

RICHMOND FIRE RESCUE REVIEW

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1 Introduction

This Report is the product of a review I conducted on behalf of the City of Richmond pursuant to Motion R06/6-6 passed by the City Council which motion reads

1 FIRE DEPARTMENT REVIEW

R06/6-6 It was moved and seconded

- (1) That the City conduct as soon as possible, a full external review of the Richmond Fire Department including hiring history, hiring practices, work place safety, and harassment policies, including recommendations that will provide the opportunity to allow the female firefighters to return to work as soon as possible, and to continue to work, and to feel secure in doing so, and

- (2) That staff provide a plan with budget implications, for implementation of any recommendations which may result from the external review

CARRIED”

This Report contains no names. I have also tried to eliminate identifying factors for any individuals referred to in this Report with the exception of specific reference to the Fire Chief. The identity of the specific individuals or their connection to a specific piece of information is not relevant to persons who may read this Report.

I was mindful during the process of collecting information through the interviews outlined in more detail below, that individuals would potentially be less candid if their views or concerns were connected directly or indirectly to them in this Report. I realize that in attaching such a high level of confidentiality to the information that there may be a suggestion that information provided could be tainted or provided in a self-serving manner by an individual because of the low risk of a comment or piece of information being attributed back to the provider. I have been very conscious of this in conducting the interviews and in assessing the credibility of each individual interviewed during this exercise. More will be said about that below.

For the last several months the Richmond Fire Rescue Department, (RFR), has been under a relentless glare of media attention brought on in part by litigation commenced by one of RFR's firefighters. The focus of the media attention has been on alleged difficulties experienced by various current and former women employed as firefighters in RFR. The media have presented RFR as a workplace in which as a matter of course women are unwelcome, marginalized and treated in such a manner as to cause them to leave RFR temporarily or potentially to leave firefighting altogether as a career. The force and intensity of the media attention on RFR in the last few months has had the effect of "painting everyone with the same brush", in that there is a perception that all women who are or have been employed in RFR have had a difficult and unsatisfactory experience through no fault of their own and that all, or nearly all men employed in RFR have had a direct or indirect role to play in the unhappy experiences of the women. It is inappropriate to suggest that all those who share a specific demographic characteristic have behaved in the same way – positively or negatively.

I have approached this review mindful of the intense public attention and media scrutiny RFR has experienced in the last few months. I have *not* been influenced in my methodology, my analysis, in the making of my findings or in the preparation of recommendations, by the publicity surrounding RFR.

In every context possible I have strived to maintain neutrality, objectivity and fairness in the collection and assessment of information. I have been determined to obtain the widest possible scope of information and to carefully assess this information in the context in which it has been provided but with no predisposition in respect of findings, outcomes or recommendations. The findings and recommendations in this Report are mine. They are the product of a careful scrutiny of the verbal and written information I have collected through interviews and other research outlined below, and the application of my experience and knowledge of other workplaces that I have been involved with in various contexts in the past twenty years. I have not been influenced by any stakeholder in making the findings and recommendations that are included in this Report.

The goal of this review has been to provide to the City of Richmond an objective comprehensive review of the various aspects of the Richmond Fire Rescue Department indicated

in the Motion set out above, together with recommendations so that meaningful progress can be made to improve the work environment in the Richmond Fire Rescue Department

The Motion requires that this review include recommendations that will provide the opportunity to allow the female firefighters to return to work as soon as possible, and to continue to work and to feel secure in doing so ” I have made findings and recommendations that address this specific issue However, I have interpreted this direction to include the expectation that in addition to the work environment being safe for women, it must also be safe for all other employees, regardless of gender or other demographic characteristics The development of a safe work environment must work in concert with ensuring RFR is effective and efficient As a result, while I have paid particular attention to issues and concerns raised by women firefighters, I have ensured that those issues and the recommendations flowing from them are presented in the context of building the most productive, effective and efficient Fire Rescue Department possible where all employees are valued and inspired regardless of demographic characteristics

2 **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference for this review are set out in a document prepared by the City designed to reflect the objectives of Council's Motion (Appendix 1). The Terms of Reference are

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXTERNAL REVIEW

RICHMOND FIRE RESCUE

BETWEEN

THE CITY OF RICHMOND

(the "City")

AND

SUSAN I PAISH

(the "Reviewer")

1 The Reviewer, will

- (a) Conduct interviews with key individuals to determine their perspective of the workplace in the Richmond Fire Rescue Department,
- (b) Review and evaluate current policies and procedures that govern workplace behaviour in the Richmond Fire Rescue Department,
- (c) Review and evaluate any proposed initiative that will govern workplace behaviour in the Richmond Fire Rescue Department,
- (d) Review current and past recruiting practices and hiring practices,
- (e) Review best practices in recruiting and hiring practices and make recommendations on any proposed changes to current practices
- (f) Review workplace safety practices and make recommendations as she determines appropriate

Together the above is reference throughout this document as the External Review

- 2 The External Review will be conducted by the Reviewer as legal counsel for the City, for the purpose of providing legal advice through a fact finding report and recommendations to the City
- 3 The Reviewer will advise each person she interviews that she is conducting this review as legal counsel for the City. The Reviewer's notes and the report that she prepares will be protected by solicitor/client privilege
- 4 All information supplied to the Reviewer by the individuals whom the Reviewer interviews will be supplied in confidence and will be treated by the Reviewer as strictly confidential. The information will be revealed only on a "need to know" basis in order to ensure that the External Review is complete and comprehensive
- 5 The information collected in the notes taken and the report prepared by the Reviewer during the course of the External Review will be collected and prepared and treated as information supplied in confidence and as information which is privileged and which is not discloseable under the British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The Reviewer will inform all whom she interviews of this understanding
- 6 The Reviewer will provide her report and Recommendations to the City Human Resources Director or others as she may be directed by the City. Those receiving the report will treat the report as strictly confidential unless directed otherwise by their advisors

Section 1(a) of the Terms of Reference has been fulfilled to the best of my ability. However, as noted in the next section of this Report, I was unable to obtain the cooperation of women currently employed as firefighters in RFR. More is said about this below.

Sections 1(b) through 1(f) of the Terms of Reference are addressed in the balance of this Report.

3 METHODOLOGY

(a) General Approach

This review commenced on April 28, 2006 with my first interview of a member of RFR. Between April 28th and June 7th, I interviewed 21 individuals employed in or connected to RFR or who had been previously employed in RFR. Each interview was conducted in person and in some cases individuals were interviewed more than once. The interviews ranged in length from one hour to six hours with most interviews lasting slightly over three hours.

While I will not disclose names of specific individuals interviewed, individuals interviewed came from the following groups or "stakeholders":

- newly hired firefighters,
- long-service firefighters in Richmond,
- firefighters from YVR now in Richmond,
- union leadership,
- various levels of Department management,
- City Human Resources
- public relations,
- former firefighters,
- retired firefighters,
- counsel on behalf of one firefighter, and
- administrative staff in RFR

Most interviews were conducted in private with one individual at a time. However, there were two occasions where logistics dictated that interviewing more than one individual was appropriate. On one occasion there were two individuals in the interview and on the second there were four individuals. In these two circumstances I was careful to ensure that each

individual understood and agreed to the parameters of the process and that each had a fair opportunity to speak

Each interview was conducted within the same parameters and each individual was advised of those parameters before she or he provided any information. The parameters governing every interview and which were explained to each individual prior to each interview were that

- 1 The interview process was voluntary. No individual could be coerced or forced to participate in this process. Each individual confirmed that she/he was voluntarily participating in the interview.
- 2 The interview could be conducted at any time in any location, except the individual's home. While some interviews took place at City Hall this was not the case for all interviews.
- 3 All information collected is protected by solicitor/client privilege. As a result, it would not be disclosed by me to any person other than in the solicitor client context. In addition, information provided would be kept confidential except to the extent that it needed to be referred to in this report. I advised each person that I did not "report out" to any individual in the City or RFR respecting the substance of any interview. However, I advised each individual that I would keep specific individuals in the City apprised of procedural or timing issues that I encountered.
- 4 I reviewed with each individual the general nature of the Motion passed by Richmond City Council and, in particular, advised each individual that I would be seeking information from them respecting the recruitment and hiring of firefighters workplace practices and procedures in particular relating to harassment information respecting the work environment and safety and any information respecting the inclusion of women currently or in the future, into RFR. I also advised each individual that in the context of them providing information to me respecting women in RFR I would be prepared to receive from them their views or any information they had in respect of building a more

diverse Department from perspectives other than gender such a racial or religious diversity

5 I explained to each individual that throughout the interview I would be assessing their credibility I explained in general terms what this would involve Given that information collected through personal interviews was a fundamental part of this review I explained in addition to recording whatever information the individual would be providing to me, I would also be assessing the manner, candour and frankness with which the information was provided in order to make a credibility assessment of each individual

6 Each individual was informed that I would be preparing a written report for submission to City Council I reviewed with each individual the general structure of the report but made it clear that I would not discuss with any individual the substance of the report, in particular what specific recommendations or findings may be I advised each individual that this Report would contain no names or identifying factors for the reasons outlined earlier I advised that the report was being prepared under the protection of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation* However, I also advised that an application could be made pursuant to that legislation to have all or part of the report disclosed Even though the report is prepared pursuant to the legislation, I advised each individual that I was advised that the Recommendation section of this Report would be public I advised each individual I did not have authority respecting the implementation of any recommendation

7 Each individual confirmed that she or he understood that I would not be disclosing to them specific substantive information provided by others

8 I asked each individual if he/she accepted the terms and parameters of the interview Each individual agreed to the parameters set out above

9 I then asked each individual to agree to hold confidential any and all information discussed during the interview There were two exceptions to this requirement of confidentiality and these were that the individual could discuss information with her or his lawyer and that the individual could discuss the information provided by the

individual with her or his own spouse or partner provided only that the spouse or partner agreed to hold that information confidential. I required that each individual confirm his or her personal commitment to keeping the information confidential. All persons interviewed during this process provided their personal commitment to maintaining confidentiality.

