

Camden County Fire Rescue Organizational Analysis

October 30, 2017

Jack Krakeel
Kyle Gorman



Camden County *Georgia*
Award-Winning Government

**CAMDEN COUNTY FIRE RESCUE
ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS**

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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2017, Camden County, Georgia enlisted the assistance of emergency service consultants to conduct an organizational analysis of the Camden County Fire Rescue Department (CCFR). This document reflects the results of that analysis and provides both a baseline assessment of CCFR's current status, and recommendations regarding future opportunities.

The analysis reveals an organization with many strong attributes, including a workforce that is keenly interested in the well-being of the organization, an elected body that has provided significant funding to improve the agency's infrastructure, and fire department leadership that has improved the coordination of service delivery between inter-jurisdictional agencies—specifically, intergovernmental agreements between CCFR and the City of Kingsland and St. Marys Fire Department that allowed the closure of duplicate fire station facilities in close proximity to municipal assets. The recent addition of a Director of Fleet Services reflects the importance that the Board of Commissioners has placed on maintaining a safe and effective fleet of apparatus. The addition of a part time EMA position greatly assisted the County in meeting the challenges posed by Hurricane Irma.

The agency has improved service by eliminating jurisdictional response boundaries and by using automatic aid protocols to ensure that the closest unit—irrespective of geo-political boundaries—responds to the emergency incident. The new program has also increased the number of emergency personnel available for on-scene activities, including fire suppression tasks, and has reduced response times to citizens' requests for assistance. In addition, CCFR has introduced a collateral duty program in which some station officers have been tasked with managing specific operational assets such as breathing apparatus and hose. That program appears to be functioning very effectively.

In contrast to the many positive attributes, there are issues that have emerged over the last several years that are having an impact on the morale of employees within the organization. Highly publicized issues with maintenance of apparatus reflect a failure of the organization to ensure a constant state of readiness. While some of the responsibility for this issue can be attributed to organizational leadership, it is the consultants' opinions that multiple factors are attributable, including a lack of an adequate number of maintenance personnel. In addition, span-of-control, unity of command, as well as a structured and defined process for

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organizational communications could be factors that have contributed to an overall decline in employee morale and to some extent the degree of turnover that the department has witnessed during the last five years.

Based on our observations, the degree of negative publicity being generated against the Chief of the department does not reflect a consensus opinion of the organization but rather a small vocal group of both current and some former employees. Though this group is small, it has had an adverse impact on the organization by creating doubt among some of the employees regarding the leadership capabilities of the Chief of the Department.

Our analysis of the department does not reflect a requirement for a change in leadership; however, we do believe it is imperative that changes be commenced to ensure that the organization is capable of meeting the challenges and demands of operating a high-quality emergency services program to the Camden County community. Our recommendations contained within the body of the report reflect best practices of emergency services organizations throughout the country. They are not intended to be a singular cure-all for the problems the organization is facing in specific areas. Rather they are designed to be utilized as a process for organizational improvement in key areas.

Our analysis is based on multiple agency assessments conducted by the consultants as members and leaders of Peer Assessment Teams for the Center of Public Safety's Fire Service Accreditation Program. We highly recommend that the CCFR consider accreditation of their agency as one of the methods of ensuring that the department strives to achieve a program of excellence.

Consultants are profoundly grateful to each of those who were interviewed during our on-site visit, especially the personnel of the CCFR. Without their candor, insight, and participation this report would not have been possible. Further, based on our observations and interviews, we believe that the men and women of the CCFR continue to do their best to deliver high quality emergency services to the citizens of Camden County.

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Introduction

Camden County, in the southeast portion of the State of Georgia, was established in 1777 as one of the eight original Georgia counties. The county is comprised of three incorporated cities—Kingsland, St. Marys, and Woodbine—and more than 610 square miles of land surface area. The county is a popular coastal recreation destination, with multiple scenic waterways and coastline. It is also the home to the US Navy’s Kings Bay Submarine Base.

Four fire agencies serve the county. The cities of Kingsland and St. Marys operate city fire departments, the US Navy operates a fire department serving the naval base, and Camden County Fire Rescue serves the balance of the county. Camden County Fire Rescue provides ambulance and paramedic service countywide.

According to the 2010 US Census, the resident population of Camden County is 50,513. About a third of the population lives in 42 square miles within Kingsland, another third lives in the 22 square miles that makes up St. Marys, and virtually all of the rest of the population is spread out over the 550 square miles in the balance of the county. The varying population densities in the county, and the types of services offered to those populations create unique complexities for Camden County Fire and Rescue.

Camden County Population and Housing			
	Population	Housing units	Land area
Camden County	50,513	21,114	613.03
Other Fire Agencies			
Kings Bay Base	1,777	320	1.89
Kingsland City	15,946	6,506	42.72
St. Marys City	17,121	7,443	22.51
Camden F & R Service Area	15,669	6,845	546
Ambulance Area	50,513	21,114	613

Table 1: County and City Population

Since the last decennial census (2010), the county’s population has increased to an estimated 53,008 residents in 2016, reflecting a growth rate of approximately 5 percent. From the following figure, it becomes clear that not only has the county grown in population, but that population growth has occurred relatively equally in Kingsland, St. Marys, and in the incorporated areas. However, the team recognizes that some of the growth in the size of the cities could be the result of annexation. We also note that the recent recession has had a resulting effect on the population in that the population has not increased at the same rate as larger employment areas of the state and the country.

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Camden County and City Population Data							
Date	1-Apr 2010 Census	1-Jul 2011 (est)	1-Jul 2012 (est)	1-Jul 2013 (est)	1-Jul 2014 (est)	1-Jul 2015 (est)	1-Jul 2016 (est)
Camden County	50,513	50,323	51,407	51,490	52,012	52,543	53,008
Kingsland city	15,946	15,860	16,256	16,229	16,386	16,474	16,720
St. Marys city	17,121	17,215	17,598	17,709	17,921	17,962	18,088
Woodbine city	1,412	1,381	1,348	1,352	1,318	1,285	1,322
Uninc. County	16,034	15,867	16,205	16,200	16,387	16,822	16,878

Table 2: County and City Population Growth

CCFR staffs and operates eight fire stations from which it provides fire and EMS services. From two of these stations CCFR operates ambulances, it locates and staffs ambulances at four additional fire stations (two in Kingsland stations and two in St Marys), and in addition it maintains a volunteer engine at the Grayfield Inn on Cumberland Island. At some stations, multiple front-line apparatus allow firefighters to staff the appropriate response unit in real time based on the type of incident. In total, there are six front-line ambulances, nine front-line engines, and eight front-line tankers.

Background

In 1966, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council published a landmark report on the state of emergency medical services in the United States. That report, *Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society*, provided the initial framework around which a number of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) systems were organized.¹ Importantly, the report provided the impetus for states and localities to begin to regulate EMS because, as the report noted, mortuaries operated more than half of the ambulance services in the United States.

Evidence from that report was so compelling that Congress passed the Highway Safety Act of 1966 that established the first organized EMS systems in the United States. Research compiled since that report makes it clear that EMS systems are much more than simply ambulance transport services and that problems continue to exist in EMS system design.²

Similarly, in 1973, the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, created a report entitled *America Burning* that articulated the nature of the fire problem in the United States,

¹National Research Council: National Academy of Sciences – Division of Medical Sciences: *“Accidental Death and Disability: The Neglected Disease of Modern Society”* Washington D.C., September 1966

²See also: Committee on Trauma Research, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. 1985. *Injury in America: A Continuing Public Health Problem*. National Academy Press: Washington D.C.

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including the risk to firefighters and civilians. Part of that report noted that, "the richest and most technologically advanced nation in the world leads all the major industrialized countries in per capita deaths and property loss from fire." In addition, the report made a number of recommendations for firefighter training and safety. In response, Congress passed the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974, thereby establishing the National Fire Academy, the US Fire Administration, and the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). Architects, for the first time, were required to consider fire safety in building designs.

Today, emergency response systems—many of which remain structured on those traditional paradigms of the 1960s and 1970s—are evolving rapidly. Ambulances across the country are providing high levels of critical-care medicine, operating specialized and advanced equipment, and in some areas are even providing community health care. Fire agencies, are becoming all-hazard departments, requiring expertise in multiple disciplines, including rescue, EMS, fire prevention, hazardous materials, and others. Twentieth-century views are being further challenged as regulators demand more accountability for ambulance transport and emergency care, fire departments seek better and more efficient use of resources, all agencies struggle with increased system demand, and system participants are faced with economic constraints.

These systems are important considerations for regulators, elected officials, and the citizens they are intended to serve. In most areas, a body of elected officials has overall responsibility for one or more components of the system, such as fire service first response or transport, or for regulating ambulance service contracts. In some cases, multiple local agencies exert some level of control over components. In Camden County, the County Commission has overall oversight of both the fire (in unincorporated areas and Woodbine) and emergency medical response (throughout the county) systems.

Factors Considered in Reviewing Camden County Fire Rescue

During the past year, Camden County has received criticism about the fire department's operations and management. Some of those critiques became publicly visible when local media reported on those concerns. In response, Camden County officials engaged Krakeel and Gorman (the consultants) to conduct an evaluation of the Camden Fire Rescue Department to report on the potential validity of those comments and to identify opportunities for improvement.

In analyzing and developing the assessment of the fire and emergency medical systems, the team reviewed the following elements of the emergency system's design:

- Organizational Governance
- Planning

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- Operations
- Fiscal Management
- Communications
- System Planning
- Human Resources
- Staffing, and
- Training

Assessment Process and Method

The emergency services assessment conducted by the consultants strives to consider system structures and functions rather than simply tactical activities within the context of a single service. This report seeks to evaluate how these interrelating components work together, the structures and functions of effective systems, the findings of published research (if any), how the system compares against comparable communities, and internal and external data.

In reviewing Camden County Fire Rescue, the team used its proprietary evaluation matrix as a model for evaluation. The matrix is based not only on the expertise of analysts, but also on contemporary, professional literature regarding fire, EMS, and regulatory systems. This component list, derived from material provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM), The National Fire Protection Association, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, and other sources, are reasonable factors to consider for the operation of the local emergency services systems. These resources, as well as the team's expertise, provided the background information necessary to develop a component list of the items critical to the effective operation of this system.

