

Director Neidig Fire Department and Paid Personnel Evaluation

Survey Results

I conducted the below surveys of the community and volunteer fire fighters to assess the current level of satisfaction with the department. My objective was to determine if there are areas for improvement or issues that require increased focus as the Board works to refine the process of goal setting and evaluating paid personnel against performance objectives.

Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Department- Community Evaluation

Number of respondents: 30

I have noted the average response to each question below but due to the small sample size and extreme opinions expressed, the “average” for most questions is simply in the middle of the positive and the negative responses.

1. In general, are you happy with the current level of service the Fallen Leaf Volunteer Fire Department provides?
 - Average Rating: Very satisfied
2. Would you like the fire department to conduct more informational and training sessions for the community? Examples include: fire extinguisher maintenance and training, defensible space inspections, youth education and CPR classes.
 - Average Rating: Yes
3. Are you able to name 3 current volunteer firefighters?
 - Average Rating: No
4. How would you gauge the overall community involvement of the fire department? How well do you generally know the department or see them active in our community?
 - Average Rating: Involved
5. How well informed do you feel about the capabilities of our department and the level of care and action they can provide in a medical or fire emergency?
 - Average Rating: Informed
6. How would you rate the overall level of communication between the fire department and community? Do you have an understanding of ISO ratings, ways to volunteer, and fundraising needs?
 - Average Rating: Adequate
7. Currently, total fire related taxes are \$710 per home (\$595 parcel tax plus \$115 California SRA fee). Would you support an increase in the parcel tax to provide more funding to the fire department?
 - Average Rating: Yes
8. Do you think it is important for Fallen Leaf to have an independent fire department, or would you be interested in considering a potential merger or outsourcing to a local professional department?
 - Average Rating: Important

Fallen Leaf Fire Department Volunteer Survey

Number of respondents: 1

The small sample size was disappointing. The input and feedback of our volunteers is critical, especially since they possess a much higher level of knowledge and understanding of the fire department than the CSD and its board members. Given the lack of interest in these questions, I suggest the CSD should work with volunteers to identify questions, goals, and areas for improvement that they deem to be important.

1. How long have you been a volunteer with the FLLFD? Please fill in the number of years.
2. What percent of trainings have you attended this year?
3. Do you consider yourself to be a current (active) volunteer for this summer season?
4. Do you feel like you are learning and developing as a volunteer at the level you would like?
5. Do you feel the training sessions are worthwhile and effective?
6. Do you think the FLLFD is prepared for probable medical or fire incidents?
7. What do you think is the highest priority in terms of equipment needs?
8. What do you think is the highest priority in terms of training needs?
9. How would you assess the current level of leadership of the department?
10. Do you feel supported by the community?

Observations & Recommendations:

(To be discussed and elaborated upon during the CSD meeting)

- There currently are separate contracts for the General Manager and the Fire Chief positions. Although both contracts appear to be thoughtfully written, with one person currently occupying both positions it would make sense to merge the contracts into one agreement.
- In reviewing the current Fire Chief contract and duties with contracts and job descriptions for neighboring departments, it appears ours is generally sufficient and outlines key duties that are also identified by other departments. While the basics elements are present, consider revising to reflect more specific needs that are unique to our community.
- Work with Chief/General Manager to develop annual measurable goals and objectives for the season. Create a “Fire Chief One Year Plan” to compliment the “Fire Department Five Year Plan.” It should be this One Year Plan in conjunction with the Five Year Plan that the CSD should evaluate the chief against when considering salary and bonus decisions.
- Ensure annual performance evaluation is conducted prior to March 1st as outlined in the current employment contract. The performance evaluation should include

three elements: an evaluation conducted by the CSD, a self-evaluation, and “360 reviews” and feedback from volunteers and paid personnel.

- Add community education and outreach as a formal duty

Possible evaluation points and new areas of focus could include:

- Number of grants applied for and received
- Retention and morale of experienced volunteers
- Volunteer attendance at trainings
- Current vs. historic number of “chief relief” hours worked in a season