- 10 Each individual was advised that the information they provided would be recorded by me by hand. There would be no tape recording of the interview, nor would my handwritten notes be transcribed or provided to others.
- 11 Every individual was invited to provide me with any written documentation of any sort that they thought may be helpful to me gaining a better understanding of the specific issues as well as the overall operation and culture in RFR. Several individuals provided written materials.
- 12 Individuals were invited to recommend to me additional people for me to interview. However, I advised each individual that it was within my sole discretion to determine who I would interview and so while suggestions were welcomed and encouraged, this would not mean every, or even any individual recommended to me would, be interviewed.

After the above parameters were explained to each individual, I asked if there were any questions. Any questions were answered and then I asked again if the individual understood and accepted the parameters of the interview process. Each individual confirmed her or his understanding and acceptance of the parameters before the interview commenced.

In addition to obtaining information through the in-person interviews, I also requested various documents from the City and RFR, all of which were quickly and willingly provided. Through my own research, I also obtained documentation respecting fire departments generally, the inclusion of women and other demographic minorities in fire departments.

In addition to the personal interviews and review of documents, I

- toured the facilities at Fire Halls 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

- toured the new hall No 4 under construction,
- participated in a 'ride along' program with a day shift crew
- participated in a partial night shift 'ride along', and
- observed part of an Officers' Information Meeting

During both the day and night shift 'ride alongs' I had the opportunity to observe and, to a lesser degree, experience the work day/night of a crew and to observe some of the interactions between members of RFR including interactions with management and, on the night shift, with a recruit. While I certainly appreciate that this was a very limited exposure, I am comfortable that the crews were candid in their behaviour towards each other and in their conduct during the shifts. I was not given a rehearsed or engineered presentation of shifts or crews. I selected the shifts and date I would participate with no interference from anyone at RFR.

During each of the "ride along" shifts I had the opportunity to meet firefighters in and from several halls. I also had the opportunity to speak casually and informally with individual and small groups of firefighters for anywhere from five minutes to approximately thirty minutes. These informal discussions were not clothed with the parameters or restrictions of the full interviews described above. These interactions gave firefighters the opportunity to ask questions. Questions asked included

- the scope of the review,
- the process I was following,
- timing,
- my personal and professional background, and
- the product of the review (*i.e.* who I would report to)

No confidential information was disclosed during these discussions. It was very clear through the discussions that RFR members are anxious to bring closure to what has clearly been a disruptive and for some, deeply disturbing period.

In addition to answering various questions from RFR members, I was also able to ask many of them substantive questions relating to the areas covered by this review. These

exchanges provided a further and very useful insight into the practices, culture and perspectives of various individuals and of the RFR as a whole

In summary, this review is based on information obtained through

- (i) in-person interviews with individuals who agreed to the specific parameters
- (ii) reviews of facilities at six of the seven halls and one of the two new halls under construction,
- (iii) observations of interactions and operations obtained through two “ride alongs”,
- (iv) informal exchanges and discussions with several RFR members alone or in small groups,
- (v) a review of considerable procedural and policy related documentation provided by the City, RFR, and various individuals,
- (vi) a review specific personal documentation relevant to specific incidents, individuals or complaints,
- (vii) a review of general documentation obtained respecting workplace “best practices”, fire department operations testing, recruitment, and other aspects of fire departments operations and culture, and
- (viii) knowledge I have obtained respecting workplace conflict, workplace harassment, culture change and “best practices” obtained through my involvement in other similar projects and my involvement in the human resources field for over 20 years

With the one exception noted below I am comfortable that in the less than six weeks used to collect data and information I have obtained a very broad and satisfactorily deep understanding of the history, operations and culture in RFR, that provides a reliable and comprehensive platform for the conclusions and recommendations in this Report

(b) **Participation by Women Firefighters**

There are currently four women employed in RFR as firefighters. Two of these women are currently on leaves of absence. Two other women are employed in RFR in positions outside of fire suppression. In the past there have been as many as seven women employed in RFR. Of the three no longer employed in RFR, two have left firefighting and one is deceased.

The Resolution from Richmond City Council states in part that the Report is to include recommendations that will provide the opportunity to allow the female firefighters to return to work as soon as possible, and to continue to work, and to feel secure in doing so". In addition to this specific directive, the intent of the City Council Resolution is in part to find effective and practical ways to fully engage the women currently employed in RFR, to create a work environment that is productive and effective for them and to also find ways to increase the representation of women in RFR, in particular as active members of suppression crews.

One of the four women currently employed in RFR is engaged in active litigation in which various current and former members of RFR, RFR as a whole, the Union and the City are named as defendants. I determined that it was likely not appropriate to interview this woman as doing so may have been perceived as disrespectful of her interests in the litigation and I did not want to compromise the litigation process in any way. However, her counsel contacted me by email enquiring about this process. I was able to speak with her counsel as noted earlier. He had some reservations at the outset of our meeting about my neutrality and objectivity but once he understood the process and the objectives of the Review, he was candid and forthcoming in his comments, views, suggestions and concerns, some of which are reflected in this Report. After speaking with him I decided that it was neither necessary or appropriate for me to seek to speak directly with his client.

Interviews were scheduled with each of the other three women firefighters. Each of these women cancelled her interview. I exchanged several telephone messages with one of the women in an effort to explore the reason why she had cancelled her interview and why she was not prepared to participate. The only answer I was given was that she was not prepared to participate at this time. I was advised by another of the women that this woman had sent a letter directly to the Mayor setting out why she would not participate in this process. She did not

discuss any concerns with me and I do not have her letter. I do not know whether any procedural concerns apparently raised by this woman could have been addressed so that she would participate.

I attempted to contact one of the other women but my telephone calls were not returned. I left both of these women email messages requesting and encouraging them to contact me so that we could discuss concerns that they may have respecting the process or any aspect of the review in hopes that they would agree to participate. These messages were not returned.

I met with the third female firefighter on two separate occasions, with one of the meetings lasting approximately three hours and the other meeting lasting just over two hours. At the first meeting, the individual had many understandable questions about the procedure, the process, the outcomes and timing. I reviewed with her in detail every aspect of the process, the parameters for an interview, the concept and expectation of confidentiality and I addressed all the issues that she raised. In particular, this individual wanted to confirm that the recommendation section of this report would be made public. I immediately confirmed this with the City and reported this back to her. After the first meeting she said that she would consider whether she was prepared to participate in the process.

After not hearing from her for several days I contacted her once again to see if she would be prepared to participate in the process and she agreed to schedule a meeting. However, when I arrived at the meeting at the time and location selected, she advised that she had changed her mind and that she was not prepared to participate in the process. I again offered to answer or attempt to answer any questions or concerns that she may have about the process and encouraged her to bring her perspectives forward so that they could be fully considered in this review. For approximately two hours we again discussed her concerns. While she had no specific concerns that had not been addressed in our first meeting she concluded that she did not feel comfortable participating in the process primarily because she did not believe that anything effective would result from this review. She was not able to provide me any reasons for this conclusion other than her view that complaints and legislative rights were the only thing the City would pay attention to.

After leaving several messages for this woman I heard back from her at the end of May. On May 29th she agreed to meet on June 1 and to participate in the process. She retracted that agreement on May 30 because she received an email from the City which she interpreted as saying that my retainer had changed and that I was responsible for working with her on her specific return to work logistics. I followed up immediately with the City confirmed that unfortunately the email had been misinterpreted and, with the City's concurrence, communicated this to the firefighter and again set out the parameters and focus of this review and encouraged her to participate.

There was some additional email exchange with this woman focussed on encouraging her participation but she refused citing that she was "concerned about speaking with a lawyer that the City had retained to review its practices". I determined that it was unlikely anything could be done to obtain this firefighter's participation as each time one of her concerns was addressed she articulated a new concern.

On June 12th I received a copy of an email message this woman sent to the City setting out her conditions for participation. Among other conditions, this woman said she would only participate by responding in writing to written questions I provided. I had previously advised this woman at least twice that this process was not based on specific "questions and answers" but rather that I wanted to hear her perspectives on the macro level topics that are the subject of this review. I first met this woman at the end of April and offered then to provide her a written outline of the general areas covered by this review so that she could consider them before speaking with me. She did not respond to this suggestion until her email to the City of June 12th.

This woman was very well aware of the time line governing this review and I had specifically advised her at the end of May that information collection would end in early June and that I would then be focussed on preparing this Report.

After several attempts to obtain the participation of this woman I concluded that she would likely never be prepared to participate in a manner that would allow me to test in any meaningful way any information she brought forward. I also concluded it was inappropriate to present a process completely different and less reliable for this woman than for any of the other participants. I advised the City of these conclusions.

As a result, although this review has been initiated in part because of issues and concerns raised by the women firefighters and even though this review is focussed on trying to better understand the operations and the environment in RFR as it impacts or may impact women firefighters with a view to developing recommendations that will produce a work environment in which they can thrive and be valued, they have refused to participate

The refusal of the women to participate in this process is disappointing. However, their refusal to participate, while maintaining that they have considerable concerns and issues that are not being appropriately addressed by RFR presents a more fundamental and troubling issue

Although I have not had the opportunity to speak with all the women, I have spoken with one in considerable detail and one other through various voice message exchanges. I also heard through the interviews from several individuals who have worked with, or on behalf of the women in respect of addressing or resolving various of the complaints or concerns they raised. Some common themes were very clear through these interviews which themes are consistent with my experience in trying to gain the women's participation in this review. These themes are

- a refusal to accept any accountability for their own conduct,
- refusal to accept processes or guidelines generally applied to others (either in the workplace or in this review),
- rejection of the potential that they should or might need to consider compromises,
- rejection of the potential that they may need to adjust their own behaviour,
- inability or refusal to see situations from the perspective of others,
- expectation that they are entitled to govern the result in a situation where many others are involved

Some examples of my own experiences include

- disagreement with my decision not to confirm that conclusions suggested by one woman would be accepted
- strong rejection of the suggestion that most if not all members of RFR may need to change in some way

- rejection of the fact that information or assertions provided would be tested

I heard from others many examples similar to those set out above arising in various other contexts in the workplace

There is a stubbornness and self-righteousness attached the behaviour of these three women that is perplexing in the context in which they find themselves. They have each raised various complaints about the work environment over the past several years. In a well-intentioned effort to better understand their concerns at a macro level and to explore opportunities for meaningful and lasting change that will be relevant to them, City Council carried Resolution R06/6-6 and directed that this review be held. The refusal of these three women to participate in this process, to provide any substantive reasons for their refusal and to shut off communications suggests that there is a real question as to whether these individuals are seriously interested in achieving meaningful resolution to their issues and whether they are prepared to bring closure to matters already dealt with and to look forward to building a productive inspired Fire Rescue Department. They seem more interested in finding fault, raising complaints and being fixated on the past. I appreciate that my comments are harsh. They should not be taken in any way to suggest that some of the substantive complaints the women have raised lack merit. My comments should also not be taken to suggest that attempts to resolve their concerns in the past have been successful.