The team conducted interviews with multiple stakeholders in the system, including field personnel at multiple stations and shifts; we reviewed data that was available to us, including historical data, previous meeting minutes and agenda, and financial data; we reviewed the agency's strategic plan, including mission, vision, and values statements; and examined what other agencies are doing in the state. The team did not conduct an in-depth audit of the agency's training records, it did not conduct a focused review of the fire prevention office, nor did it conduct a temporal analysis of the agency's dispatch data. Dispatch personnel were unavailable during our site visit and the requested dispatch data was not provided in a format that allowed for analysis. As such, we cannot comment on how response times are reported and recorded, the use of dispatch protocols and how those impact performance, and the other structures and methods used within the dispatch system. The E-911 Center responsible for

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dispatching CCFR is a component unit of the Camden County Sheriff's Department. The onsite review, and the associated document requests, took place during mid-July, 2017. Changes made by the agency after the site evaluation may not be reflected herein.

Critical Issues for the Department

The nature of the interviews conducted by the consultants was guided and direct during the assessment of Camden County Fire Rescue services. We conducted extensive interviews with the executive personnel at the county and at the Fire Rescue Department. We also interviewed Camden County EMTs, paramedics, and firefighters; fire management personnel at Kingsland and at St. Marys; State of Georgia Fire Standards and Training Council; and others. The interviews helped to identify new information, and it clarified data produced by the system and data produced outside the system. And while we examined a broad array of components, we paid particular attention to issues that were noted to be areas of concern from employees and managers alike. Based on the interviews and on the overlapping comments from management and field personnel alike, we used contemporary, professional standards to triage these issues into those we determined to be critical issues that would require resolution.

The critical issues identified by the team, are called "critical issues" because they meet three generally applicable rules: they are important to the function of the operations of the agency, they are difficult and time consuming to accomplish, they require multiple organizational units to be successful. The assessment was designed to identify these critical issues, however, we note that additional non-critical issues may be identified during the course of this evaluation.

The following critical issues were identified during the course of the evaluation:

Strategic Direction and Leadership

Leadership competencies ensure that the agency is able to achieve its organizational goals. These competencies ensure that the personnel, processes, policies, and procedures align to produce the best outcomes. During the consultants' evaluation, including discussions with employees and evaluation of documentation, it became clear that there are opportunities to improve the organizational oversight. For example, maintenance decisions and priorities were not clearly articulated, which created confusion and frustration by the crews about why certain maintenance decisions were being made. Command personnel tend to operate on a "status quo" basis, giving little time or thought to plan for the future direction of the agency. There are substantive gaps in the policies and procedures, and while those gaps are recognized and being rectified, the policies and procedures remain quite stale.

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Most important, the agency has no strategic plan. A high-quality plan, such as the one in use by the county, is a valuable tool in providing guidance to command staff and other personnel in making decisions on behalf of the agency.

Finally, there is some concern from employees and command staff alike that the fire chief is not entirely visible to employees. As such, opportunities exist for the chief to engage with personnel, offer information, and provide detail about the agency's direction. Further, additional engagement allows employees to ask questions and seek resolution about issues that are important to field personnel.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Establish a process to develop a strategic plan for the agency. Engage all levels in the organization, including command staff, station staff, and line personnel to establish a high level of vestment in the plan.
- Create a Standard of Response Cover document to guide the agency in the deployment and performance of response resources.
- Improve the current policies and procedures, and complete documents that are currently in process. These documents will provide strategic guidance to command staff and crews and will ensure appropriate oversight over apparatus, crews, stations, and divisions.
- Improve the visibility and availability of the chief. Regular station visits, and well as a regular command staff meetings will assist managers with understanding the organization goals and will allow them to communicate those to their subordinates.

Communication

Communication is not merely a singular activity that involves sharing information. Rather, it is also the process of how that information is being disseminated or communicated not only internally to employees but to external constituencies of the organization. Internal communications should be designed so that employees are informed about the organization's priorities and direction. Specific communications should be structured to enable personnel in carrying out their functional duties and responsibilities. Externally, the process should enable an organization to inform their stakeholders (citizens, media, elected officials) about the activities, plans, goals, and accomplishments of the department.

Internal Communications

Interviews conducted with staff members throughout the organization reflected a common

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theme regarding a lack of clear and direct communications within the organization. It is not uncommon for personnel to voice concerns regarding the lack of internal communications within emergency service organizations. Many fire departments, such as Camden County Fire Rescue, essentially employ three different work groups reflective of the 24-hour staffing model (three 24 hours shifts) as well as distributing those employees to multiple facilities that are dispersed over a broad geographic area—in Camden County’s case, more than 613 square miles. The combination of those factors, multiple and distinct workgroups operating in a decentralized structure, can contribute to a lack of information flow.

The recent removal of the organization’s intranet site has had an adverse impact on the internal flow of information, however its absence from service cannot be singularly pointed to as the sole reason for the perceived lack of information flow. Except for periodic memos, little evidence was found for a formal process of communicating with members of the organization in keeping them informed about the various activities, programs and priorities of the organization. Without a formal and structured communication process for disseminating information and communicating with employees, the grapevine and “rumor mill” will become the primary methods by which employees access information. Often, these informal processes result in the dissemination of information that is inconsistent with the goals of the organization.

RECOMMENDATION:

Formal and informal process for communicating with employees should be established. That process at a minimum should include:

- Dissemination of minutes of senior staff’s weekly meetings
- The Fire Chief should at a minimum visit each shift and station at least once every four months and engage directly with employees.
- Daily visits to each station by shift captains
- Development of an internal monthly newsletter
- Dissemination of the Fire Advisory Council meeting minutes
- Information should be provided regarding formal communications such as memos, and directives issued by the Chief through Shift Captains.
- Establish an alternative electronic method of disseminating information.

Communication is also a two-way process. Management disseminates information to the employees and conversely employees communicate with management on a wide variety of organizational issue—including ones that directly impact their ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities. As one employee stated: “After years of informing management about

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vehicle maintenance issues, why did it take going public with those concerns before serious attention was given to correcting apparatus maintenance problems”. While there are certainly multiple factors involved in maintaining a state of readiness for emergency services equipment, some beyond the control of the Fire Chief, the fact that some employees felt a need to go outside the organization reflects a failure in the internal communication process.

External Communications

It is apparent that failures with the internal communications program have resulted in the external communication process being driven by factors outside of the department’s control. Often, but not always, the information being disseminated by external entities is incorrect and rife with innuendo. The negative publicity the department has witnessed over the last year has resulted in a detrimental effect on employee morale. However, based on our observations and interviews with other organizational leaders, it does not appear that employees have allowed these distractions to interfere with the delivery of quality emergency services to the citizens of Camden County.

In light of the negative information being disseminated, the department should respond vigorously to any false claims made and subsequently be prepared to provide accurate and timely information when information is requested from the organization by external agencies. Senior County Management should be informed anytime investigative requests are made of the agency in order to ensure that elected officials are aware of the requests and are prepared to appropriately respond to their constituents.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The department should strive to establish formal processes for communicating with external constituents including the public, and print and television media.
- Identify and authorize key management personnel to speak on behalf of the organization, especially at emergency scenes.
- Appoint a Public Information Officer within the organization, coordinate PIO efforts with the County’s Public Information Program.
- Develop an Annual Report outlining the organization’s accomplishments and performance during the prior year.
- Engage with Civic Organizations by providing speakers and information on topics of interest.
- Consider establishing a Citizen’s Academy.
- Engage in philanthropic efforts such as March of Dimes, “Fill the Boot” campaigns, etc.

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Training

John Granito, noted fire service author of the *"Fire Service Instructor's Guide"*, makes the following observation: "A good training program is undoubtedly the single most important factor in producing and maintaining a high level of proficiency in any fire department. It not only produces high efficiency initially, but also affects future efficiency when we consider that the rawest recruit now being trained may be chief of department or at least a senior officer in 20 or 30 years."

Fire Training

Recently, Camden County Fire Rescue (CCFR) was audited by the Georgia Firefighter Standards Council (GFSTC) for compliance with Title 25 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, more specifically O.C.G.A. § 25-3-20 which identifies the minimum requirements for fire departments operating in the State of Georgia. The standard includes maintaining training records for all personnel including initial certification, registering all members of the department with GFSTC, maintaining specific equipment on apparatus, issuance of adequate protective clothing (turnout gear), maintaining workers' compensation insurance, and staffed with a sufficient number of personnel who have successfully completed basic firefighter training. Other than updating personnel records with the standards agency and ensuring training records have appropriate signatures the department was found in compliance with state requirements and will maintain its Certificate of Compliance.

However, the audit revealed deficiencies that are reflective of an inadequate training staff. Until several years ago, CCFR had a fulltime training officer assigned to the organization's administration division. The position was eliminated and responsibility for fire training was delegated to a Shift Captain as part of an introduction to a program of collateral duty responsibilities for field officers. The collateral duty responsibility has functioned effectively for issues such as air-pack and hose maintenance programs. It has not been an effective approach in ensuring that all members of the organization receive on-going training and education commensurate with their job responsibilities. In addition, there are multiple legal requirements associated with department training programs. At the federal level, the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA) requires that emergency personnel receive hazardous materials training at a minimum to the Awareness Level. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards require employers to provide training and education on subjects such as blood borne pathogen, hazardous materials and other subjects, including training on 2-in-2 out, Confined Space Awareness Hazard Communication, and Airborne Pathogens

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RECOMMENDATION:

A full-time Training officer position should be established and included as part of the Administrative Division of the organization. In addition, the Training Officer should be provided with appropriate administrative support services. The Training Officer should have responsibilities for ensuring that the training program accomplishes the following goals and objectives:

- Develop annual training schedules.
- Coordinate use of partner agency training facilities by County staff.
- Establish training program goals and objectives.
- Ensure consistency and uniformity in training personnel.
- Ensure the training program meets applicable standards including the following:
 - NFPA 1403 - Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions
 - NFPA 1410 - Standard for Initial Emergency Scene Operations
 - NFPA 1521 - Standard for Fire Department Safety Officers
 - NFPA 1561 - Standard on Emergency services Incident Management
 - NFPA 1451 - Standard for a Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program
- Establish appropriate training methodologies for unit and company operations and performance.
- Develop a resource library of training materials and aids to assist company officers with delivering training programs to their staff.
- Ensure the training program meets Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements and achieves maximum credit under the ISO Grading Schedule.
- Ensure departmental training records and programs are compliant with GFSTC rules and regulations.
- Coordinate training with automatic aid partners including multi-company operations.

