. 30, 2014 | Fire Chief<br>Communications Director | Assistance from Communications Lab Implement once new director is hired |
| 10 | Develop a written list of key messages to be shared following executive staff meetings, so all Division Chiefs and Battalion Chiefs have the same talking points and deliver the same message. | · Establish format and protocols for writing and conveying key messages from executive staff meetings<br>· Meet with Division and Battalion Chiefs to communicate expectations for consistent delivery of key messages | June 30, 2014<br><br><br>July 31, 2014 | Deputy Chief<br><br><br>Fire Chief | Assistance from Communications Lab, Communications Director (once hired) |
| 11 | Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Division Chiefs. | · Meet with each Board member and City Manager to discuss the desired role of Division Chiefs in their community and confirm OCFA's abilities to meet expectations<br>· Document and communicate critical tasks, core responsibilities, and expectations to Division Chiefs | Mar. 31, 2015<br><br><br><br><br>July 31, 2014 | Fire Chief<br><br><br><br><br>Asst. Chief Ops. | Assistance from Deputy Chief and Asst. Chief Ops. Potential change in Board members in Jan. 2015 |
| 12 | When a Division Chief serves more than one jurisdiction, assign a Battalion Chief as an additional liaison for each jurisdiction. | · Designate a battalion chief from each division to serve as the back-up liaison<br>· Introduce back up liaison to Board member and City Manager from each jurisdiction | Completed<br><br>June 30, 2014 | Asst. Chief Operations (Ops.)<br>Fire Chief | Assistance from Division Chiefs |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Establish or make more explicit the procedures for rotating staff Battalion Chief positions. | · Document procedures for rotating staff Battalion Chief positions<br>· Confer with legal counsel on meet and confer obligations as needed<br>· Meet with Chief Officer Association to review procedures and their implementation | Sept. 30, 2014<br><br>Sept. 30, 2014<br><br><br>Sept. 30, 2014 | Asst. Chief Ops.<br><br>Asst. Chief Ops.<br><br><br>Asst. Chief Ops. | |
| 14 | Hire a communications professional to head the corporate communications function. | · Obtain Board authorization for position<br>· Recruit and hire position | Complete<br>June 30, 2014 | HR Director<br>Fire Chief | Assistance from Communications Lab |
| 15 | Assign and train three Captains (one per shift) with good communication skills to assist the head of corporate communications as PIOs when needed. | · Document list of existing trained Captains<br>· Identify whether additional personnel need training<br>· Develop formal protocols for assigning PIO responsibility to trained Captains | June 30, 2014<br><br>July 31, 2014<br><br>Aug. 28, 2014 | HR Director<br><br>Asst. Chief Ops.<br><br>Communications Director | Assistance from Communications Lab |
| 16 | Assign the community relations/education specialists to the Corporate Communications Division. | · Transfer community relations/education specialist positions from the Community Risk Reduction Department to the Corporate Communications Division | Complete | Deputy Chief | Completed in April 2014 with Community Risk Reduction department reorganization |
| 17 | Develop a corporate communications calendar that details the community risk reduction strategy of the department. | · Complete recruitments for Fire Marshal and Communications Director<br>· Develop community risk reduction goals, objectives and communication strategies<br>· Develop annual calendar of community risk reduction activities, events and public information messages to be delivered to the community<br>· Establish a process to evaluate effectiveness of community risk reduction communication strategies at six month intervals | June 30, 2014<br><br>Nov. 21, 2014<br><br><br>Dec. 19, 2014<br><br><br><br><br>Jan. 1, 2015 | HR Director<br><br>Fire Marshal<br><br><br>Communications Director<br><br><br><br>Communications Director | Assistance of Communications Director/Communications Lab |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 18 | Fill the vacant Captain positions as soon as possible. | · Establish promotional list for Captain positions<br>· Fill vacant positions from list | Oct. 21, 2014<br><br>Nov. 28, 2014 | Asst. Chief Ops<br><br>Asst. Chief Ops | Support from HR Director<br><br>Support from HR Director |
| 19 | Negotiate a more cost-effective shift schedule for employees in the Emergency Command Center. Clarify language in the MOU. | · Evaluate impacts of alternative shift schedules on staffing, overtime and associated costs<br>· Develop and present recommendations to Board (closed session)<br>· Meet and confer with OCEA on proposed shift changes | Oct. 31, 2014<br><br>Nov. 20, 2014<br><br>Dec. 31, 2014 | Asst. Chief Bus. Services<br><br>Asst. Chief Support Services<br>HR Director | Involve Asst. Chief Support Services and HR Director<br><br>Assistance of HR Director<br><br>Assistance of Asst. Chief Business Services, Asst. Chief Support Services |