The fact is that the women have suggested there are macro level or systemic issues that need to be addressed, the City has responded to their concerns and in the face of a process that may offer solutions to their concerns and which will certainly ensure their concerns are heard and considered they have walked away and have done so without suggesting realistic solutions to their concerns.

There may be some who will suggest that because the women have refused to participate in the process that this review cannot be completed. I disagree. This process was commenced by Council with the best of intentions. The process has been set up in a manner that is as 'safe' and as confidential as possible. Many members and former members of RFR have agreed to participate and to abide by the parameters for interviews set out above. The fact that the three

individuals who are most likely expected to benefit from this process have refused to participate in it should not give them the platform to manipulate the process or delay the progress

Virtually every individual who has participated in the interviews has acknowledged that change in various aspects of the operations, policies, structure environment and culture in RFR needs to occur. While I have no doubt that some individuals see others requiring more change than themselves no individual interviewed suggested that change lay solely in the domain of others. I am confident that there is a cautious willingness amongst those who did participate in this process both through the interviews and through the informal discussions to consider significant and fundamental change in various aspects of RFR. This willingness may provide the platform for meaningful progress towards a more diverse Fire Rescue Department and a Department that is prepared to be more inclusive and welcoming to demographic groups different from those which currently dominate RFR. However this willingness will be significantly undermined if a small group of individuals has the ability to manipulate the entire Department. The refusal of the women to participate in this process cannot be used as a basis for not considering and implementing some or all of the recommendations in this Report. If that is allowed to happen, it will, in effect, allow three individuals to manipulate and engineer the progress or lack of progress of RFR.

As will be seen in later sections of this Report I have determined that on various occasions and in various circumstances City and Department leadership and management have allowed themselves to be manipulated by small groups or individuals in ways that may be in the best interests of a specific group or individual but to the detriment of the interests of RFR as a whole. That cannot continue.

The Richmond City Council resolved that this review would be conducted as soon as possible. Every effort has been made to structure the review to protect the interests of the individuals participating. There is every indication that City Council is seriously committed to considering and implementing recommendations for change. There is also a strong indication the members of RFR at all levels are prepared for change. The refusal of those who may potentially benefit most from this review to participate in the process should not cause Council or any other party to shy away from starting to implement some of the recommendations in this

Report Rather, moving forward with change even without the input of the women firefighters will be a clear and strong signal that the City and RFR are committed to building a more inclusive and integrated Fire Rescue Department

In conclusion, the four female firefighters employed in RFR have been given every opportunity to participate in this process, three of them through direct communications with them and one through communication with her counsel I have input through counsel for one of the women firefighters None of the other three have agreed to participate and none have provided substantive reasons to me for their refusal, nor have they provided reasonable suggestions as to how the process may be changed in a way that would permit them to participate As a result, I conclude that while these women have raised concerns and issues about the work environment and profess to want meaningful change, they are not prepared to participate in a process that is likely to produce that result That is unfortunate but should not deter the City or RFR from continuing to move forward

4 CREDIBILITY

Credibility is an issue that must be considered in any dispute where facts are not agreed. While this review is not a 'fact finding' exercise nor is it an investigation, it is important that I am confident in the validity of information which I consider in this review.

While there are many documents recording specific complaints, policies, resolutions to specific complaints and various plans to implement change in RFR, the true nature of the issues affecting RFR cannot be discerned from a detached review of documents. It is for that reason that the in-person interviews have been a fundamental element of the information gathering process in this review. The time constraints on this process prevented extensive interviewing. In a "perfect world", I would have had the opportunity to interview more members and former members of RFR. As a result, I was careful to select interview candidates who held different positions or held different positions in RFR or had various other relationships with RFR, had various work histories, different lengths of service and ideally different personalities and perspectives. The last two characteristics could not be guaranteed but having now completed the interviews I am comfortable that all of the above objectives were met with the obvious exception of the failure of the women firefighters to participate.

In the context of interviewing only a small sample of the total population in the workplace and given the highly charged atmosphere in and around RFR brought on in part by the publicity, it was critical that I carefully assess credibility of each individual.

The leading case in this province in respect of the tests applied by adjudicators when assessing credibility is *Faryna v Chorny* (1952) 2 DLR 354, BCCA. At page 356 of the decision Mr. Justice O'Halloran states:

If a trial Judge's finding of credibility is to depend solely on which person he thinks made the better appearance of sincerity in the witness box, we are left with a purely arbitrary finding and justice would then depend upon the best actors in the witness box. On reflection it becomes almost axiomatic that the appearance of telling the truth is but one of the elements that enter into the credibility of the evidence of a witness.

Opportunities for knowledge, powers of observation, judgment and memory, ability to describe clearly what he has seen and heard, as well as other factors

combine to produce what is called credibility, and *cf Raymond v Bosanquet* (1919), 50 D L R 560 at p 566, 59 S C R 452 at p 460, 17 O W N 295. A witness by his manner may create a very unfavourable impression of his truthfulness upon the trial Judge, and yet the surrounding circumstances in the case may point decisively to the conclusion that he is actually telling the truth. I am not referring to the comparatively infrequent cases in which a witness is caught in a clumsy lie.

The credibility of interested witnesses, particularly in cases of conflict of evidence cannot be gauged solely by the test of whether the personal demeanour of the particular witness carried conviction of the truth. The test must reasonably subject his story to an examination of its consistency with the probabilities that surround the currently existing conditions. In short, the real test of the truth of the story of a witness in such a case must be its harmony with the preponderance of the probabilities which a practical and informed person would readily recognize as reasonable in that place and in those conditions. Only thus can a Court satisfactorily appraise the testimony of quick-minded, experienced and confident witnesses, and of those shrewd persons adept in the half-lie and of long and successful experience in combining skilful exaggeration with partial suppression of the truth. Again a witness may testify what he sincerely believes to be true, but he may be quite honestly mistaken. For a trial Judge to say "I believe him because I judge him to be telling the truth", is to come to a conclusion on consideration of only half the problem. In truth it may easily be self-direction of a dangerous kind."

The above noted tests set out in *Faryna v Chorny* were focused on findings of credibility made in the context of a courtroom trial where witnesses were giving evidence under oath and were subject to cross-examination. The tests have been consistently applied in determinations of credibility made by courts in British Columbia, human rights tribunals and other administrative bodies over the past five decades (see for example *Sherry Hanson v Surfside Acres 1980 Limited Doing Business as Surfside RV Ltd*, A C C H R No 233 November 12, 1992, *Wanda Arbigast v Empire International Investment Corporation*, A C C H R No 231 February 24, 1993, *Nicky Lee Rouger v Hin Yuan Holdings and Joe Freitas* A C C H R No 255 December 7 1993)

Witnesses appearing before arbitration boards, courts or other administrative tribunals are sworn to tell the truth and are subject to cross-examination. Such is not the case in the review of the sort I have conducted. The individuals interviewed were not giving evidence under oath. Also, I did not "cross-examine" in the sense that term is used in a litigation context.

However, the information provided to me during this review has not been left 'untested'. During the interview process I relied upon the factors set out in the *Fayna* case. I also built in as many credibility 'checks' as possible to each interview and to the overall process. The following specific steps were taken during the interviews to both assist me in assessing credibility and to reduce the likelihood that any individual would feel pressured or, alternatively, at liberty to provide information that was not credible.

- 1 The parameters for the interview were described in detail to each individual in advance of that individual providing any information. This ensured that no person could say that they were unclear or did not understand the interview environment or the uses to which their information would be put.
- 2 I tried to create an interview environment that was as comfortable as possible for the individual. Each individual was advised that they could take breaks whenever they wished during the interview, they could terminate the interview at any time, reschedule if they wished, provide any documentation that they wished, recommend other people for interviewing and be accompanied by someone during the interview if they wished. All these steps were taken to put individuals at ease and remove as much stress or pressure as possible which, if not removed, may result in less than credible information coming forward.
- 3 All individuals were given the opportunity to contact me at any time after the interview if they had additional information or if they wanted to discuss any of the information they provided during the interview.
- 4 All individuals were questioned about inconsistencies within their own information or information that they provided to me that was inconsistent with information provided to me by others. I was careful not to attribute conflicting information to any other individual but was also careful to make sure that any individual who provided information to me that was in conflict with what I had heard elsewhere was made aware of this.

I very carefully assessed the substance of the information provided to me as well as the manner in which the information was provided. I carefully observed body language, listened to voice tone and watched other mannerisms throughout the interview.