EMS Training

EMS training is provided in-house by a paramedic who is also assigned to staff an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance. Each month, the paramedic performs training duties for a two-week period in lieu of functioning as a paramedic on an ambulance. The program appears to be functioning adequately in meeting the ALS and BLS continuing education requirements for personnel mandated by the Georgia State Office of EMS. In addition, specialty recertification classes such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) are conducted in-house with certified instructors.

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RECOMMENDATION:

A full-time EMS Training Officer is warranted for the organization given its EMS role and number of employees. Duties and responsibilities of the position include the following:

- Develop annual EMS training Schedule.
- Coordinate classes for Paramedics to maintain specialty certifications and serve as Lead Instructor.
- Conduct Basic EMT class for new recruits.
- Establish Annual EMS training goals and objectives.
- Function as the primary point of contact with the organization's Medical Director.
- Direct the department's quality assurance program.
- Identify specific training goals and objectives based on review of Patient Care Records (PCR's).

Recruit Training

Newly-hired employees receive their initial training and certification as National Professional Qualification Certification Firefighter 1 (NPQ FF 1) through the Georgia State Fire Academy (GSFA). Upon completion of the eight-week program and prior to assuming emergency response duties and responsibilities, recruits receive an additional two-week training program specifically tailored to Camden County Fire Rescue operations. Initial training received through the GSFA prepares the firefighter for the competencies required of a firefighter to participate in live fire operations and hazardous atmospheres. However, GSFA does not prepare students for the multiple additional tasks that may be required of them depending upon their employer's needs. As just a few examples, additional training courses may include, driving apparatus under emergency conditions, conducting water supply operations, operating fire apparatus pumps, assuming incident command duties, and carrying out station management responsibilities. These additional educational modules are typically provided by the employer, and when combined with didactic and manual training, may take weeks or months to accomplish.

Camden County operates in both suburban and rural environments, each requiring different competencies based on the availability of pressurized water for firefighting operations. Rather than having to have competencies just for pump operations associated with an available water supply from fire hydrants, CCFR firefighters must also have competencies in operating fire apparatus through drafting operations whether from a pond, stream, dry-hydrant, draft tank, and turbo draft devices. Competency in water delivery for firefighting operations takes time to acquire through repetitive training and exercises. It is therefore incumbent on the organization

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to assist new personnel in meeting these challenges by providing an appropriate mentoring period during which the recruit is partnered with a seasoned veteran or officer who can guide the development of the skills that will be required as a member of CCFR.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The practice of using a task-book or similar method to test for competencies should be re-instituted and required of all new recruits entering the workforce with the Camden County Fire Rescue.
- Recruits should also be required to complete a recognized program of emergency apparatus driver's training consistent with the requirements of NFPA 1451 - Standard for a Fire Service Vehicle Operations Training Program prior to operating apparatus under emergency response conditions. The Volunteer Fireman's Insurance Services Office offers a model emergency apparatus driver's training program.

Historically, part of process of ensuring new recruits had the requisite skills and competencies was through the completion of a task-book by recruits after their station assignment. The task-book identified various skills and competencies that the recruit would be tested on by their Station Officer. After demonstrating proficiency in the required competency, the Station Officer would verify the recruit had met the competency by signing the task book. Based on our observations, the practice of ensuring minimum competencies of recruits through a task-book or similar methodology does not appear to be in effect.

Induction Period

Previously high turnover rates have resulted in a workforce with limited experience. According to information regarding employee tenure provided by the Department of Human Resources, approximately 32 percent of the department consists of personnel with less than two years' experience and over half of the department has five years or less of service.

Years of Service		
Years	Number	Percent
< 2	32	36%
2 thru 5	16	18%
6 thru 10	20	23%
11 thru 20	14	16%
> 20	6	7%

Table 3: Employee Tenure

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Due to staffing limitations, some stations operate with staffing of two personnel. Consultants observed stations staffed with two firefighters who each had less than one year of experience. Compounding the situation is the current assignment of officers to EMS units housed at City stations. Consultants recognize that this is, in part, due to the limited number of paramedics employed by the organization and that all officers are required to be paramedics.

In some areas of the county, officers have responsibility for fire stations other than the one to which they are assigned. Responsibility and management for a station where one is physically not located, as well as high demand for EMS calls (approximately 68 percent of all emergency response activity), makes it difficult for officers assigned to EMS units at City stations in Kingsland and St. Marys to adequately monitor personnel assigned to their primary County station as well as making sure they have the requisite competencies. This supervision model also results in the newest recruits being assigned to stations in the unincorporated areas of the County often without a station officer.

The current method of station management is predicated on two factors. First, station oversight is primarily the responsibility of the station officer. In his absence, paramedic certification trumps all other factors such as seniority or other certifications. Having paramedic certification, while beneficial for patient care, does not necessarily translate into quality station management. Further limiting the department's flexibility with personnel assignments is the recognition that Basic EMT certification is not required of new employees. Taken collectively, these factors result in new recruits being assigned to stations where they have responsibility for carrying out emergency response activities without first having had experience or station leadership.

RECOMMENDATION:

- New recruits should have a mentoring program during which they become acclimated to the requirements of the position. The department should strive to ensure that a new employee is partnered with a station officer or other senior firefighter during their first eighteen months of employment.
- The department should ensure that the most senior firefighter (experience greater than 2 years) should hold responsibility for station management in the absence of the station officer.

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RECOMMENDATION:

- The department should require all new employees to achieve Basic EMT certification within the first two years of employment.
- The department should institute a program of training new employees to the level of Basic EMT.
- The department should annually provide for a minimum number of scholarships to Paramedic training programs with the cost of training borne by the organization.

The CCFR is a combination department in which the traditional role of fire suppression as well as advanced life support patient transport services are provided by the same department. In recognition of this role, the department should tailor its recruitments goals to achieve a workforce capable of performing both primary functions. To improve staffing flexibility the department should expand the number of personnel certified in the field of EMS.

Officer Development and Promotion

Opportunities for officer development and promotion appear to be limited to self-initiative in acquiring required certifications. CCFR recently released requirements for individuals desiring to pursue a leadership role within the organization.

These requirements consist primarily of meeting specific NPQ certifications such as Training Officer, Fire Officer 1, 2, 3 & 4, & Paramedic Certification and various leadership courses offered by the Georgia Fire Academy. While it is highly appropriate to have various operational certifications to pursue leadership positions within the organization, the actual selection process lacks essential elements to ensure that the department promotes the individual with the highest level of competency. The selection process, once certifications are achieved, consists of minimal demonstration of competencies. There does not appear to be a hierarchal ranking system based on successful completion of a promotional testing process. The key component to being promoted appears to be an essay describing the promotional candidate's desire for the position of leadership. Based upon these submissions, the Fire Chief determines the candidate most qualified for promotion.

Certifications and leadership courses do not necessarily prepare promotional candidates for leadership positions. Exposure to the duties and responsibilities of leadership are also essential ingredients to ensure a highly competent supervisor. There are various methodologies through which one can acquire these essential skills, including participation in a mentoring program with another department, being responsible for a specific departmental committee, leadership positions within another organization are but some of the examples. The department should be commended for taking a first step toward the implementation of a mentoring program. The

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Chief in recognition that the organization will be undergoing an ISO review of the department within the foreseeable future has designated one of the shift commanders to oversee the ISO process. To assist the individual with this responsibility, the Chief reached an agreement with the City of Kingsland Fire Department to allow the officer to participate in their ISO review process which is currently on-going including participation in the on-site interview process conducted by an ISO field representative. Officers participating in these activities develop more robust leadership competencies, make better decisions, and are more committed to the organization. These activities also create improvements to long-term bench strength, especially within the officer ranks.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The department should establish a promotional registry. The registry merely reflects individuals who have met the minimum requirements (certifications) for promotion. The selection of candidates for promotion should be a separate and distinct process.
- The department should reconsider whether paramedic certification should be a prerequisite for promotion. Maintaining this prerequisite may exclude otherwise qualified candidates.
- The department should establish a selection process that adequately tests for the various leadership positions within the organization. The process should be structured and formalized consisting at a minimum of the following activities:
 - In-Basket Exercises
 - Incident Management and Personnel Management Proficiency demonstrated through a formal panel interview process. Panel members should include representatives from external agencies.
 - Interview with senior management including the Senior Director of Human Resources.
 - The department should ensure compliance with Section 7 of the County Personnel Policy, which states “the Human Resources Director shall conduct competitive promotional examinations in accordance with these regulations and shall admit to the examination all employees who meet the published qualification requirements”.

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Turnover

Issues related to turnover and replacement

There clearly has been significant turnover within the department over the course of the last four to five years although recent activity appears to reflect a decline in this trend. One can certainly make the argument that low employee morale has been a contributing factor. In fact, some employees interviewed cited departmental leadership as a contributing factor. However, there are other factors that can also be pointed to including a highly competitive work environment with regional agencies in Florida including Duvall County.

One of the primary attractions for employees to consider Duvall County is the availability of a defined benefit plan as opposed to a defined contribution plan as provided in Camden County. Defined contribution plans in which the employee and employer share in the risk and contributions of the plan are becoming more popular with local governments. Camden County’s match to its defined Contribution Plan is significant and exceeds many other jurisdictions. A review of comparable agencies in size, agencies in proximity and fire departments that deliver both fire suppression and Advanced Life Support EMS transport functions indicate that Camden County’s starting salaries are within a competitive range. Other contributing factors to high employee turnover include an economy that has emerged from the worst economic environment since the Great Depression. It is not uncommon for fire departments and other public-sector agencies to witness increased turnover when economic conditions are favorable in recognition that private sector agencies generally have higher salary packages than comparable public-sector workforce competitors.

Starting Salary Comparison		
Regional Jurisdictions		
Location	FF/EMT	FF/PM
Camden County	32,300	37,200
Duvall County	33,600	
Glynn County	34,570	37,564
Nassau County*		37,000
City of Brunswick*	28,370	
City of Savannah*	35,046	

Table 4: Jurisdictional Salary Comparison

Nassau County does not employ FF/EMTs only Firefighter Paramedics. The cities of Brunswick and Savannah do not provide ALS transport services.

