

Correspondence – Item 11 – Fire Chief Recruitment 3/1/10

Dear City Council,

I believe it more than prudent to think "outside the box" in seeking a new Fire Chief. Piedmont, a very small city with 11,000 population, may not need a separate Police and Fire Chief. Indeed, many larger cities have successfully integrated public service in one department. Integrating Fire and Police Departments, or minimally one public safety chief position, should be explored.

Another easier alternative to implement is to share a fire chief with another small town. Albany is in close proximity to Piedmont with similar culture and values; I understand they will be seeking a new Fire Chief. These chief positions have become exorbitantly expensive, and I do not believe the administrative duties are such that this heavy financial outlay is warranted. I ask the Council to examine options that go beyond Mr. Grote's staff report.

The economy of scale is a commonly accepted economic principle, the concept also working in reverse. A small fire department is less efficient when compared to larger agencies, especially at the costly senior command levels. I suspect there are studies already in place that will confirm my assumption, no additional cost is necessary for staff to locate existing studies. Reducing cost at the top does not limit services to the community, it does eliminate unneeded senior staff cost.

Sincerely,

Rick Schiller

Mayor and Council Members

I join you in thanking Chief Speakman for his service. His boots and helmet will be difficult to fill.

Before voting on the process to replace the Chief, I urge you to consider the following questions, in an effort to explore all fiscally responsible options available to the City:

1. **Does Piedmont require a full time Fire Chief?** Could we share a Fire Chief with another similar sized city? Many smaller towns have done this in the past.

2. **Would a Head of Emergency Services be able to fill a dual role of Police Chief and Fire Chief?**

We do not have a Police Chief today, and this vacancy presents an opportunity to redefine the organizational structure of our Emergency Services Departments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ryan Gilbert