I have concluded that each individual who participated in this process did so credibly and provided their information in a credible and forthright fashion. This is not to say that I accept all the versions of events or perspectives that have been provided to me. That is not possible especially where one perspective is in conflict with another. However, conflicting perspectives does not mean that one party is lacking in credibility. Two people can observe the same event and come away with different perspectives. This does not mean that one perspective is credible and the other is not. Credibility in the context of this review means that each individual sincerely provided information in an accurate and complete manner. Information may have been influenced by an individual's perspective on the work environment and personal factors. Some individuals provided information in a manner that was more self-serving than it needed to be and others took advantage of the benefit of hindsight in explaining certain behaviours or action taken in the past. However, I do not find any individual who participated in this process to be lacking in credibility. No one tried to withhold information, present information inaccurately, manufacture information or manipulate the process.

5 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

This review was established in part because of repeated, allegations respecting various aspects of the RFR culture and operations. While the focus of this review has been on identifying problems and developing recommendations to overcome these problems, the review has also confirmed that there are real strengths and positive elements in RFR. In moving forward it will be very important to build upon and leverage the strength in RFR as part of the strategy for addressing problems.

The challenges facing RFR are not trivial or superficial, nor are they insurmountable. The challenges are the product of a deeply rooted workplace culture that needs to evolve. Cultural change in a work environment is among the most important and yet most difficult for an organization to address. There is no 'quick fix'. The nature and extent of the change needed will only be realized through strong leadership, committed management, a realistic time horizon, appropriate funding and a realization that every individual employed in or connected to, RFR will likely need to change some aspect of his/her attitudes, behaviour and perspectives. Below is a summary of conclusions which conclusions have provided the platform for the recommendations in the next section.

1. There are many members of RFR who are sincerely supportive of improving the demographic diversity in RFR. There are also many members of RFR who have been deeply hurt and troubled on a personal, professional and family level by some of the publicity and allegations levelled at the department.
2. Nearly everyone in RFR realizes that the status quo in terms of operation, structure, and culture is unsustainable and that change is coming. It is not often that an organization finds itself needing significant and fundamental change and having most stakeholders understanding that change will happen.
3. The development of a more diverse, inclusive work environment must work in concert with ensuring RFR emergency response remains effective and efficient. While current circumstances require that particular attention be paid to issues and concerns raised by women firefighters, those issues and recommendations flowing from them must be

considered in the context of building the most productive effective and efficient Fire Rescue Department possible where all employees are valued and inspired regardless of demographic characteristics

- 4 There is a stubbornness and self-righteousness attached to the behaviour of the three women firefighters who refused to participate in this review. This is perplexing in the context in which they find themselves. They have each raised complaints about the work environment. In a well-intentioned effort to better understand their concerns and to explore opportunities for meaningful change, City Council carried Resolution R06/6-6 and directed that this review be held. The refusal of the women to participate in the process suggests there is a real question as to whether these individuals are seriously interested in achieving meaningful resolution to their issues and whether they are prepared to bring closure to matters already dealt with and to look forward to building a productive, inspired Fire Rescue Department.
- 5 The refusal of the women to participate should not delay or divert the City's commitment to implement change focused on building a more inclusive and demographically diverse Fire Rescue department.
- 6 It is unrealistic to expect significant changes in the demographic structure and aspects of the culture in the short term. Culture and demographic change needed in RFR must be a priority but it must be very carefully and cautiously planned, managed and implemented if there is any expectation of lasting meaningful movement from the current culture or demographic make-up.
- 7 There has been a lack of meaningful progress in RFR towards building more diversity and in particular towards building a work environment that understands and appreciates the value of demographic diversity. This is disappointing. It is caused in part by the current culture which is characterized by the following:
 - (a) for generations firefighting has been seen as a calling not a job
 - (b) there is a strong belief by some current firefighters that the calling vs job assessment is important in building effective fire departments

- (c) the paramilitary culture and chain of command structure which are essential to effective emergency response
 - (d) the paramilitary and chain of command aspects of RFR are embedded in how non-emergency issues are addressed,
 - (e) an environment that does not tolerate deviations from narrowly defined norms'
 - (f) the operation of crews in which they spend extended periods of time in non-emergency response situations This is where bonds based on openness, candour and a willingness to work co-operatively are developed,
 - (g) until recently, promotion into Battalion Chief based on seniority This is still the case for Officers There is little training and no testing for Officers or Battalion Chiefs in respect of their people skills, coaching ability, conflict resolution, effective communication, leadership or management aptitudes or experience, and
 - (h) resistance to change
- 8 The current structure in the suppression area in RFR and within RFR overall has inhibited the prioritizing of issues such as diversity and inclusiveness The structure has also negatively impacted development or implementation of plans that would lead to any meaningful change
- 9 Specific aspects of RFR structure and perspectives on management have impeded progress on developing plans for change These aspects include
- (a) a restrictive view of who is senior management
 - (b) the senior management team being comprised of the two Deputies and the Chief prevents inclusion of different perspectives and skill sets from for example the managers of Finance and Administration in discussions respecting various matters in RFR

- (c) very little, if any real time and energy being devoted to macro issues, including organizational or cultural change
 - (d) strict adherence to seniority based promotions to the Officer and Battalion Chief levels in the past has resulted in senior and technically skilled personnel occupying these positions but not necessarily those who have management aptitudes or abilities
 - (e) little meaningful education or training of Officers and Battalion Chiefs in respect of coaching, communication, conflict resolution, people management or other non-technical skills
 - (f) the inclusion of the Officers and Battalion Chiefs in the bargaining unit likely limits the degree to which people in these positions can realistically be expected to implement meaningful change that may “rock the boat” in a culture where tradition and an adherence to historical practices is nearly sacrosanct
- 10 Without a structure that provides regular and consistent management level leadership across the shifts, on the ground at a crew level, cultural change will happen very slowly and may be compromised
- 11 The new Fire Chief arrived in the spring of 2000 just as an investigation into serious allegations of misconduct was concluded. He was unaware of the seriousness and depth or breadth of these issues
- 12 The Fire Chief focused on rebuilding and rehabilitating the relationship between RFR and the City during his first 2-3 years. He did this at the expense of engaging with, and understanding fundamental issues in the fire halls
- 13 In 2002-2003 and while the Chief was focused on rebuilding relationships between the Fire Department and the rest of the City, the Chief Administrative Officer left the vacancy created was not filled, the Chief Administrative Officer then returned the General Manager to which the Fire Chief reported retired this vacancy was not filled and the Fire Chief started reporting directly to the newly returned Chief Administrative

- Officer This was not an environment in which the Fire Chief could have been expected to effectively rebuild the broken relationship between RFR and the City and at the same time effectively engage with the fire halls and maintain a presence in the community
- 14 The Fire Chief was aware of general concerns of the women firefighters He underestimated the importance, the depth and the breadth of the concerns raised by the women The Fire Chief saw himself as a ‘champion’ for women in firefighting but he did not apply time, energy or attention to this until very recently
- 15 The Fire Chief’s secondary focus during the first years of his tenure was to reduce the overriding importance seniority had on the career path of firefighters His vision was that if he could achieve this he would be able to develop a more inspired and a more diverse and inclusive fire department
- 16 The optimism first shown by the women firefighters towards the new Chief’s leadership eroded Issues that were seen as minor and technical at first were left unaddressed for months and eventually years and became flashpoints and examples of the alleged systemic rejection of women in the Fire Department
- 17 The Fire Chief had a compelling and sensible vision for RFR when he arrived He invested heavily in pursuing the two primary elements of that vision Regrettably, the Chief was not advised, nor did he become aware of serious rifts in the RFR that had their genesis likely in the 1970’s and continued to fester through the merger with YVR , and which were still unresolved when the Chief arrived in 2000 These unresolved issues combined with the structural issues significantly undermined the chance that the Chief could effectively pursue his long-term vision Changes are needed to the structure, training policies and operations in RFR in order for the vision of a more inclusive and demographically diverse department to be realized
- 18 Between 2000 and 2004 there were several factors that resulted in little or no meaningful attention being paid to demographic cultural and structural issues and the need for significant change These factors included
- (a) the arrival of a new Fire Chief in 2000

- (b) the focus of the Fire Chief on rehabilitating the relationship between RFR, other City departments and senior City officials and the secondary focus of the Fire Chief on achieving an appreciation of the value of education and training in a strictly seniority-based promotional system,
 - (c) changes in the structure and reporting relationships between the Fire Chief and senior City officials, and
 - (d) failure by the Fire Chief to learn the history and understand the culture in RFR early in his tenure
- 19 The tone and culture of a particular crew is set in large part by the Officer and Battalion Chief. The historical practice of promotion based on seniority means that there are some Officers and Battalion Chiefs who do not have an aptitude for management and leadership. There are Officers and Battalion Chiefs who are struggling with respect to their responsibility to deal with 'people issues'. There is little training provided to the Officers in respect of these aspects of their responsibility. In order to move RFR forward to a more inclusive environment accepting of different perspectives, it will be important to ensure that those in supervisory or management positions have the aptitudes, the ability and training to effectively coach, lead and manage people as well as senior level technical and operational expertise.
- 20 It will be unrealistic and impractical to expect significant change in the culture to be inspired or promoted by the Battalion Chiefs or Officers while they are in the same bargaining unit as those they supervise. This is in part because the cultural change necessary to move RFR forward to being more inclusive and demographically diverse will require in some cases 'changing traditions', 'implementing new norms' and demonstrating intolerance for behaviour and conduct that may well have been tolerated and even condoned by those now requiring the change.
- 21 There is a strong focus on technical training and ensuring that all members of the department receive regular and somewhat rigorous technical updates and training but there has been very little meaningful training on coaching, communications, interpersonal

relations, conflict resolution and other people related topics. Some of those interviewed during this review said they expected that there would be resistance to this kind of training and that some firefighters may see such training as ‘a joke’

- 22 There has been discussion in RFR about an ‘Assistant Deputy Chief’ position that would be outside the bargaining unit and would relieve the Deputy Chiefs and the Fire Chief of some administrative and other responsibilities, thereby giving them more time to focus on strategic projects such as cultural change. It was not apparent to me that this additional level is needed. It would be expensive to create these positions and then to hire the additional staff needed to fill them.
- 23 The existing “Action Plan – Richmond Fire-Rescue – Building a Respectful Workplace” may provide a good platform for considering and reviewing certain training areas and training needs. Projects on the action plan need to be prioritized and carefully costed. The nature and extent of training necessary in RFR will potentially be costly. In order to effectively implement training contemplated in the plan, RFR members will likely need to be called in on overtime or a truck will need to be taken out of service. There may be notable budget implications for the City and RFR. Without effective, consistent and thorough training on various non-operational topics, there will be little chance that meaningful culture change will be realized in RFR in the near future.