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In addition to a competitive starting salary, Camden County also provides employees with access to preventative health care services utilizing a contracted provider, MainPoint Health and Wellness. Services provided to firefighters include annual physicals, stress tests and bi-annual chest x-rays as well as TB screening. While the Human Resources Department conducts exit interviews with employees leaving the organization, sufficient data for analysis was not available and therefore without direct corroborating data, it is difficult to define a singular factor responsible for the turnover the agency has witnessed in recent years. It is highly likely that a combination of factors previously described resulted in the high turnover rates.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Human Resources staff should conduct exit interviews and maintain the data in an electronic format that can be utilized for analysis. Information gleaned from the analysis of this data should be utilized for management, planning and policy development purposes.

Apparatus and Equipment Maintenance

Issues related to apparatus and equipment maintenance

CCFR maintains a fleet of approximately 40 emergency response apparatus ranging from staff vehicles to ambulances, fire trucks, and tankers for hauling water to fire scenes. Maintenance of these apparatus is the responsibility of one mechanic assigned to the Fire Department. Observations made during our on-site visit, revealed a number of outstanding work orders, and information provided regarding the degree of negative publicity the department has received, that apparatus maintenance has been a critical issue for some time.

It does not appear that funding has had a detrimental impact on the department's ability to maintain the fleet in a state of readiness. The Board of Commissioners has expended significant funding through the General Fund, SPLOST 7, and Unincorporated Fund for the replacement of apparatus. Approximately \$2,400,000 has been allocated within the last five years for the replacement of apparatus that have reached their useful life. However, the fire equipment requires maintenance. A single mechanic is insufficient to adequately conduct routine preventative maintenance as well as emergency repairs on the CCFR fleet. The complexity of fire apparatus with fire pumps, electronics, drive train and engine components require multiple skills to adequately maintain the units. Until recently, it does not appear that outside expertise has been routinely engaged to correct maintenance issues, nor does it appear that maintenance personnel are certified as Emergency Vehicle Technicians (EVTs).

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To resolve continued concerns regarding the state of readiness of apparatus, the department should undertake a safety and readiness assessment of all emergency response apparatus. That assessment should be led by the organization's Risk Management Director in conjunction with the Fire Chief and Director of Fleet Services. Results of that assessment should be made available to the Board of Commissioners. Based on the assessment, priorities should be established to correct critical issues with the help of qualified (Emergency Vehicle Technician Certification) external sources.
- The department in conjunction with the Director of Fleet Services should institute a comprehensive Preventative Maintenance Program in accordance with apparatus manufacturer's recommendations.
- The department should acquire a fleet maintenance facility capable of meeting the requirements of emergency apparatus repairs.
- The fire department mechanic position should be transferred to, and report to, the Director of Fleet Services.
- An electronic maintenance record system should be established for all emergency services apparatus including maintaining a comprehensive maintenance history as well as timetables for scheduled preventative maintenance.
- The department should acquire the services of a qualified and certified pump-testing agency and have all apparatus tested on an annual basis and any time major repairs have been made to fire apparatus pumps. Staff members who have undergone pump-testing training to improve their proficiency in conducting annual pump tests should observe annual pump tests.
- Apparatus should be checked and inventoried daily rather than weekly to ensure functionality. Records of daily checks should be maintained electronically. Employees should be authorized based on daily checks to place a unit in an out-of-service status if the mechanical issue creates a safety concern in concert with the current guidelines for conditions that warrant placing an apparatus in an out-of-service capacity.
- The department should establish a reciprocal agreement with municipal partners to utilize their reserve apparatus if reserve capacity is not available within the department.
- The department in conjunction with the Director of Fleet Services should develop policies for the replacement of emergency response apparatus based on years of front-line service, operating hours, maintenance history, and other factors appropriate to Camden County.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The department should consider establishing an apparatus specifications committee consisting of members of the organization and the Director of Fleet Services to assist the department in identifying apparatus specifications that will bring uniformity to future apparatus replacement programs.
- The department should consider EVT certification for personnel who repair or maintain emergency apparatus.
- The department should ensure that all apparatus including reserve apparatus have the basic equipment required in compliance with ISO guidelines as well as NFPA 1901 - Standard for Automotive Apparatus.

Equipment

The department maintains a comprehensive array of specialized equipment for conducting emergency services operations in addition to its fleet of emergency apparatus. Specialized equipment includes self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA's), protective gear, hose, generators, radios, ladders and specialty fire suppression equipment such as turbo-draft devices. Medical equipment, including cardiac monitors, require calibration testing and patient stretchers require mechanical inspection on an annual basis. Most if not all equipment is within the range of capital expenditures from a financial perspective. Based on our observation there does not appear to be a guiding policy with respect to the replacement of equipment. In fact, cardiac monitors while still functional do not reflect current state of the art technology recognizing that they are fifteen years old and have reached their useful and technological life span.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The department should ensure that policies are developed for inspection, testing, replacement and maintenance of all equipment.

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Observations

Organizational Governance

Emergency systems are comprised of a number of disparate components that must be carefully coordinated to ensure that outcomes are optimized. Coordination typically involves creating goals and objectives, establishing and implementing a plan, monitoring that plan, and then making improvements. Most states have authorizing statutes allowing local regulation of fire and EMS, although few local jurisdictions provide the necessary oversight to provide appropriate safeguards for citizens.

Local policy makers often seek to implement regulatory oversight of at least some components of emergency services. Though services are usually provided through the combined efforts of system providers and regulators, few systems have the all-inclusive oversight necessary to manage the interdependence of multiple, autonomous organizations. When systems fail, that failure is often the result of the inability of participants to coordinate autonomous delivery models. That is why strong, governmental, regulatory oversight is necessary.

One important factor for overseeing emergency services is ensuring that a single thread of authority is woven from the top of the response system to the bottom. One regulatory body can establish clear lines of authority and control, it can ensure that multiple requirements do not create impossible situations for service providers and it can ensure that services are integrated to the extent possible. That thread is present in Camden County because county elected officials are responsible for most of the system components.

Governance and Oversight

To maximize the likelihood of success, the agency overseeing the EMS system should maintain comprehensive oversight over all system components. The system components should work together, ensuring that the system provides the appropriate balance between high quality patient care and system funding. To be most effective, the emergency agency must operate under clear lines of authority, it must be empowered to create plans for the future of services, and then be empowered to implement those plans. Finally, it must be adequately funded to ensure its ongoing operations.

Camden County

Camden County is overseen by five-member Board of County Commissioners, elected by commission district to staggered terms. The authority of the elected officials is articulated in

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Camden County Codes and Ordinances. The County Administrator, Steve Howard, has structured the executive branch of the county such that the administrator oversees four individuals as well as eight department heads, all of whom implement the board's policies. The organization chart for Camden County is shown in APPENDIX 1. CAMDEN COUNTY ORGANIZATION CHART.

Like most municipal governments, Camden County has an established set of codes and ordinances that empower, direct, and guide the various departments in the county. Chapter 27 of the Camden County Codes and Ordinances guides the fire department, while the emergency management department is authorized under Chapter 22.

Camden County Fire Rescue

Fire Chief Mark Crews, heads the Camden County Fire Rescue (CCFR) department. In the budgetary oversight process, his time is allocated 80 percent to the Camden County Fire Rescue and 20 percent to emergency management.

The chief manages the department by means of a hierarchical chain of command. The span of control is reasonable, with three administrative support personnel, and an administrative division officer and operations division officer that report directly to the chief. Typically, what is seen as an appropriate span of control equals seven direct reports, plus or minus two. This command structure requires high levels of communication at all levels of the organization so that expectations are clearly communicated. It also requires a high level of visibility on the part of the chief.

Given the size and complexity of the organization in delivering multiple emergency services programs, the County should reestablish the position of Assistant Chief for Operations. In addition to direct responsibility for all operational activities, the position should also be responsible for the coordination of the fleet and facility maintenance programs. The current position of Assistant Chief for Administrative Services should oversee the functional responsibilities associated with the Fire Prevention Bureau, Training Program and EMS program responsibilities such as billing and collections, quality assurance program and coordination with the department's Medical Director. The department should conduct a promotional process for the position of Assistant Chief for Operations.

The position of Medical Director should be identified in the department's organizational chart. The Medical Director currently functions on a voluntary basis and assists the department to the extent that his schedule will permit. The County should consider establishing a contractual

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relationship with the Medical Director specifically defining the level of service to be provided by the Medical Director as well as compensation for serving in that capacity. The level of compensation provided will allow the Medical Director to acquire assistance in delivering the scope of services required by the department.

The newly added part time position for the Emergency Management Agency should also be identified in the organizational chart.

(See Appendix 1 for Recommended Organizational Chart.)

At least some of the concerns raised during the last few months related to the performance of the fire chief. The consultants can't directly corroborate performance issues in the absence of a county-established performance evaluation process. A performance evaluation process allows the county to establish expectations, create goals, and to periodically review performance toward meeting those goals. The consultants cannot reliably state that the chief's performance does not meet expectations when it is not clear what expectations exist.

While no formal performance evaluation process is in place, the Senior Director of Human Resources is developing a new process to appropriately evaluate not just department heads in the county, but all other employees as well. The Fire Chief (as do all other employees except for the County Administrator) works as an at will employee, without a contract. We anticipate that when the performance evaluation process is complete, the county will have a more reliable method to both measure and ensure performance.

The Fire Chief's authority is described in Chapter 27 "Fire Rescue Fire Prevention and Services Ordinance" of Camden County Codes and Ordinances. That ordinance describes the authority as follows:

"Camden County Fire Rescue shall have the authority to: a) Protect life and property against fire, explosion, hazardous materials, or electrical hazards; b) Detect, prevent and assist in the prosecution of arson; c) Administer and enforce the laws of Georgia; the rules and regulations, and any ordinances and codes that are adopted by the Camden County Board of Commissioners that are related to the prevention and suppression of fires, explosions, or injuries from hazardous materials and explosions and the protection of life and property from such hazards."

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The fire chief also oversees the fire prevention office, which is responsible to enforce the fire codes, some share of the building codes, and animal control codes.

