

Fire Commissioner Appoints Two Civilian Deputies

Stronger management capacity responsive to Commissioner is objective

Fire Commissioner Rod Fraser appointed veteran city officials to two newly created civilian Deputy Commissioner positions on June 10, 2008. Execution of the duties of these two positions should improve the administration and management of the Fire Department and strengthen the Commissioner's management authority. By creating and filling these two positions, the Commissioner has implemented another recommendation of the Fire Review Panel chaired by James Shannon which released its report on November 30, 2007.

The two positions created are the Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance and Deputy Commissioner for Labor and Management. The former position represents a reconfiguration of the Office of Administrative Services in the BFD and Kathleen Kirleis, the head of this office for the past three years was appointed as Deputy Commissioner. The Labor and Management Office represents a restructuring of the vacant position of Legal Advisor and Karen Glasgow, the Senior Assistant Corporation Counsel who served in the City's Law Department for nine years, was appointed as Deputy Commissioner. The Review Panel also recommended the creation of the Office of Planning and Organizational Development to be headed by a civilian Deputy Commissioner who has yet to be appointed.

The general areas of responsibility for the two new offices are shown below:

Administration and Finance

- Maintenance
- Payroll Services
- Budget & Finance
- Purchasing

Labor and Management

- Personnel
- Human Resources
- Legal Affairs
- Medical Office
- Labor Relations

The creation of these two positions reflects the importance of the Commissioner being able to establish a management structure responsive to him and separate from the union. In the BFD, except for the Chief of Department and the two Deputy Chiefs for Field Services and Support Services, all uniformed personnel belong to the same union, Local 718, whether they are Deputy Chief, District Chief, Lieutenant or firefighter.

There still exists a significant contrast between the management structure of the Boston Police and Fire Departments, indicating that further changes in the BFD management and union structure are warranted to best serve the citizens and taxpayers of the city.