YVR Merger

- 24 The coming together of the seniority lists between the PSAC unit and the IAFF unit created considerable tension and disharmony especially between older and younger firefighters in the YVR operation. For the most part it appears that those tensions have now subsided but there are a few senior employees who continue to harbour concerns. There is nothing that can be done to change now how the seniority issues were handled in 1995 but senior management in RFR needs to be aware that there are some lingering sensitivities. Senior management including the Battalion Chiefs need to be alert to specific concerns. They need to be prepared to address it in a private discussion with individuals focused on understanding the basis for any current concern and on helping the

- individual look forward. There are not many RFR members still concerned about seniority and this should not be a significant issue to address.
- 25 The failure to integrate the YVR Officers into RFR at the time of the merger created short term resentment on the part of the YVR Officers which resentment has subsided in part because of the retirement of many of these Officers, and in part because of the passage of time. The lost opportunity to learn from the Officers in 1995 about working in a mixed gender environment cannot be recaptured.
- 26 There are a few members who hang on to the view that there is a 'two tier' environment, with the former YVR members being on the bottom tier. Those individuals are sometimes vocal in their views and are in positions where they may influence both the views of others and the overall morale or perspective of a crew or shift. There is no policy or macro level program needed or that would be appropriate to address these lingering but problematic attitudes. It will be up to Senior Management, the Battalion Chiefs and Officers to be alert to individuals still harbouring resentment towards either RFR or YVR employees based on perceptions of technical expertise and to address these concerns on an individual basis.
- 27 The lack of appreciation of the culture and of some of the non-operational issues existing at YVR at the time of the merger created deep and lasting rifts, some of which have contributed to some of the problems today.
- 28 The passage of time and the retirement of some of the senior YVR and RFR employees has lessened the tension between the YVR and RFR employees. However, there has been negative publicity respecting how the YVR merger was handled, some coming from retired employees. Retirement from RFR does not mean unresolved issues will not be discussed in the media. There is also a lingering negativity in RFR about how the YVR Merger was handled. That needs to be resolved and closed once and for all. Even though the leadership responsible for the YVR merger in 1995 has left RFR the current leadership cannot ignore some of the unresolved issues. As part of moving ahead and building a more inclusive department current leadership including leadership in the City will need to acknowledge that the YVR Merger was not well handled by various

leadership levels in the Union, RFR or YVR. There is no need for major or elaborate programs or apologies but rather a recognition that the merger created issues and difficulties at the time, and that some of the decisions taken at the time of the YVR Merger created unfortunate and negative impacts for many members. Those decisions cannot be undone. Some of the mistakes from 1995 will provide important guidance in moving ahead to build a more inclusive RFR.

29 The YVR Merger introduced women into RFR for the first time. The experience of the mixed gender workforce at YVR was not positive for all of the women employed at that facility. Because of the lack of communication between the leadership at YVR and the leadership in RFR at various levels and because of the almost singular focus on labour relations issues, no real attention was paid to the significance of bringing the women into RFR. There was no consideration of the views and expectations of the members of RFR who had never worked with women before, there was little consideration given to views and expectations of the women beyond some cursory discussion about the need to change some of the facilities and there was no appreciation of the difficulties that the women or the men had experienced working together at YVR. As a result, there were two significant outcomes from the YVR Merger from the perspective of integrating women into RFR.

(a) Pre-existing issues between the women at YVR and between the women and men at YVR were not understood and were left unresolved at the time of the merger. These issues and concerns were imported into RFR where they festered.

(b) There was very little attention given to the views and attitudes of the members of RFR in respect of including women in their workforce. There was some limited attention paid to superficial facility needs and some cursory training but no attention paid to attitudes, expectations or perceptions of the men.

30 The failure to appreciate the significance of the introduction of women into RFR cannot be undone at this point. It will be critical for RFR and the City as well as every member of RFR to appreciate that the integration of women from this point forward and the

building of a more diverse and inclusive yet effective and efficient, RFR will require an appreciation of the interests, expectations and perspectives of all members of RFR

- 31 In moving forward it will be important for RFR and City leadership to learn from the YVR experience. The inclusion of women in the environment will present challenges for some women. It will also present challenges and uncertainty for some men. In addition it is dangerous and unrealistic to assume that all women or all men have the identical needs, expectations or sensitivities because of their gender.

Recruitment and Hiring

- 32 There has been no shortage of candidates interested in becoming members of RFR and therefore, but for a desire to change the complexion of the candidate pool there has been no incentive or need to reach out to sectors of the community who have not traditionally been interested in a firefighting career. In particular, women and the non Caucasian communities have been significantly less represented in the candidate pools than have been Caucasian males. It is highly unlikely that RFR will increase its demographic diversity unless there is a significant change in the demographic diversity of the candidate pool.

- 33 Prior to 2000 RFR utilized what was considered a traditional approach to recruitment and selection focused on attracting candidates through a 'firefighters network', as well as those candidates who had a "life dream" of becoming a firefighter. There was a sufficient number of these candidates applying such that there was no need to advertise for candidates nor to consider significant changes to recruitment or outreach. The candidate pool was demographically very similar to the demographics existing in the fire department with the overwhelming majority of candidates being young, white males. During the selection process the emphasis was on technical and strength attributes of candidates with very little attention being given to non technical skills, education or non-firefighting related skills or experiences. As with the recruitment process there was little incentive until very recently to consider changes to the selection process because there was no incentive or need to change either the demographics of the new recruits or the skills, experience and aptitudes they brought to RFR. A new approach to recruitment and

selection started to develop in 2000 with the arrival of the new Fire Chief and the designation to RFR of a human resources manager from the City's Human Resources Department

34 The selection process in 2000 was more structured and more objective than had been the case in previous years. However, there were significant issues raised by the HR Designate respecting the process. These concerns included

- (a) A lack of visible minorities or women in the candidate pool,
- (b) low scores on the applications submitted by women and visible minorities indicating a lesser degree of preparation than other candidates,
- (c) the failure of any women to pass the skills assessment,
- (d) a lack of objective or independent accreditation of the skills assessment component of the selection process,
- (e) the arbitrary designation of time limits for the timed portion of the selection process, and
- (f) a strongly held view by members of the evaluation team that even though the time limit set for day two of the skills assessment section of the selection process were designed to create a 'pass/fail' line, that RFR would focus on hiring those candidates with the 'best times' in preference to candidates who may have a 'pass' time but who may have other skills or abilities

35 It is most unfortunate that senior leadership in RFR did not focus upon the issues raised by the HR Designate at the conclusion of the 2000 recruitment. The results of the 2000 recruitment and the issues raised by the HR Designate presented a perfect platform for discussing the values of increased diversity from a number of contexts and to set about developing a plan. Due to the lack of time and attention the then new Fire Chief had for these issues in 2000, a notable increase in grievances and complaints from RFR coming to the attention of the HR Designate and a noted resistance by various members of RFR to change the recruitment and selection process, nothing was done about the issues raised

by the HR Designate. This was an opportunity lost. It also signalled the beginnings of a distancing between certain members of the City's HR department and RFR, which distancing continued to grow when the complaints of the women firefighters became managed almost exclusively through the HR department with little meaningful input from RFR. This relationship between the HR department and RFR is problematic and needs to be resolved.

- 36 The process followed for selecting candidates in the summer of 2005, was comprehensive and thorough. There was a notable attempt made to broaden the selection criteria beyond the physical strength and mechanical aptitude that had been the driving factors in the past. There was also an attempt to introduce more objective testing methods such as the Ergometrics module. In addition, it was clear that all elements of the selection process were carefully evaluated and considered in the final selection decisions.
- 37 Even though notable improvements were made to the recruitment and selection process used by RFR in the summer of 2005, there were very few female candidates in the candidate pool and no female candidates proceeded beyond the skills assessment phase of the process. The absence of successful female candidates in the 2005 process is not something that will be effectively changed in the immediate term. However, it is essential that changes be made to the recruitment and selection process now to increase the likelihood of a more diverse and larger candidate pool in the future that will include more women and minorities and remove some of the inherent barriers in the selection process which still exist.
- 38 There have been some candidates from visible minorities recruited into RFR. However, the member complement in RFR is still overwhelmingly Caucasian males. There is acknowledgement that the complement in RFR will become more demographically diverse. However, a significant number of individuals do not understand the rationale for pursuing this objective and instead see demographic diversity as a goal developed under political pressure or in response to complaints. It will be critical for RFR and City leadership to clearly and carefully explain the operational and service rationale for increasing the demographic diversity in RFR.