Overseeing the fire department means that the fire chief establishes policies and procedures that guide the management team and other employees in carrying out the duties of the department. In our review of the policies and procedures related to the provision of fire and EMS services, we discovered that a number of the policies were not available, or were in the process of revision.

Importantly, the chief noted that local cities were establishing or rewriting policies and procedures to guide those cities, and that the department desired to establish procedures that aligned with those local cities. The consultants believe that policies and procedures, especially those related to fire ground or emergency scene operations, should be transparent to geopolitical boundaries, and hence we agree with the chief. Yet, while the joint policy development is important, the department cannot continue indefinitely without important policies in place.

Further, in the review of documents, it appears that the policies that currently exist vary greatly in form and format. Some are signed and authorized by the previous chief and some are unsigned and undated. As such, it is not clear which policies are actually in effect.

As we have previously noted, CCFR is made up of a group of employees that have a relatively short tenure with the organization. According to the organization's records, more than 50 percent of field personnel have tenure of less than five years. This employee group may lack the historical context of the more tenured employees and as such may be more likely to rely on the policies and procedures for guidance. That is why the consultants recommend that the organization move quickly to finalize those policies that are in process, establish new policies that are needed, and format and formally authorize all of the policies under the aegis of the chief.

Operations

CCFR has direct responsibility for the delivery of fire suppression services to the unincorporated areas of Camden County as well as the City of Woodbine. The service area is approximately 550 square miles. Annually, the department responds to approximately 2,000 (2016 data) fire-related incidents to a population of 15,669. In addition to its fire suppression role, the department has direct responsibility for the delivery of advanced life Support ambulance service. Call volume to EMS incidents accounted for 6,301 responses in 2016 representing

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approximately 76 percent of emergency responses. Approximately 50 percent of EMS calls resulted in a patient being transported by ambulance to a hospital. The department is the licensed and designated zone provider through the State Office of EMS for all E-911 medical assistance requests throughout the 619 square miles area of the County. The department provides this service throughout the unincorporated county and the incorporated cities of Kingsland, St. Marys and Woodbine with a combined population of 50,513. The department also provides emergency services through a volunteer arrangement with Cumberland Island.

In addition, the department also serves as the Emergency Management Agency for the County.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES	
A. Fire	1,997
B. Medical	6,301
i) Transports	3,129
ii) Advanced Life Support Transports	2,318
iii) Basic Life Support Transports	811
iv) No Transports	1,870

Table 5: Annual Responses (2016)

Emergency services are provided from eight active fire stations owned and operated by Camden County, plus one volunteer station on Cumberland Island. Three additional City stations are used by the County to staff ambulances and crews based on agreements between the county and the cities of Kingsland and St. Marys. An emergency operations center (EOC) is maintained by the County to coordinate disaster-related activities.

The County employs nine front-line engines (pumpers) and four reserve engines, along with six primary ambulances and three reserve ambulances, as well as eight tankers (utilized for water supply where there are no fire hydrants) and other support vehicles.³

Fiscal Management

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is charged with responsibility for the financial services and general financial operations of the government. Some of services provided by this department include:

- Preparation of the Annual Budget
- Management of County debt
- Financial planning

³ We note here that the number of front-line vehicles exceeds the number of fire stations. This occurs because some stations are staffed with more than one crew, and some crews select the appropriate apparatus to respond in based on the nature of the incident.

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- Maintenance of fixed assets and CIP
- Preparation of financial reports to measure organizational results

The County utilizes a July 1 through June 30 Fiscal Year. The assessed property value for taxation purposes has recently stabilized after sustaining declines in assessed valuation for the previous five years. The current total assessed value of properties is \$1,289,616,500. While the values have stabilized the current value reflects a loss of approximately \$500,000,000 in total valuation since FY 2010.

The General Fund is the primary operating fund for the County. The General Fund accounts for all financial resources received and expenses required for normal operations except those that are required, usually by law or ordinance, to be accounted for in other funds. Revenues generated by the approved millage rate of 13.94 for the General Fund is approximately \$30,430,585.

Camden County uses several different funding sources to account for the plurality of services provided by the CCFR. Expenditures from the General Fund reflect those expenses directly attributable to the EMS role of the department.

General Fund expenditures for the CCFR Budget for FY 2018 have been approved at \$4,476,265. In addition, the County uses a levy rate for the unincorporated areas of the County to offset the cost of certain services delivered to the unincorporated areas of the County. The fund also collects additional revenues that are used to reduce the millage rate required for the General Fund. The fund is projected to generate approximately \$1,586,568 in revenue for FY 2018.

The fire department receives \$865,193 from the unincorporated tax district to directly support fire service delivery in the unincorporated Camden County. The combined General Fund and Unincorporated Tax District funding reflects a total operating budget of \$5,341,458. This funding level represents approximately 11 percent of the total county budget.

In comparison to other jurisdictions, Camden County ranks favorably with respect to emergency service expenditures on a per-capita basis. There is however, a clear distinction between the County and agencies within proximity in the State of Florida.

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COMPARISON OF AGENCIES										
AGENCY	Organization		Services Provided		Land Area	Population	Density	Per Capita Expend.		Total
	Career	Vol	Fire	EMS*				Fire	EMS	
Camden County Fire/Rescue	X		X	X	619	53,008	82	\$33	\$88	\$121
Glynn County Fire Department	X		X	X	420	84,502	190	\$92	\$42	\$134
Thomas County FD**		X	X		544	45,248	82	\$58	\$72	\$130
Spalding County FD***	X		X		196	64,806	326	\$96		\$96
Laurens County FD		X	X		807	47,516	60	\$18	\$52	\$70
Colquit County FD**		X	X		544	45,708	83.6	\$12	\$53	\$65
Lee County FD	X		X	X	355	29,337	80	\$74	\$88	\$162
Troup County FD***	X				413	70,005	161	\$64		\$64
Nassau County FD, FL	X			X	648	80,622	113	\$93	\$100	\$193
Jacksonville FD, FL	X		X	X	747	880,619	1100	\$247		\$247

* Denotes Fire Departments that provide Advance Life Support Ambulance Service

** Denotes that ALS Ambulance Service is provided by an agency other than the fire department.

*** ALS Ambulance Service is provided by a private enterprise for which no financial information was available.

Table 6: Per Capita Financial Comparison

In addition to providing operational funding for fire/rescue services, the County allocates approximately \$200,000 for capital projects from the Unincorporated Tax District.

The County has an impact fee program in which new development is assessed a designated fee to provide funding for making improvements to existing services and to accommodate the additional service delivery requirements associated with new developments. Historically, this program has not generated the expected level of revenue, primarily due to the “Great Recession” and overall decline in development activities. The anticipated revenue from the Impact Fee Program for FY 2018 is \$57,025. The Fire Department’s share of this revenue for capital projects is projected to be approximately \$24,584.

The County has an established five-year Capital Improvement Plan identifying programmed expenditures for major capital projects. There are multiple funding sources for the fire department projects in the CIP including the General Fund, SPLOST 7, Impact fees and the Unincorporated Tax District. The FY 2018 CIP includes approved funding in the amount of \$850,240 for fire facility improvements and equipment

As indicated, Camden County also utilizes proceeds from a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to assist in the funding and implementation of various capital projects. The current SPLOST in effect until 2019, represents the seventh time that voters in the County have approved a 1 percent sales tax levy for funding major capital projects. Included in the SPLOST 7

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Initiative is \$530,000 for the replacement of fire apparatus as well as initial funding for the construction of an additional fire station. An additional \$110,000 has been appropriated for FY 2018 for replacing an ambulance. During FY 2017, the County appropriated funding for the replacement of a fire apparatus.

Capital Improvement and Replacement

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS - CAMDEN COUNTY FIRE/RESCUE								
PROJECTS	SOURCE	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2108	FY 2019	TOTAL
Fire Station Roof	GF			35,000				35,000
Ambulance Replacement	SPLOST 7		530,000					530,000
Fire Apparatus ment	SPLOST 7	270,000	270,000	270,000	540,000	270,000	270,000	1,890,000
Fire Station Roof - 16	GF					10,000		10,000
Extrication Equipment	GF					25,740		25,740
Replace Flooring - Mush Bluff FS	GF					10,000		10,000
Planned FS 18	SPLOST 7					420,000		420,000
Turnout Gear	UNINC. FD					52,000		52,000
SCBA	UNINC. FD					62,500		62,500
Total CIP		\$270,000	\$800,000	\$305,000	\$540,000	\$850,240	\$270,000	\$3,035,240
		0						

Table 7: Capital Improvement Expenditures

The various CIP funding sources have a combined total of approximately \$3,035,240 allocated to the CCFR for organizational infrastructure improvements. The County has utilized all available sources of revenue to assist in funding the various capital projects and programs required for the delivery of an effective emergency services program. Should the County's long-term community development efforts come to fruition, the Impact Fee program is uniquely positioned to assist the County in meeting the future demands placed on the emergency services program.

Planning

Agencies participating in emergency systems should develop plans for creating ongoing improvements, to maintain service levels that are both effective and appropriate, to identify environmental changes, and to project future needs. The components of the plan are integrated and designed to ensure that the system provides the appropriate balance between high quality and effective service and system funding.

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The planning process is critical to ensuring the ongoing success of emergency systems and also to ensure that services continually improve. While the mission and the vision statements of the agency overseeing fire and EMS agency provides the "star to steer by," the strategic plan provides the foundation by which the agencies can navigate the rocks so that the goals of the system can be achieved. Importantly, planners must be able to look over the horizon in identifying environmental changes prior to those changes impacting the system. In doing so, planners should create written plans, regularly review those plans, and report on the effectiveness of those plans. Plan components should at a minimum include needs and resources analyses, data collection processes, and a process by which system data can be analyzed and evaluated to monitor the agency's performance.

When properly developed and implemented, the plan can clearly communicate to all employees the intended direction that the agency has elected to go. Absence of a plan leads to confusion among employees and managers, and may lead to stress in the department.

The consultants evaluated the manner in which system planning takes place. Primarily that evaluation considered the plans provided by the county and the Fire Rescue Department. The consultants were particularly interested in the nature of long-term planning.

The consultants evaluated the presence of long-term planning documents and the content of those documents. In that evaluation, we learned that there is no comprehensive document that provides planning throughout CCFR, however, several documents are available that describe the focus and intent of both the County and the department.