| 20 | Establish joint labor-management committees for each labor association. | · Invite each labor associations to participate in a joint-labor committee<br>· Establish protocols for referring issues to joint-labor committees | July 31, 2014<br><br>August 29, 2014 | Deputy Chief<br><br>Deputy Chief | Support from HR Director<br><br>Support from HR Director |
| 21 | Evaluate the selection and promotion process to ensure all hiring practices are nondiscriminatory and fair. | · Review and evaluate existing selection and promotion policies, procedures and practices<br>· Report results of the evaluation to the Chief, with recommendations for improvement<br>· Communicate results of the evaluation to labor association leaders | Mar. 31, 2015<br><br>April 30, 2015<br><br>April 30, 2015 | HR Director<br><br>HR Director<br><br>Fire Chief | |
| 22 | Establish an Advisory Promotional Process Review Committee to develop recommendations for improving the promotional selection process for safety positions. | · Invite Local 3631 and Chief Officers Association to participate on Committee<br>· Meet to develop recommendations for improving the process<br>· Present recommendations to the Fire Chief | Dec. 31, 2014<br><br>Feb. 28, 2015<br><br>Mar. 31, 2015 | HR Director<br><br>HR Director<br><br>Chair of Advisory Committee | May delay until completion of labor negotiations<br><br><br>Support from HR Director |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 23 | Develop a formal succession plan for executive and senior management positions. | • Create a succession plan including the following components:<br>  o Additional workforce analysis to forecast future leadership needs<br>  o Identification of core competencies and job requirements for each position<br>  o Identification of training and professional development opportunities<br>  o Mechanisms for identifying and mentoring talent<br>  o Processes for documenting institutional knowledge<br>  o Implementation strategies and resources required<br>• Communicate the succession plan to the Board and OCFA organization once developed | Oct. 31, 2015<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Nov. 30, 2015 | HR Director<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>Fire Chief | Involve the executive management team, Division Chiefs, and Board Human Resources Committee |
| 24 | Create opportunities for cross-training, job shadowing, officer training, professional development, and mentoring. | • Provide information on effective mentoring and encourage employees to find a mentor and to mentor others<br>• Enlist the help of managers and supervisors to identify and implement cross training and/or job shadowing opportunities<br>• Establish a process for tracking and documenting the results of cross training and job shadowing activities | May 31, 2015<br><br><br>Oct. 31, 2015<br><br><br><br><br>Nov. 30, 2015 | HR Director<br><br><br>HR Director<br><br><br><br><br>HR Director | |
| 25 | Explore the feasibility of providing additional leadership development. | • Develop recommendations for expanding leadership training opportunities beyond the current program and identify the required resources<br>• Present recommendations for funding as part of the FY 2015-16 budget | April 30, 2015<br><br><br><br><br>May 30, 2015 | HR Director<br><br><br><br><br>Fire Chief | |

| Rec# | Recommendation | Implementation Steps | Planned Completion | Person Responsible | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Review information with Board members on an annual basis that stresses their roles and responsibilities, including Board norms for behavior. | • Schedule a special Board meeting to discuss roles, responsibilities, and other areas to enhance Board member effectiveness<br><br>• Review and update Board handbook materials to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities and norms for behavior | Feb. 28, 2015 and annually thereafter<br><br>Jan. 31, 2015 | Fire Chief<br><br><br><br>Deputy Chief | Also general counsel<br><br><br><br>Also general counsel |
| 27 | Provide an in-depth orientation for new Board members within 30 days of appointment. | • Establish a process to invite new Board members for an orientation as soon as they have been appointed<br><br>• Review and update Board orientation materials | Nov. 28, 2014<br><br><br><br>Dec. 28, 2014 | Fire Chief<br><br><br><br>Asst. Chief Bus. Services | Have executive team participate in orientation<br><br>Include input from executive team and general counsel |
| 28 | Authorize the Chair to make recommendations to Committee appointments, with ratification by the full Board. | • Schedule discussion of a change in policy regarding Committee appointments for a Board meeting | Aug. 28, 2014 | Board Chair | |
| 29 | Establish Board norms for behavior. | • Incorporate into special Board meeting referenced in Recommendation 26.<br><br>• Establish a process to periodically review Board norms for behavior | Feb. 28, 2015<br><br>Feb. 28, 2015 | Fire Chief<br><br><br>Executive Committee | |