- 39 There had been a 'directive' that more women will be hired. This statement or directive has been received negatively and has resulted in a wide spread view that as a result of this directive hiring standards and qualifications for recruits will be diluted. This perception must be reversed. If it is not, any attempts to increase the likelihood that more female candidates or candidates of visible minorities will apply to RFR or any increase in the number of candidates recruited from these groups will be undermined. Furthermore, if this perception continues the likelihood that women or non-white recruits will be successfully integrated into RFR will be low.
- 40 Demographic diversity will not be achieved in the short term. There will be only limited changes to the demographic diversity in RFR until there are notable changes in the demographic make up of the candidate pool.
- 41 If the City and RFR are truly committed to changing the demographic make up in RFR, a community outreach plan needs to be developed now.
- 42 The qualifications for candidates currently includes a requirement that candidates complete a lengthy program at the Justice Institute. Currently, only 2-4% of graduates from the Justice Institute are women. There will be little chance of meaningful changes to the candidate pool for RFR as long as the Justice Institute program is a requirement. Two options may be worthy of consideration:
- (a) working closely with the Justice Institute on community outreach, and
 - (b) determining whether the Justice Institute program is a necessary pre-qualification criteria or whether candidates successfully completing other elements of the RFR selection process can then be directed to the Justice Institute. The selection would be finalized after completion of the JI program.
- 43 Currently physical strength and mechanical ability are assessed through the two-day skills assessment exercises. The exercises and the evaluation of candidates during these two days have been customized by RFR. Some individuals take extreme pride in the customized approach developed by RFR. They believe strongly that this is a critical part of the selection process that should not be altered in any way. However, others

recognize that the stations through which candidates pass do not necessarily track closely what a firefighter is expected to do even in an emergency situation. In addition, there has been no external or objective validation of the tests or the evaluation criteria including the timing elements used in the skills assessment stations.

- 44 It is not in the best interests of RFR to continue to use a testing platform that has not been objectively validated or accredited. To begin with, RFR leadership needs to ensure that the current membership understands and accepts the benefits of changing the current skills assessment component of the selection process. This will not be easy as various influential members of the Department, including some members of Union leadership do not want to see changes to this component of the selection process. RFR leadership will need to work closely with Union leadership and others to ensure that before any changes are made to the skills assessment that the rationale and benefits of change are fully communicated to RFR members. If this is not done carefully and thoroughly, any changes to the skills assessment component of the selection component will be seen by many as diluting or diminishing the criteria required to become a firefighter in RFR. If this view is allowed to take hold, candidates coming through a selection process using a different skills assessment component will potentially be seen as unqualified or 'second class' firefighters in much the same way as the firefighters who joined RFR through the YVR merger were characterized. RFR needs to learn from the experience from the YVR merger to ensure that the difficulties encountered then are not repeated in the future.
- 45 There are two potential ways of addressing the skills assessment component of the selection process. RFR may decide to seek independent accreditation of the skills assessment component or it may decide to move to a different skills assessment module that is already accredited. There are organizations such as the Centre for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) who would be prepared to evaluate the skills assessment module and provide advice on how it would need to be altered in order to achieve accreditation through CPSE or one of its affiliated organizations such as the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. This approach may be the most cost effective and least disruptive way of addressing the skills assessment component of the selection process assuming that an external agency retained to evaluate the existing module does not

conclude that the module is totally inappropriate CPSE may also be able to provide advice respecting whether the Justice Institute diploma is a necessary pre-qualification

46 The alternate approach to addressing the skills assessment module is to abandon the existing internally customized module and require that candidates complete an externally developed and externally accredited skills assessment module Such a module is currently being used by the Abbotsford Fire Department The module is called 'CPAT' and is internationally recognized by the International Fire Department Association The module has been reviewed by one of the RFR Deputy Chiefs who concluded that while the module may not be as "tough" as the one currently used by RFR, he was confident that if a candidate successfully completed this CPAT module the candidate could be developed into successful firefighter There could be considerable costs associated with adopting a brand new skills assessment model Potentially RFR would need to purchase appropriate testing equipment to introduce the module or direct candidates to Abbotsford or some other location where RFR candidates could be tested for a fee The module also requires an investment of time by candidates as there is a 6 to 8 week orientation plan for prospective candidates to ensure that they understand the testing module and have an opportunity to train on it so that there is a better chance of success for the candidate

47 The overall selection process including pre-qualification criteria, specific tests used, evaluation criteria and weighting needs to be evaluated and accredited by an external body This evaluation and assessment will take time and will also require potentially considerable hard costs If RFR wants to both improve the credibility of its selection process and attract a more diverse candidate pool and select a more demographically diverse group of recruits in the future it needs to start the evaluation and amendment of its selection of its recruitment process now

Policy Framework

48 In order to help RFR to tackle some of the challenges and changes to its culture, structure and operations and in order to build a more diverse, inclusive environment, it will be essential that those in leadership positions or positions of responsibility clearly understand the policy framework governing RFR That is not the case at present It will

be important for the City and RFR leadership to identify clearly whether RFR is expected to develop its own policy framework, whether RFR is subject to the policy framework developed by the City or whether there is a combination of the two

49 It is necessary and appropriate for the City to conduct an audit of all human resources related policies given that some of the policies have apparently not been reviewed for over 30 years. A policy audit could be conducted by a multi-department committee or task force led by a senior member of the human resources department with the objective of identifying appropriate policy topics for City employees, reviewing existing policies relating to those topics and ensuring that there is a consistent and up-to-date policy relevant to each topic

50 Once a policy framework has been developed and policy audit completed, there needs to be a clear plan for implementing and communicating the policies to all employees. This cannot be effectively done through electronic or impersonal communications

51 It will be important for the City and RFR leadership to

- (a) develop a clear policy framework for workplace behaviour that applies to all employees of the City including those employed in RFR,
- (b) ensure that all existing policies are current, practical and easy to understand,
- (c) develop crisp, clear policy statements in respect of any topics not currently covered by a policy,
- (d) develop and implement a clear and practical information and training program for all City employees who in any way may be involved in administration of policies governing workplace behaviour,
- (e) develop and implement a clear and crisp information session for all employees respecting the policy framework and the meaning and application of specific policy within the framework to insure that all employees understand what is expected of them in respect of workplace behaviour, and ensure that all policies are consistently and fairly administered

- 52 The Harassment Free Workplace Policy and Administrative Procedure are overly formal, overly detailed and cumbersome. Certain aspects of the documents are also inconsistent with each other and in some cases inconsistent with the law. These documents need to be rewritten.
- 53 While it is important to have a clear and practical policy framework that is communicated and understood by all employees, it is equally important to ensure that the Officers and Battalion Chiefs are comfortable with and trained in conflict resolution and that they understand how to model respectful behaviour and build a work environment at the crew level that is respectful and inclusive. This will be one of the most effective steps RFR can take in developing a more inclusive and respectful work environment for all members of the department.

Operations

Emergency response procedures are the source of considerable pride. None of the current internal issues have in any way compromised the emergency response procedures.

- 54 The women firefighters are currently not following established procedures in the Harassment Free Workplace policy or other procedures such as those in the collective agreement to resolve their complaints. There may be reasons for this. The current procedure whereby the women meet weekly with the General Manager needs to end soon if there is a realistic prospect that these women will be effectively reintegrated into the fire halls. There is a strong sense developing at various levels in the RFR halls that the women are managing and perhaps manipulating the City to achieve special treatment that is outside the bounds of what would normally be considered reasonable accommodation and that they are doing so under threat of public complaint or litigation against the City.
- 55 As the various parties work towards the return of the female firefighter who is still off work it will be important that this reintegration not produce one sided or unreasonable changes to the operations, staffing or practices in the workplace that are insensitive to some of the reasonable requirements and expectations of the other members of the crew or shift. It will also be important for this woman to demonstrate a willingness to be understanding that others in the Department are anxious and apprehensive about her

return to work. She will need to clearly demonstrate a willingness to work openly and cooperatively with members of her crew and to be candid and frank with individuals if issues arise and to not catapult every workplace issue into a complaint.

- 56 The perception that the discipline procedures and other policies are not applied fairly or consistently is pervasive. RFR management and those that they work with in the Human Resources Department need to ensure that all policies relating to workplace behaviour, including discipline procedures are consistently and clearly applied to all individuals.

Equipment and Facilities

- 57 The quality and sophistication of the emergency response equipment in RFR is a source of great pride for RFR members and it is widely appreciated that the City has continued to invest in this way.

- 58 There is a wide range of facilities currently in RFR. None are luxurious. Most are functional and can reasonably accommodate both men and women working together on suppression crews. The exception to this are Halls No. 4 and 5. However, these halls will be replaced later this year with state of the art facilities that provide complete privacy for men and women and separate washroom and change room areas.

- 59 The only issue that arose with respect to equipment was a concern that given understandable budget restrictions, there be no reduction in the quality or sophistication of equipment because of spending needed in respect of training or responses to on-going complaints or publicity. This is an important point that needs to be managed at the leadership level in both RFR and the City to ensure that the need to invest in non-technical aspects of RFR does not compromise the quality or nature of the equipment in RFR.

- 60 In order to ensure maximum flexibility for staffing and minimal risk of issues arising in the future respecting washroom facilities, the City and RFR should develop a plan to ensure that those halls that do not provide separate washroom and shower facilities for men and women are renovated in the reasonably near future such that separate facilities are provided. Having said this, it is practical and reasonable to expect the men and

women working on a crew together where there is one washroom facility to be able to discuss and agree on how the washroom will be used to ensure privacy and access for all. With the exception of Halls No. 4 and 5 in the past where the facilities are extremely cramped, the inability of the crews to be able to resolve washroom access issues seems to be more a question of personality and cooperation than inadequate facilities.

- 61 There is no need to consider renovations to any of the fire halls to provide special areas of privacy to facilitate changing. Rather, it should be the responsibility of the Officer to ensure that at the start of every shift where men and women are working together that there is a clearly understood and agreed to protocol with respect to how privacy will be respected and protected when crew members are changing.

6 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This review has provided the opportunity for RFR and the City to see the RFR from a number of perspectives through an objective and neutral lens. There are several significant strengths in RFR that are rightly the source of pride. There are also several areas in which fundamental change must happen in order to rebuild stability and confidence inside and outside RFR so that RFR is positioned to continue to maintain excellence in firefighting in an environment that is inspired, energized and encouraging for all those who work in and who are connected to the Department.

There are some short term changes that can provide the platform for more significant and fundamental long term changes. Meaningful change will be driven by strong leadership, thoughtful planning, realistic goals, meaningful time horizons, committed management and adequate budgets.

Culture

The culture is the product of demographic homogeneity where there are narrowly defined norms and little tolerance for conduct, attitudes or perspectives outside those norms. The culture must change to be more open to and understanding of the benefits of demographic diversity. This change will only come over time.