Camden County Planning

The County has a well-developed, professionally designed mission statement, which is part of a larger document that includes vision and values statements. The mission, vision, and values are prominently displayed throughout county offices. The overall county vision, called "Vision 2032", is established and clearly communicated--"Camden County 2032 is the Premier Coastal Community of Georgia - Beautiful and Safe. "

In addition to its mission statement, the county has an established strategic plan that is published and available on the county website. While the plan is broad in scope, encompassing all county departments, there are a few items that relate specifically to fire and emergency medical services. Notably, the issue of safety (related to ambulance response performance), radio upgrade/communications, and apparatus purchases are described in the plan. The

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county's strategic plan is reviewed and updated annually, and is adopted by the county commission.

The planning process for emergency response systems is a critical component to ensuring the ongoing success of those systems and to ensure that customer outcomes continually improve. While the mission and the vision statements of Camden County provide the strategic direction, the CCFR plan should provide the foundation by which the goals of the system can be achieved. The County has an articulated plan, accompanied by mission, vision, and values statements, as well as a clear strategic plan based on those tenets described in those documents. Any proposed strategic planning process established by CCFR must clearly articulate and parallel the goals and outcomes established by the County in its strategic planning documents.

CCFR Planning

In contrast to the county's planning process, CCFR has its own mission, vision, and values statements based on departmental needs, however, those statements were last revised in 2006, making them rather stale in the context of the department's current issues and challenges.

Of more concern, CCFR does not have a strategic plan. During interviews, employees could not describe where the department was headed and what it would look like during the next two, or five, or ten years. A locally established, data-driven, and continually analyzed process will provide for proper system planning, improve performance, guide sound decisions for further system refinements, and resolve critical issues that currently plague the department. Perhaps most important, a strategic plan communicates to employees the direction of the agency and allows for higher levels of employee engagement.

Agencies must craft the policies and mitigating strategies that should be employed to achieve the goals and objectives of the Camden County system. Planning for response to emergency situations must be done well in advance of an emergency. Once that pre-planning is accomplished, the management team must continuously strive to improve performance. The challenge is to unceasingly evaluate and improve as many system components as possible, with the end result being better customer service and reduced life and property loss.

Goals and objectives must be a part of any strategic plan. Currently, objectives are established for all departments in the county and those are, for the most part, related to budgetary objectives. Yet the budgetary objectives are not operational objectives, instead, they are expected numbers of calls and personnel. These numbers aid the commissioners in determining

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whether the resources are sufficient to serve the expected demand. However, they do little to provide department personnel a guide with which to measure operational performance.

The gold standard for establishing a strategic plan for emergency services, with the accompanying goals and objectives, is outlined in the CFAI Accreditation Manual, 9th Edition, established by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. The core issues outlined in the document include a Standard of Response Cover (SORC) document that guides the agency in establishing response time and resource standards for typical events such as fire, EMS, haz-mat, and technical rescue. Agencies completing the process described in the document establish clearly articulated goals such as, “The agency will respond to an emergency medical event within 6 minutes with 90 percent reliability”, or “to each structure fire, the agency will respond with an effective fire fighting force within 9 minutes 90 percent of the time.”

Employees and managers reported that the response time goal of 6 minutes or less has been established for EMS events. However, there is significant confusion about how that 6 minutes is measured in the context of “average” response time reporting versus “fractile” reporting, as well as the events and activities that start and stop the response time clock. A SORC document will eliminate that confusion.

Multiple benefits occur with the development of a SORC document:

- The agency can pore over historical data to determine its performance during the last two to five years. This establishes a baseline of performance.
- Elected officials and employees can examine both the overall performance and the components of that performance over time.
- The agency determines the resources and resource types that will be needed to perform an effective response force for each type of event.
- Based on that analysis, the agency determines its response goals and definitions about how response performance will be measured.
- The agency then carefully monitors the performance going forward and makes operational modifications as needed to make improvements over time.

The consultants have recommended that the department establish a strategic plan as well as revisit the mission, vision, and values statements. We believe that the agency should do so quickly—at least to engage the basic elements of that process. Once that is complete, the corresponding goals and objectives can be established that align with the county’s overall priorities and strategies as identified in “Vision 2032”. We further recommend that the plan have the broad engagement of CCFR personnel and integrate measurable elements of quantity, quality, and time.

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Human Resources

Camden County maintains a professional HR department. The department is managed by the Senior Director of Human Resources charged with the responsibility for:

- Filling all County positions with diverse, qualified, and capable individuals
- Providing competitive benefit programs to all employees
- Providing excellent training, which equips employees with the technical, managerial, and educational skills to serve the citizens of Camden County
- Creating a quality work life for all employees

The department maintains a comprehensive Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual detailing the work environment and expectations of the workforce. Included in the Policies and Procedures Manual is a Safety Policy which allows any member of the organization to report an adverse safety concern anonymously. The County Personnel Policies and Procedures are incorporated within the fire department's Rules and Regulations. The HR Department is to be commended for establishing and managing the Firefighter's Advisory Council. The Council was established within the past two years to provide members of the fire department with an opportunity to identify issues of concern, and provide solutions and recommendations for consideration by fire department administration on matters of importance to the agency's workforce.

Staffing

The CCFR department is led by a designated Fire Chief. The chief's administrative staff includes an Assistant Chief and an Operations Captain. In addition, the position of Fire Marshal is a co-shared position between the fire department and other county departments requiring someone with code enforcement duties and responsibilities. Based on work flow information submitted for budgetary purposes, the position allocates approximately 30 percent of time to fire prevention program activities principally inspections and violation enforcement. There are two administrative staff support positions one logistics and one vehicle maintenance position assigned to the administrative division. Three operations Captains (Shift Commanders) are also considered part of the administrative structure.

The operations division operates a three-platoon system consisting of 24-hour shifts with personnel distributed to eight county stations and three municipal stations. Personnel assigned to the various stations work an average 53-hour workweek although some employees accrue significant overtime due to mandatory scheduling requirements. Each 24-hour shift has 6 supervisory positions including 2 Captains and 4 Lieutenants. The balance of staffing is distributed between Firefighter Paramedic (7), Firefighter EMT (20) and Firefighter 1 (34). The

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department is also authorized for 12 Part Time positions which are usually filled by firefighters from other fire departments. Station staffing consists of 2 personnel with the exception of stations which have an EMS unit located at the station. Minimum staffing for an EMS unit is two personnel. The departments' staffing model concurs with the FY 2018 budget document which reflects an authorized workforce of 100 fulltime and 12-part time positions. Approximately 50% of station officers are assigned to ambulance units at City stations.

As indicated in the organizational chart (See Appendix 2) and defined in the department's Rules and Regulations (April 2017), CCFR employs a traditional hierarchical chain of command through the rank of Lieutenant. According to CCFR 001-0054

The Chain of Command and rank shall be as follows:

- Fire Chief
- Assistant Chief
- Operations Captain
- Shift Captain
- Station Captain
- Lieutenant
- FF/Paramedic
- FF/EMT
- Firefighter

Administration

The Chief of the department is assisted in the administration of the department through two positions, the Assistant Chief and the Operations Captain. A review of the departments Rules and Regulations assigns the following responsibilities to these positions.

Assistant Chief - Administrative Duties

- The Assistant Chief shall serve as assistant and report directly to the Fire Chief.
- In the absence of the Fire Chief, the Assistant Chief will be expected to carry out any necessary assignments or administrative duties associated with that office. In situations where the Fire Chief may be out of the office for an extended period, the Assistant Chief will fill the position.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.
- The Assistant Chief shall be held directly responsible for the conduct, morale, and efficiency of all subordinates and shall enforce the Rules and Regulations, Operating Procedures, and County Policies and Procedures.

Operations Captains - Administrative Duties

- The Operations Captain manages and coordinate the operational needs of the staff to provide services as defined by the Fire Chief.

⁴ CCFR Rules and Regulations, Administration – April 2017

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- This position shall manage combat staffing and assist the Fire Chief with the staffing process.
- Manages various department technical systems as needed.
- Manage and administer department work order system.
- Assist in resolving personnel matters as needed.
- Attends meetings and serve as a liaison for the department as needed.
- Supervise and coordinate the daily operations of the department.
- Assists with the development of department policy and procedures.
- Shall serve in the capacity of a Critical Workforce Employee during disasters.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.
- The Operations Captain shall be responsible for all, but not limited to, aspects regarding operations outside of emergency medical operations.

There does not appear to be any functional responsibility assigned to the position of Assistant Chief other than a reporting relationship requirement for the Fire Marshal. Similar organizations generally assign functional responsibility over organizational divisions such as operations, administration, fire prevention, training, EMS and support services to senior administrative positions. In addition, the Rules and Regulations specifically cite the Chief's authority in establishing the work week for these senior administrative positions. According to CCFR 001-005 "The Operations Captain will be a salaried employee and their work week and assignments will be at the discretion of the Fire Chief." Administrative positions should function within the parameters of a traditional 40-hour workweek. There does not appear to be any reporting relationship on the department's organizational chart for the position of the Medical Director. Even though the position is voluntary in nature the breath and scope of authority of the Medical Director should be reflected in the hierarchy of the organization.

The department's collateral duty program extends to the position of Shift Captains with identified responsibilities for the three shifts. According to the department's Rules and Regulations 001-005, shift captain responsibilities are assigned accordingly:

- A-Shift is responsible for Facility Maintenance, correspondence and follow-up.
- B-Shift is responsible for Special Projects and Budget Review.
- C-Shift is responsible for Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.

The organizational chart reflects two Captains per shift. It is not clear from observation or practice the degree of authority that is exercised by the shift captains over these identified areas of responsibility.

Operations

Where the department deviates from a management perspective with other fire departments is at the lower end of the chain-of-command. Most fire departments depend upon seniority as the

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critical factor in determining supervisory and management responsibilities in the absence of a station officer for station related duties and responsibilities. CCFR delegates this responsibility to the firefighter with the most medical knowledge and certification. While there is no question that operational decisions regarding patient care at EMS calls should reside with the most medically qualified and certified individual, EMS certification does not necessarily translate into effective station management.

