



To: Community Safety Committee
From: John McGowan
 Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue

Date: July 15, 2011
File: 09-5000-01/2011-Vol
 01

Re: Fire 20/20 Workshop 'Recruiting and Retaining Diversity in the Fire Service'

Staff Recommendation

That Council approve Richmond Fire Rescue's request to host a Fire 20/20 workshop on September 15 and 16, 2011, entitled "Recruiting and Retaining Diversity in the Fire Service".

John McGowan
 Fire Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue
 (604-303-2734)

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Human Resources	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the opportunity for Richmond Fire Rescue has to host a Fire 20/20 workshop entitled "Recruiting and Retaining Diversity in the Fire Service" to be held on September 15th and 16th, 2011.

The workshop brings together teams from eights to ten fire departments. Each team is comprised of four to five individuals including: the fire chief, a labour leader, a recruitment officer, a diversity representative and Human Resources representative. The host department is allowed to have a second team and total participation from RFR will be up to ten participants.

The report is in support of the Council term goals to:

"The City will have a stable, effective, and knowledgeable workforce to serve Council and the community now and in the future through sound recruitment and retention processes."

and

"Ensure Richmond remains a safe and desirable community to live, work and play in through an interdisciplinary approach to community safety and a term strategy that results in discussions with Council on the implementation of change in the culture of Richmond Fire Rescue."

Analysis

Fire 20/20 is a non-profit organization based in the United States, which works with Fire/EMS to connect them with the multicultural communities they serve. Their focus is to increase departments' effectiveness of diversity recruitment and retention, emergency response, and community risk reduction programs.

Through corporate sponsorship, Fire 20/20 has facilitated a number of "Recruiting and Retaining Diversity in the Fire Service" workshops throughout the U.S. with positive results. These workshops are free for the participating departments. As a result of the initiatives that Richmond has undertaken in the area of diversity and cultural change, and the relationship which Deputy Chief Kim Howell has built with them, Fire 20/20 has offered to hold a workshop in Richmond. This would be the first time the workshop would be held outside of the U.S.

The workshop is valued at \$10,000, which includes costs for facilitators' time, travel, accommodations, meals, taxis and other related travel expenses. However, due to the sponsorship from Scott Health & Safety, there is no cost to the participating departments. The return on investment for the City of Richmond and Richmond Fire Rescue will be the production of an outline of an action plan for achieving specific goals towards a more inclusive and diverse department that can be accomplished within 30 to 60 days. This plan will provide a framework for strategies that support retention, enrolls the community as recruitment partners, and maximizes the effectiveness of campaigns.

The workshop will identify the department's top three assets and top three vulnerabilities for building a more inclusive and diverse department. It will benchmark measurements for improvement by completing a report card on how the department compares to best practice guidelines. It will align with those key positions, within the City of Richmond, that can influence change and ensure actions that successfully transform the culture of RFR.

As host, the City would welcome the other participants and publicly acknowledge Richmond's commitment to inclusion and diversity. The workshop is oriented to assist departments that understand the value of diversity and inclusion and want to move forward faster and more efficiently to a fire department that is truly inclusive and diverse.

As part of the workshop the teams engage in two 75-minute panel discussions with people from the community. One team is a youth panel, which is made up of a group of four to five diverse young people between the ages of 14-19. The objective of the youth panel is two-way learning. Instead of the facilitators presenting research about today's young people, it is planned to bring members of the next generation into the room to engage in a direct conversation.

The second panel is comprised of diverse community leaders. This panel will be made up of formal or informal leaders with a strong social, business or personal network within that multicultural community. The objective is to engage the fire service participants in direct conversations with formal and informal leaders from four to five multicultural communities that are served by the local fire department.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

Conclusion

Over the past four years significant strides have been made in transforming RFR's culture. This workshop will provide a fundamental base for the future strategy. As the host department Richmond would be sending a clear message to the community, City staff, and other fire departments, that Richmond is prepared to lead the way in becoming a more diverse and inclusive department.



Kim Howell
Deputy Chief, Richmond Fire-Rescue
(604-303-2762)

KH:js