CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Fire Chief**

DEPARTMENT: **Fire**

E-PLAN
SG:E-DH-A
CS:N
FLSA:N
EEO4CODE:OA

JOB SUMMARY:

The Fire Chief provides leadership, direction, and general administrative oversight to the Fire Departments and employees responsible for fire protection, code enforcement and prevention and "All Hazards" disaster preparedness within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Fire District 8; county-wide fire/emergency medical services (EMS) dispatch operations and emergency paramedic services; and, fire/EMS as provided for in applicable contracts for service. Provides leadership and participates in cooperative relationships and initiatives for county and regional fire and emergency medical and disaster preparedness services. Work involves significant community engagement and public involvement with elected officials, fire, EMS, Port of Bellingham, numerous public safety agencies and institutions, as well as other governmental entities, citizens, business owner/operators and neighborhood groups. As a member of the City's senior management team, collaborates with the Executive Department, City Council, and other City departments on strategy and policy to ensure the City's mission and core values are incorporated into operational activities and services.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the Mayor and District 8 Board of Commissioners. Works independently under general guidance from the Mayor or designee to ensure coordination of objectives and priorities of the Mayor, Council and District 8 Board of Commissioners. Supervises staff, directly or through assigned managers. Works under various federal, state and County regulations, inter-local and agency agreements, as well as the City's municipal code, policies, and procedures.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. General Management: Plans, organizes, directs, controls and evaluates the work of the Bellingham Fire Department and Fire District 8 including all aspects of fire suppression, training, communications, code enforcement and prevention, administration, emergency medical services, and All Hazards disaster preparedness. Includes facilities, equipment, apparatus, personnel, public information/education, and fire inspection/investigation and code enforcement.

2. Program Development and Oversight of Operations: Oversees the management of the day-to-day administration of the Department, including budget, departmental structure and staffing, field operations, reporting and communications, stewardship and development of assets (fire stations, emergency communications dispatch center, equipment and apparatus), personnel and labor relations, incident management, employee safety, quality control, records and reporting. Coordinates programs and activities of the Departments with other City and/or County departments, local and regional agencies, Lummi Nation and citizen groups to ensure that programs and activities meet the fire and emergency medical services needs of the community. Provides for ongoing research into new approaches, technologies and trends, and recommends

implementation of programs and equipment to help the Department achieve its objectives more efficiently.

3. Personnel Management: Develops and maintains a workforce committed to, and with highly developed competencies in, customer service, results orientation, and teamwork. Directly or through managers, appoints, supervises, provides for training, performance evaluation and development; safety; and accountability of the Departments' employees. Ensures compliance with applicable laws and standards as well as labor agreements and City-wide and Departments' policies and procedures. Participates in the development and negotiation of labor contract proposals.

4. Fiscal and Business Management: Ensures the financial well-being of the Departments by establishing cost control measures and monitoring all fiscal operations of the Department. Prepares annual budgets and justifies budget requests and amendments. Projects and procures revenues and funding for the work of the Departments, including development and management of fees and charges and accessing federal and state funding sources. Ensures the efficient and economical use of departmental funds, personnel, equipment, materials, facilities and time.

5. Strategic Planning: Works with elected officials, department heads, staff, and other agencies to develop long-range plans for meeting the fire and emergency medical services needs of the community. Sets goals and objectives of the Fire Departments. Works with local, county, state and federal agencies to keep abreast of current trends and laws in the fire service, EMS and communications for the regional improvement of these activities.

6. Emergency Management and Special Incidents: Serves as the City's Director of Emergency Services overseeing the City's Office of Emergency Management and Emergency Operations Plan. Responds to, and is responsible for, emergency operations involving multiple jurisdictions through utilization of the National Incident Management System (NIMS). May assume command of large scale emergency events, if appropriate. Oversees and coordinates planning, logistics, operations, finance, and information dissemination during the emergency to protect public health and safety. Briefs Mayor and elected officials on developments which might affect overall public safety and/or other dimensions of public and community relations during a disaster event. Coordinates City disaster preparedness and training, serving as a member of applicable City/County Emergency Management Boards.

7. Inter-local Agreements and Operations: Responsible for administering inter-local service agreements which provide fire, EMS and fire/EMS dispatch services to Whatcom County and other jurisdictions, including administration and staff support for various committees and boards related to such services. Ensures Departments' representation at County Emergency Medical Services Council, County Ambulance Advisory Board, County Association of Fire Chiefs, County Emergency Management Council and other meetings concerning operations of the Fire Department, Emergency Medical Service and disaster preparedness/response operations.

8. Fire/EMS Dispatch: Serves as a member of the What-Comm Operations Board (9-1-1 Dispatch) and oversees the policies and procedures for the dispatch of emergency apparatus and personnel assigned to the Fire Department. Liaisons with other fire agencies served by the Fire Communications Center to develop county-wide fire communications policies and procedures.