Direct involvement of operational staff in certain aspects of the management of the organization is accomplished through two recently introduced initiatives including a collateral duty program and a Firefighter’s Advisory Council managed through the Department of Human Resources. The collateral duty program tasks some station officers with responsibility for the management of specific programs such as hose maintenance, self-contained breathing apparatus and fire training. Given the breath and scope of fire training required, it is difficult at best for a full-time station officer to manage all the components of an effective firefighter training program. It is not clear if the assignment of these collateral duties is based on personnel interest, organizational needs or competitive process. The utilization of a Firefighter’s Advisory Council is an effective program for fostering employee involvement and empowerment in the organization.

Next Steps

The consultants believe that there are a number of steps the organization can take in the near term to begin to create strategic improvements and to concurrently implement some of the recommendations that are made as part of this organizational analysis. These steps have a number of benefits, in that they are relatively straightforward to implement, they are relatively inexpensive, and they can have an immediate beneficial impact on the organization. Those steps are articulated below.

Implement a Strategic Planning Process, including a Standard of Response document.

Implementing a strategic planning process allows the organization to engage employees about the direction of the department and to actively solicit input from all personnel. The process allows for the chief to open communication channels with employees and maintain those channels for future projects, it allows the agency to signal its future vision, and it establishes concrete steps to engage employees to help the organization achieve that vision.

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We recommend that the process be facilitated by someone outside the department using an open and well-documented process. Typically, a team of employees, managers, and executives would convene to establish, define, and reach consensus on the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Then, based on those values they would create a plan to implement strategies to achieve the vision. The county administrator has worked through this process for Camden County, and a similar process could be employed, relatively soon, for the department.

Monthly Management Performance Process and Report

The consultants have recommended that the county refrain from replacing or reassigning the fire chief at this time. We believe that each employee deserves a process of performance management in which clearly articulated expectations are defined. A monthly management report would provide regular and specific updates on how well the department is achieving the objectives.

We anticipate that the performance process and the management report include at least some of the recommendations listed in this document, as well as strategic objectives identified as a result of the strategic planning process. In addition, we would expect that the Management Report be much more specific than the current board report, that the Report be provided to the county administrator at least once per month, that multiple functions within the Fire Department be included in the report, and that the county administrator and the HR Director oversee the development of the process. This process could be one component of the employee evaluation process that is currently in development, it could be developed relatively quickly and inexpensively, and it could resolve some unsubstantiated maligned of the chief's performance.

Establish Departmental Working Committees

One method of creating additional engagement opportunities for employees, resulting in improved tenure and employee support, and to develop an improved organizational bench strength, is to establish a number of working committees consisting of front line employees and supervisors. Working committees allow organizational engagement, input, and communication, and allow employees with specific expertise or interests to engage with those interests for the department. One characteristic of effective workgroups is that they generally come up with better solutions than individual managers alone.

Committees might include a management-labor committee to work on workplace issues, a department-specific safety committee, an apparatus and maintenance committee to work on apparatus specifications and maintenance issues, and an EMS and quality assurance committee

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to establish methods to measure quality and to review new EMS products for implementation in the department.

Establishing committees is not without risk. Management must first establish a protocol for committees, and that protocol must define the method to clearly describe each committee's charter. Each committee must have appropriate boundaries—financial, legal, and political—established in advance and a committee charter approved by the chief. The organization should be aware that failing to fundamentally accept the committee's recommendations could have an adverse effect on the agency. Yet irrespective of the risk, the process can be implemented relatively quickly and without significant cost.

Pursue Agency Accreditation

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) manages the accreditation process. The full accreditation process includes several steps—appointing an accreditation manager and/or committee, key personnel receive training on CFAI accreditation standards, the accreditation committee conducts a formal self-assessment, it submits a written self-assessment manual to CFAI, and the department receives a site visit by CFAI experts to confirm the assessment of the organization.

The CFAI self-assessment process includes CCFD's evaluation of a broad array of categories that are broken down in to specific competencies, some of which are core competencies. To achieve accreditation, the department must meet all core competencies as well as a reasonable percent of the non-core competencies in categories such as:

- Governance and Administration
- Assessment and Planning
- Goals and Objectives
- Financial Resources
- Operations (including Fire, EMS, Technical Rescue, Haz Mat, and Fire Prevention)
- Physical Resources
- Human Resources
- Training and Competency
- Essential Resources – Water Supply, Communication Systems, and Administrative support
- External Systems Relationships

A careful self-analysis of the components and competencies in each of these categories would be a useful adjunct to the strategic plan document proposed above. And while the decision to pursue accreditation is not without costs, the down range benefits of engaging in and committing to the CFAI Accreditation process far exceed the front-end costs. Further, while this

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process may take as long as two to three years to complete, it can be commenced immediately, and is a recognized process throughout the world, including the US Department of Defense.

Prepare the Organization for scheduled ISO On-Site Review

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) is a rating organization that grades fire agencies based on the fire suppression capabilities of the agency. These ratings are used by insurance companies to determine the price for property and casualty insurance. CCFR was last reviewed by ISO in 2002 in accordance with the ISO's Public Protection Classification System. ISO typically conducts these fire protection evaluations every ten years. Camden County Fire Rescue is due to be reviewed and can expect to be notified by ISO at any time of ISO's intent to update CCFR's rating. CCFR should be prepared for this review by ensuring that the department has the necessary information and data collated in a binder for ISO to review. Any missing information will lead to a lower rating. That is why, at a minimum, the department should ensure the following information is available:

- Training received by members of the department including training with automatic aid partners.
- Pump test data for the last three years.
- Hose test data for the last three years.
- Hydrant flow inspection and flow data including draft hydrants for the last three years.
- Average daily staffing data.
- Structure Fire Reports for the last two years.
- Automatic Aid Intergovernmental Agreements.
- Map depicting Station locations and Response boundaries.
- Ensure all apparatus have the required equipment.
- Ensure all fire reports are complete including the number of personnel responding to the scene.
- Fire Prevention Bureau activities including building inspections, fire safety education and fire investigation programs.
- Copy of the department's policies and procedures.

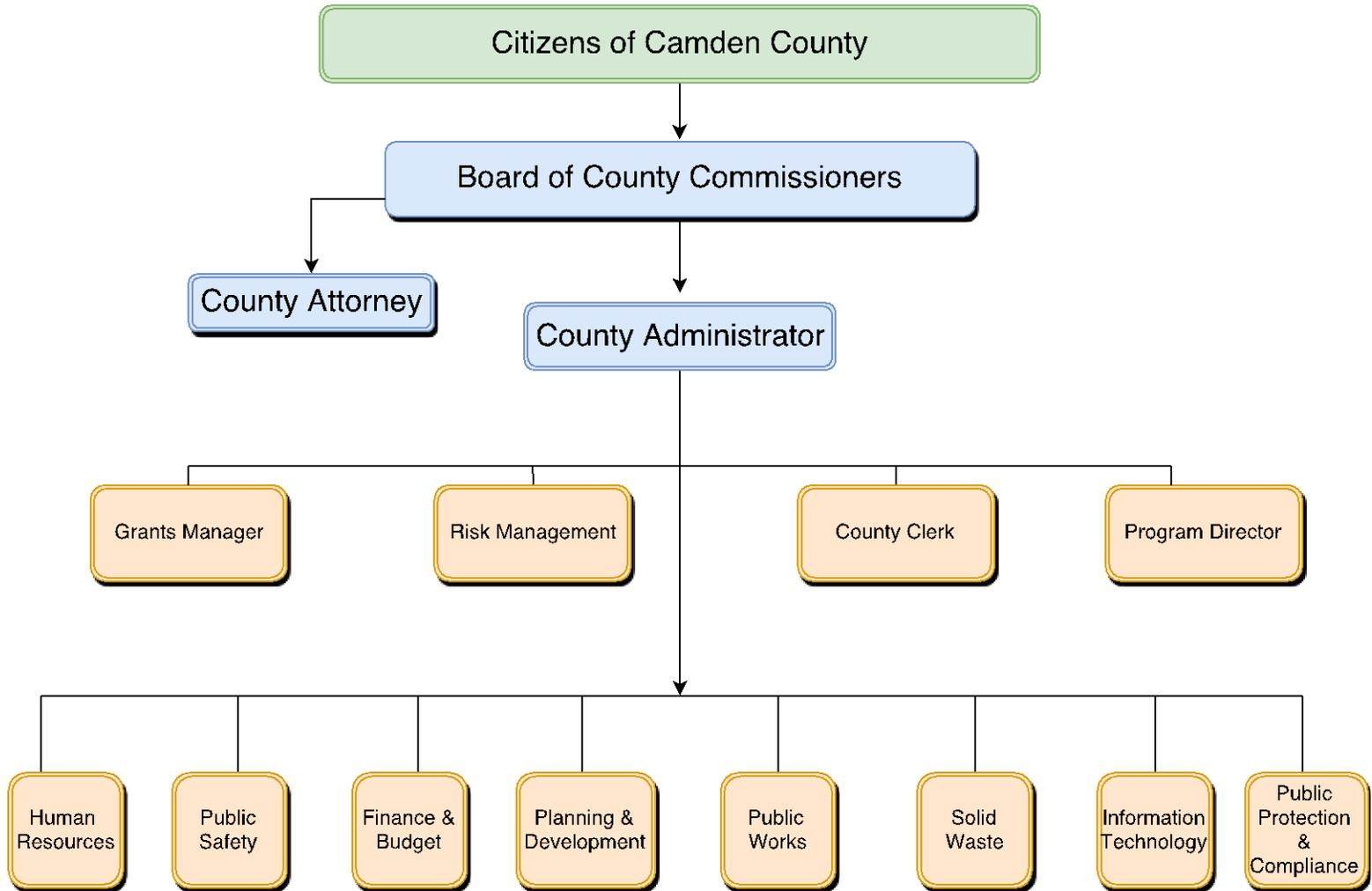
With the change of the Grading Schedule in 2013, ISO has reduced the amount of time on site with departments and has increased the frequency of reviews to approximately every five years. Because these ratings direct the price that commercial and residential property owners pay for hazard insurance, it is in the department's and the community's best interest to maintain a comprehensive set of documents that is updated on an annual basis for ISO review.