1. Culture change will be the product of many different strategies and will happen slowly. A key short term requirement for any meaningful long term change is comprehensive and in-depth training for the Fire Chief and the two Deputy Chiefs in respect of

- effective communication,
- leadership
- coaching
- change management
- conflict resolution, and

- the value of diversity

This training will likely need to take place over several days and does not need to be customized to RFR or focused on firefighting. The training should be provided by a credible, external provider. Developing a training plan for the Deputies and the Chief should be a priority in the next 60 days.

2. A comprehensive training program needs to be developed for Battalion Chiefs and Officers on the topics noted above. The training need not be as intense or lengthy as that for senior management but needs to be in depth, provided likely through external providers and be part of a year round comprehensive training program. Development of a training plan and schedule should be a priority in the next 60 days.
3. The RFR needs to develop comprehensive training objectives and plans for all RFR members focussed on the topics noted above. The training plan will serve two important goals:
 - (a) it will provide ongoing substantive training on topics that are non-technical but critical to the future success of RFR and
 - (b) it will start to instil throughout RFR that understanding and becoming proficient in the non-technical topics is as important as technical proficiency for future individual and departmental success.

RFR Structure

The current view within RFR is that only the Deputies and the Chief constitute senior management. This is an overly restricted perspective and prevents RFR from benefiting from the knowledge, talent and perspectives of the two non-uniformed senior managers in RFR.

In addition, with the Battalion Chiefs in the bargaining unit there is no consistent management presence at the shift level. Also, as members of the Union the Battalion Chiefs are

likely facing conflicting allegiances which will increase as change is implemented and the Battalion Chiefs are asked to manage and lead those in the same bargaining unit as themselves

- 4 The non-uniformed senior managers responsible for Finance and Administration should be recognized as part of and included in the senior management of RFR. A Senior Management or Executive Committee of RFR chaired by the Chief and comprised of the Chief, two Deputies, Manager of Finance and Manager of Administration should be established and be responsible for overall leadership and management at an executive level in RFR. The committee should meet regularly, likely weekly or bi-weekly and should have oversight of all strategic, policy and operational issues in RFR.
- 5 Negotiations should be initiated by the City focussed on recognizing the Battalion Chiefs as management exclusions from the IAFF bargaining unit.
- 6 When the Battalion Chiefs are exempted from the bargaining unit they, along with the RFR Senior Management Team should combine to form the RFR Extended Management Team responsible for ensuring the implementation of policies and other directives. The Extended Management Team will also provide the platform for direct communications between the shifts and senior management.

RFR and the City

RFR is not integrated into the City. There is little or no involvement of RFR on inter departmental committees. Also some of the positive connection developed by the Fire Chief between RFR and various departments has not cascaded down to other levels in RFR. In addition, although the Fire Chief made good progress in 2000-2003 in respect of building positive relationships between the City and the RFR, there is a concerning disconnect between RFR and the Human Resources department at the City at several levels. The relationship between RFR and the City's Human Resource group needs to be rehabilitated.

- 7 Under the leadership of the Chief Administrative Officer or another senior member of City staff there should be a concerted effort made to appoint members of RFR to significant inter-departmental committees and task forces currently operating in the City.

- 8 Under the leadership of a Senior Professional in the Human Resources area a multi-department committee should be established charged with the responsibility of improving talent retention and attraction in the City through building an inspired, diverse and inclusive work environment. The committee should report to a senior level such as TAG. Membership on this Committee should be diverse in respect positions held, departments of employment, age, cultural backgrounds, gender etc, but membership should not be based on tokenism.
- 9 Consideration should be given to seconding or temporarily assigning a member of the Human Resources department to RFR. This need not be a full time assignment and should not be permanent. This would allow a member of the Human Resource group to better and more fully understand the operations and culture in RFR and to assist RFR management and others address issues before they become problems. The presence of a member of Human Resources in RFR would also provide ready and consistent professional Human Resource expertise to RFR. To avoid the potential of this person becoming distanced from the HR department, the reporting relationship should remain through the HR department.

YVR Merger

The merger of the YVR fire operation and the RFR in 1995 was poorly handled. Leadership at YVR, RFR and in the two Unions focussed on specific labour relations issues and did not attend to issues relating to cultural, structural, training and demographic differences between the two operations. There has been a lasting negative impact on RFR resulting from the failure to address the above issues.

- 10 Current RFR management should acknowledge to RFR members that problems arose from the merger some of which remain unresolved. Ideally, the IAFF would participate in such an acknowledgement.
- 11 No policy or specific program needs to be developed to address lingering issues but individual members of RFR management must be alert to concerns of members and address these individually.

- 12 RFR and City leadership need to learn from the YVR – RFR merger, in particular that the inclusion of women or those with skills different from traditional firefighting skills requires careful appreciation and consideration of the interests, expectations and perspectives of all members of RFR and not only the interests of a specific group

Procedures

There are no concerns about the emergency response procedures. Rather, all individuals interviewed, including those with the strongest complaints respecting certain aspects of RFR, spoke very positively about the quality of the emergency response at all times. It is clearly a source of great pride. There are several aspects of non-emergency operations that are concerning and need to be addressed.

- 13 There is a strong consensus that issues that have arisen respecting workplace conduct have emanated from a small group. The actions and attitudes of a few have undermined the attempt to build a more diverse fire department in the past and will continue to do so into the future if these individuals are not appropriately managed. There is an equally strong view that discipline for inappropriate conduct has not been consistently applied. It will be very important to ensure that all individuals found engaging in inappropriate conduct be dealt with in a consistent manner and that any individuals engaging in inappropriate conduct more than once receive harsh discipline. This will require cooperation between the Union and RFR management and will also require consistent and firm management of any complaints or grievances.

- 14 Battalion Chiefs and Officers need to be aware of workplace conduct issues and address them before these issues become complaints or grievances. There is a sense that workplace conduct issues are moved quickly to a complaint process in part because Officers and Battalion Chiefs are uncomfortable addressing them and in part because these are not seen as important matters in RFR. The training recommended for these supervisory levels should assist in addressing this as will the assignment of an HR professional physically in RFR. However, the Battalion Chiefs and Officers need to be aware of and be comfortable and prepared to address these issues immediately when they arise.

- 15 For some time women firefighters have been meeting regularly with senior officials in the City to discuss their concerns. This may have been set up with the best of intentions but it is widely perceived as establishing a superior and unique process for the women that is not available to others and that is potentially creating 'resolutions' that are not helpful to the overall integration of the women back into suppression crews in RFR. The meetings with the women either need to end soon with a resolution that brings the women back into the fire halls or the purpose of these meetings to be explained to RFR.
- 16 Special accommodations have been made for two of the women firefighters that sees them stationed in facilities outside of the fire halls for extended periods. While there may be good reason for these decisions, these reasons are not known and the sequestering of the women in locations physically separate from RFR is not helpful to their re-integration in the future. The women should be returned to physical locations in RFR even if they are not on suppression crews. The longer they are physically distant from the department, the more difficult their re-integration will become.
- 17 There is one woman who has not yet returned to work. A perception is taking hold that special accommodations are being made for this woman that are unlike those that would be provided to any other firefighter and which would potentially adversely affect the operations of the RFR. It is important that a decision be made soon as to whether and under what circumstances this woman will return to active duty and that any accommodations that are made not materially disrupt current operations. It will also be very important for this woman and for members of the crew to which she is assigned to have an open and candid discussion regarding behaviour and workplace conduct as soon as she returns to active duty.

Policy Framework

Currently there is an unclear policy platform for members of RFR in respect of workplace conduct. There are policies that have been developed under the City's jurisdiction which purport to apply to the members of RFR but which are virtually unknown and some of which have not been updated for some time. In addition there is the recently published Code of Conduct which apparently applies only to members of RFR and which in some ways conflicts with the

provisions of other policies published by the City. In order for there to be a clear and consistent set of guidelines, expectations and procedures for members of RFR to follow, there needs to be a consistent policy framework developed.

- 18 In order to continue to strengthen the relationships and understanding between RFR and other departments in the City, there needs to be a multi-department review of the policy framework for all employees of the City, including members of the RFR in respect of workplace conduct and related policy topics. This is likely best done through a multi-department task force or committee led by a senior member of the Human Resources group charged with the responsibility of identifying policy topics relevant to human resource and workplace conduct matters, reviewing all existing general City policies and those that may exist in other departments of the City and developing a unified policy framework that will govern all City employees.
- 19 The existing Harassment-Free Workplace Policy (Policy 6004), needs to be completely re-written to ensure that it reflects current legal and other standards, is more clear and understandable and is in harmony with other City policies, including the Code of Conduct, which also needs to be reviewed in the context of the overall policy review.
- 20 The development of a consistent policy framework for all City employees will provide the platform for clear expectations respecting behaviour in the workplace and respecting the consequences for breaches of those expectations. However, policy development alone will not change conduct or culture. The policies need to be explained in a careful and practical manner to all employees of the City through information sessions. These information sessions would be best established such that employees from different departments, including RFR are combined. The sessions would need to be run several times. In order to ensure that there is the maximum distribution of information from the sessions throughout the City, including RFR attendance at one session should be mandatory for every City employee. Separate sessions may need to be held for management and non-management employees.