9. Code Enforcement: Responsible for development and enforcement of the fire code, fire prevention ordinances, and building construction fire code compliance, including investigation of the causes and circumstances of fires.

10. Emergency Medical Services: Oversees paramedic and ambulance services provided by the City of Bellingham, ensuring efficiency of operations and maintenance of quality standards in administration and services, including records security, reporting, and fiscal soundness. Develops

and administers emergency medical services contracts.

11. Public Information and Education: Responsible for public relations and public education activities including news releases, web site information, meetings, appearances and effective media communications during emergency operations.

12. Policy Development: Establishes rules and regulations for the Fire Departments that meet applicable federal, state and local laws and furthers consistency with established national and state standards for fire/EMS/Emergency Management services. Reviews and updates such rules and regulations periodically to ensure that they remain current and in conformity with changing needs of the City/District as well as with applicable laws.

13. Senior Management Team: Provides information and advice to the Mayor and City Council on strategic planning and accomplishment of City goals and objectives. Participates in organization-wide strategic planning. Coordinates the Department's activities with those of other City departments and offices to ensure a consistent approach towards common projects and interests and the cost effective delivery of services. Monitors, prepares and proposes City responses to pertinent legislation related to fire/EMS services.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Other duties assigned by the Mayor and/or District 8 Board of Commissioners.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:
- Theories, principles and practices of effective public service administration specifically related to fire/EMS administrative processes and management.
- Firefighting, fire prevention, dispatch and fire/emergency medical service fields.
- Fire Department work and operations, facilities, community infrastructure, neighborhoods, institutions, and oversight agencies.
- Legislative processes, fiscal and budget management processes, and applicable administrative policies and procedures.
- Principals, practices and procedures of disaster preparedness, emergency operations center management and the incident command system.
  Departmental and related city/district issues and stakeholders, both internal and external.
- Other governmental legislative and agency processes, players, and issues.
- Washington labor laws, contract administration and recruitment/retention best practices.
- Applicable federal, state, municipal, and local laws and regulations affecting the work of the Department.

Skill in:
- Strong leadership skills.
- Management skills including supervisory skills, problem analysis and decision-making, planning and organizing, interpersonal sensitivity, management control, adaptability/flexibility, stress tolerance, and time management.
- Strong skills with "All Hazards" incident management with experience in organized incident management team.
- Negotiation with external agencies in inter-local agreements, mergers and consolidations.
- Excellent oral communications skills for working with a diversity of personnel, public officials, and citizens.
- Excellent writing skills.

Ability to:

- Make emergency decisions under stressful conditions which might be irreversible and which could result in immediate risk to life, property, environment, and could result in liability to the City, its citizens, or other agencies or jurisdictions involved in the emergency.
- Conduct self at all times in an ethical, professional and respectful manner.
- Establish and maintain cooperative and effective working relationships with citizens and stakeholders, both internal and external.
- Quickly grasp and manage highly complex and technical issues in a fast-paced environment and in a context of inter-related issues, systems, projects, and strategies.
- Articulate the City and Department's goals and work in an understandable and appropriate manner for the particular audience or individual.
- Develop and maintain effective organizational structure, financial control, and management information systems for the Department.
- Identify the Department's future direction in response to changing community needs, and to develop, implement, and monitor appropriate plans, schedules, and action steps.
- Work collaboratively with Public Safety partner agencies in development of long term strategic plan.
- Work independently but under general policy and strategic guidance.
- Maintain high ethical standards for conduct of public officials.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physical ability to perform the essential functions of the job, including:
  - Frequently operate a computer and other office machinery such as a keyboard, mouse, phone, and fax machine;
  - Frequently communicate accurate information and ideas with others;
  - Occasionally travel between worksites;
  - Occasionally transport objects weighing up to100 lbs.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed primarily in an office setting subject to frequent interruptions and includes remaining stationary for extended periods of time. May be exposed to highly stressful situations and individuals who are irate or hostile; may be subject to long hours due to attendance at City Council and Committee meetings and other responsibilities required at this executive level. Flexibility to work evening and weekend hours and occasional overnight travel to conferences and training sessions required. Also involves working in the field to coordinate fire fighting and emergency service activities as necessary. This position requires minimal to moderate physical exertion requirements.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree in emergency management, fire service administration, public administration or related field.
- Seven years fire or emergency management services experience including five years experience as a staff officer with progressive responsibility for a major function and its personnel, exercising command authority.
- Completion of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer program preferred.
- Experience with fire service mergers, consolidations and/or formation of "Regional Fire Authority" preferred.

- An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skill and ability to successfully perform the essential functions of the job will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:

- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal convictions check and child and vulnerable adult abuse records check.
- Valid Washington State driver's license and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving record abstract prior to hire.
- Must meet required physical ability and medical standards.
- Must pass pre-employment drug test.

PREPARED BY: Mike Leigh
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