Recruitment

Recruitment has traditionally been through the ' firefighters network' There have been many unsolicited applications received through this network The overwhelming majority of these applications are from applicants who are demographically similar or identical to current members of RFR, i.e. Caucasian males In order to improve the demographic diversity in RFR in the future the demographic diversity in the candidate pool needs to be increased considerably

- 21 There will need to be a ' business case ' established and communicated to all members of RFR respecting the benefits of a more demographically diverse department This may be part of the overall training plan referenced above It is a topic that deserves specific and careful attention to ensure that any changes to the recruitment approach is not seen as diminishing standards for the sake of "political correctness"
- 22 There needs to be a comprehensive community outreach program developed, focused on providing information to prospective candidates outside the "firefighters' network" Groups included in this outreach may include high schools throughout the Lower Mainland, BCIT, various colleges, YWCA and YMCA, various sports organizations, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, and other community based organizations catering to youth and young adults
- 23 In order for the candidate pool to provide a reasonable number of potentially qualified female candidates and candidates from visible minorities, there may need to be specific attention paid to groups that service these demographics
- 24 Goals for increasing the number of women and visible minorities should be realistic recognizing that it may take some time for RFR to overcome the effects of the recent publicity Forcing unrealistic targets or quotas for hiring in the near term will be unsuccessful and will have long term negative effects
- 25 RFR Senior Management working with Human Resources needs to consider whether the Justice Institute diploma needs to be a pre-qualification

Hiring

The selection process for new recruits improved considerably in 2005 in comparison to previous years. However, there is still an over-emphasis on physical strength and on tests that are not externally validated and have not been established as reasonably testing for skills relevant to firefighting.

- 26 Changes to the selection process will need to be developed in cooperation with the Union and carefully communicated to all members of RFR. This is critical to avoid or at least minimize the potential that changes to the selection process will be perceived as creating lower standards and the hiring of “second class” recruits.
- 27 The steps taken in the 2005 selection process such as the information night, the method of scoring individual elements of the selection process and the overall evaluation of candidates should be retained.
- 28 The use of Ergometrics testing should be retained and further consideration should be given to adding elements to the selection process that are focused on attitude, team work, cooperation and problem solving.
- 29 The current skills assessment component of the selection process needs to be changed. The current model is customized to RFR and has not been externally validated. The overall selection process either needs to be subjected to a validation process by an organization such as the City for Public Safety and Excellence, or the module needs to be abandoned in favour of an externally developed and accredited module such as CPAT.

Workplace Safety

There is considerable pride across RFR in the quality and sophistication of equipment available for emergency response. Members of RFR are grateful that investment has been made continuously to ensure that RFR has the most effective and efficient equipment available. This is an understandable source of pride and positive morale across the Department.

- 30 There is currently considerable variation in the quality of the fire halls with some providing considerable privacy and separate washroom facilities for women and men, and others providing very little. With the completion of two new fire halls later this year to replace halls No 4 and No 5, there will be no hall that could not reasonably accommodate a mixed gender crew. However, where a hall does not provide segregated facilities, there needs to be a clear discussion at the beginning of each shift led by the Officer of each mixed gender crew respecting the expectations for washroom use and privacy protection.
- 31 In the near future those remaining halls that do not provide separate washroom and shower facilities for men and women need to be renovated so that such facilities are available.

Initiatives Respecting Workplace Behaviour

The primary initiative affecting workplace behaviour that has been under consideration in RFR is the 'Action Plan – Richmond – Fire Rescue Building a Respectful Workplace'. This document contains meaningful projects which, if properly planned and implemented could produce significant positive improvements to RFR.

- 32 The RFR Senior Management Team should carefully review each of the projects in the Action Plan, determine the nature and status of each project and
- prioritize projects
 - establish meaningful timelines for completion
 - establish budgets, and
 - assign individuals responsibility for ensuring project implementation as directed by the committee

Re-Integration of Women Firefighters

There are three women firefighters currently able to work, two of whom have returned to work in non-suppression positions outside the fire halls. One woman is still on leave but planning to return to a suppression crew. The following recommendations are made without the benefit of input from the women because of their refusal to participate in this process.

- 33 The Fire Chief and a member of Human Resources or the General Manager should be responsible for overseeing the re-integration.
- 34 The Chief and the General Manager should meet with each of the women separately to determine from the woman's perspective the specific barriers from her perspective to re-entry to the Department.
- 35 The Chief and General Manager in consultation with the Senior Management Team, should together assess the reasonableness of the barriers. The woman should be advised of any barriers she has identified which the employer determines are unreasonable or for which she cannot be reasonably accommodated.
- 36 Any barriers determined 'reasonable' and which can be addressed should be dealt with in the next 30 days.
- 37 RFR members who will be working with the woman should be consulted about any concerns or questions they have respecting the woman's return to the Department.
- 38 The Fire Chief and the General Manager should assess any concerns raised by firefighters in the same way concerns from the woman are assessed (see 34 and 35 above).
- 39 The woman should be advised of the specific terms under which she will be returned to the Department, what accommodations have been made and what accommodations could not be made.
- 40 The terms of return and timing of the return of each woman should be communicated to RFR members as determined appropriate by the Chief and the General Manager.

- 41 Certain of the above discussions may need to include representation by the IAFF or may require negotiation with the IAFF
- 42 When the woman returns physically to the Department there should be a brief meeting with her colleagues at which the Chief is present where she can be welcomed back and where ideally she will express her enthusiasm about returning to the Department

7 Key Challenges

The preceding sections of this report focus on specific issues facing Richmond Fire Rescue and recommendations respecting how those issues can be addressed. In the report reference is made to some fundamental needs, in particular the need for

- Strong leadership,
- Committed management,
- Realistic time horizons,
- Appropriate funding, and
- A realization that all individuals likely need to change attitudes, behaviour and/or perspectives

Without the above, there is little chance that the recommendations will be effectively implemented or that real or lasting change in the Fire Department will be realized. The above issues present potentially significant challenges for the Fire Department and for the City. The nature and importance of each of the above items is addressed below.

Strong Leadership

The challenges facing the Richmond Fire Department are not unique to the Richmond Fire Department. Challenges respecting the need for culture change and improved diversity have been considered by many Fire Rescue departments across North America and beyond. The issues in the Richmond Department are the product of a culture in fire fighting services that appears to be well entrenched across many geographic and political boundaries. For example, the study conducted by the British Home Office in 1999 and the programs initiated by the Halifax Fire Department in 2003 are both the product of concerns in those departments similar to concerns that have been raised in Richmond.

The overriding key to successfully changing the culture in the Richmond Fire Department and building a more demographically diverse and inclusive department without sacrificing service is leadership. Leadership for change needs to come from various levels. Most importantly, leadership for change needs to come from City Council. In an environment where

City Council is elected and where public urgent concerns must be attended to, it is understandably difficult to make long-term leadership commitments to bring about fundamental change of the sort recommended in this report. However, without committed long-term leadership from City Council a return on the investment made by the City in commissioning this review and the investment made by the many individuals who participated, will not be realized.

In a time when elected officials are driven to provide short term immediate answers to urgent public issues, it will require determined leadership from City Council to ensure that the changes that are needed in the Fire Department are made in the long term. There is no 'quick fix' to the issues, Commitment by Council to the long term vision for the Department will allow City Council to be recognized for visionary leadership in a way that few other elected officials facing similar challenges have been able to do and will allow the Fire Department to develop into a truly inclusive and diverse work place.

Committed Management

The leadership shown by City Council needs to be supported by committed management at various levels in the City and in the Fire Department. This too will be a significant challenge in two main respects:

- 1 City and Fire Department management will need the support of Council to move forward with projects that may be unique and that may create debate inside and outside the City or the Fire Department. The leadership referenced above from Council will be reflected in part through Council's support for management in the City and in the Department as management implements change.
- 2 There is a very small management presence and management influence in the Fire Department at this time. Structurally the management presence in the Fire Department is disproportionate to what one would expect to see in most unionized work environments. The union reach is referenced in the report in various contexts, such as the fact that Battalion Chiefs are members of the bargaining unit. However the structural influence of the Union extends into a strong operational influence that permeates many procedures and projects in the Fire Department. It will be important for City management and Fire Department management to take the lead in the developing, managing and implementing

change in the Fire Department as managers and leaders. This may at times require decisions to be taken without the support of the Union. As management moves forward with its commitment to implement change, it will require the support of City Council.

Realistic Time Horizon

Given the publicity respecting the issues facing the Fire Department there will be an understandable desire for immediate and tangible changes to occur. As noted in the report there are no 'quick fixes' to the issues in the Fire Department that will immediately change the culture or create more diversity in its make up. The investment made now in the recommendations respecting training, community outreach, structural organization and selection processes will produce meaningful change. There may be some short-term issues that need to be reviewed and addressed in the coming weeks but short-term projects should not undermine or override the importance of the long-term commitments that are needed.

Meaningful Budgets

All organizations face challenges respecting allocation of available budget funds. In the public environment of the City of Richmond these challenges are the focus of media and public attention more so than with many other organizations, public or private. Strong leadership, committed management and realistic time frames must be supported by meaningful budgets in order for real change to occur. The balancing of interests in an environment where there are demands for short-term investments for high profile projects will not be easy. It may also be tempting to reduce investment in the long-term change in the Fire Department if the current issues fade from the public eye. This would not be wise. Investment in the long term cultural, structural and operational changes in the Fire Department will benefit all citizens of Richmond, employees of the Fire Department and those who are connected directly or indirectly with the department.

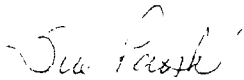
Changing Perspectives

When an organization has been under public scrutiny in the way that the City and the Fire Department have been it is understandable that many will develop perceptions and even convictions about the nature of the culture and environment in the Department and perhaps in the City. In addition where the culture in the Department is so well entrenched and has been

supported for so long within the Department and by other Fire Departments, it is understandable that there will be resistance to change. Finally, where those who may have tried to lead or influence change in the past have been unsuccessful it is understandable that there may be frustration or resentment. While all these attitudes and experiences are understandable, none of them will help with achieving a more inclusive and effective Fire Department. All stakeholders inside and outside the Fire Department need to be prepared to accept that there is no individual or group that is so 'right' that the perspectives of others can be ignored. Similarly, there is no individual or group connected to the Fire Department who can be insulated from personal change. Commitment at all levels in the Department and in the City to being open to personal change will be a key eventual institutional and cultural change.

The above challenges need to be embraced as opportunities for City leaders to show leadership and for management and others throughout the Fire Department and elsewhere to work together for the long-term growth and evolution of the Fire Department.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED



Susan I., Paish, Q C