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APPENDICES

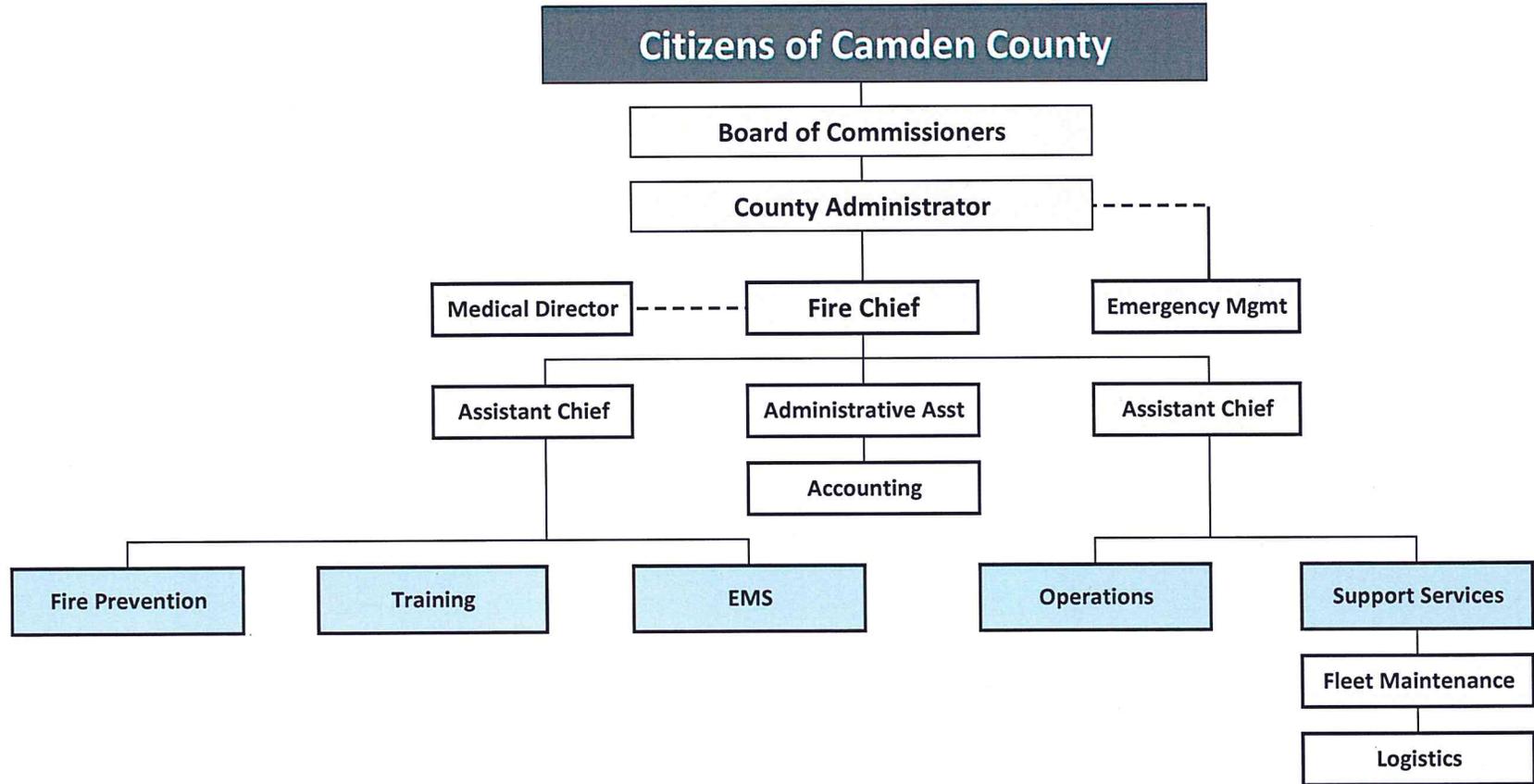
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APPENDIX 1. CAMDEN COUNTY ORGANIZATION CHART



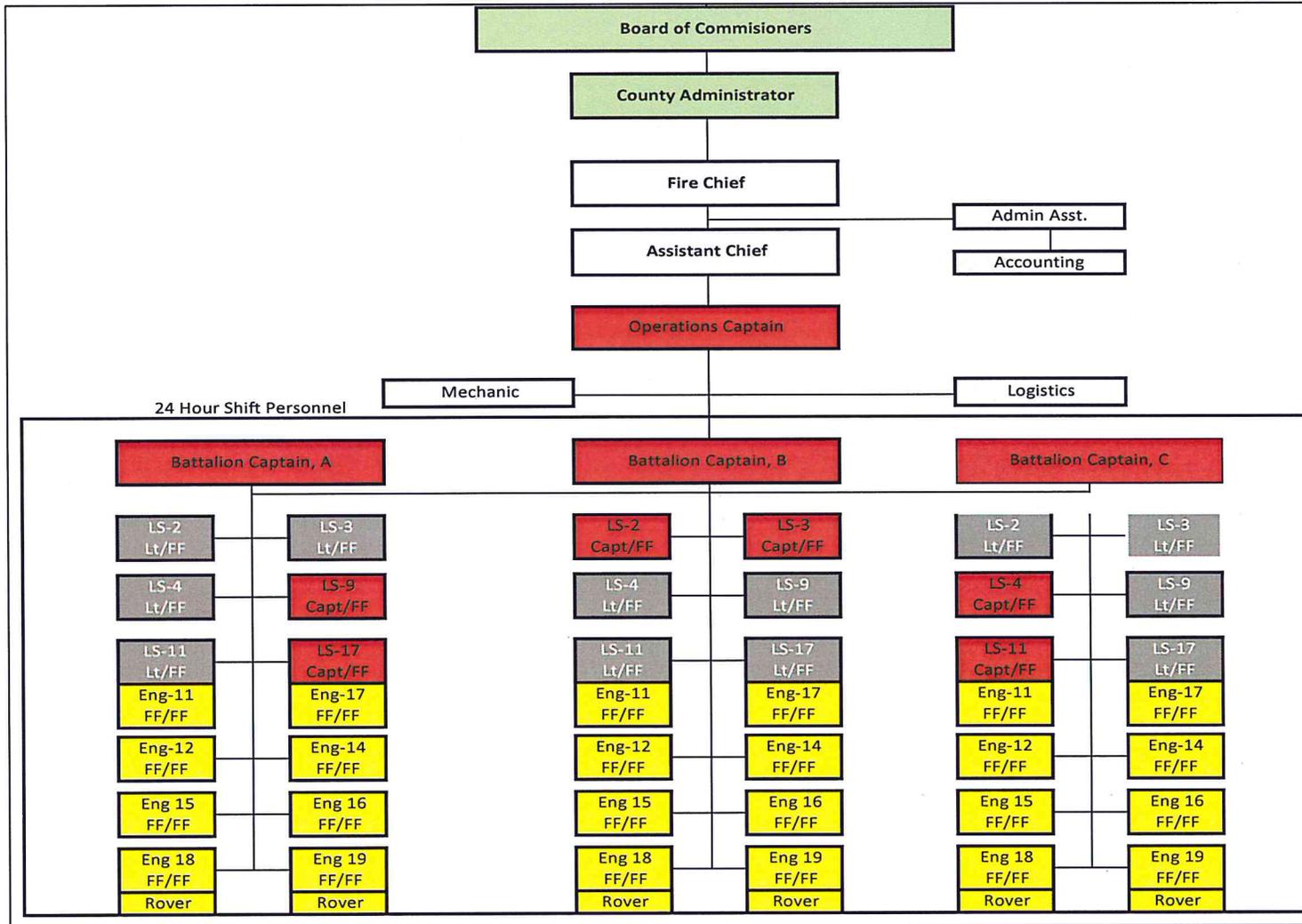
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APPENDIX 2. RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



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APPENDIX 3. EXISTING CCFR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



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APPENDIX 4. APPARATUS AGE, BY TYPE

ID	Model Year	Age	Mileage	Type	Status	Average Age
Ambulances						
LS-11	2008	9	191,063	Ambulance	Front line	
LS-17	2008	9	180,002	Ambulance	Front line	
LS-9	2015	2	48,911	Ambulance	Front line	
LS-3	2016	1	24,901	Ambulance	Front line	
LS-4	2016	1	27,988	Ambulance	Front line	
LS-2	2017	0	4,655	Ambulance	Front line	3.67
LS-8	2000	17	NA	Ambulance	Reserve	
LS-6	2002	15	234,101	Ambulance	Reserve	
LS-7	2002	15	216,510	Ambulance	Reserve	15.67
Engines						
E-20	1989	28	NA	Engine	Front line	
E-12	2000	17	86,419	Engine	Front line	
E-14	2000	17	108,571	Engine	Front line	
E-15	2000	17	92,874	Engine	Front line	
E-19	2000	17	118,031	Engine	Front line	
E-11	2015	2	13,137	Engine	Front line	
E-16	2015	2	10,536	Engine	Front line	
E-18	2015	2	13,331	Engine	Front line	
E-17	2017	0	1,247	Engine	Front line	9.25
E-2	1989	28	NA	Engine	Reserve	
E-1	1995	22	NA	Engine	Reserve	
E-4	2000	17	132,234	Engine	Reserve	
E-3	2009	8	51,382	Engine	Reserve	18.75
Tankers						
T-11	2001	16	75,163	Tanker	Front line	
T-16	2002	15	54,323	Tanker	Front line	
T-17	2002	15	46,249	Tanker	Front line	
T-14	2008	9	14,942	Tanker	Front line	
T-19	2008	9	1,464	Tanker	Front line	
T-18	2009	8	13,373	Tanker	Front line	
T-12	2013	4	10,742	Tanker	Front line	
T-15	2013	4	11,584	Tanker	Front line	10

Table 8: Apparatus Age, by Type

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APPENDIX 5: APPARATUS ASSIGNMENTS

Stations and Vehicle Assignments	Engines	Tnkr	Amb	Reserve Engines	Reserve Amb	OTHER
Fire Rescue HQ/Station 10			LS 2			Tr. Tahoe, Batt 1, Chief 1, Chief 2, OPS 1, LOGs 1, Van 1
Station 2 (St. Marys)						
Station 3 (Kingsland)			LS 3			
Station 4 (Kingsland)			LS 4			
Station 5 (Kingsland)						
Station 9 (St. Marys)			LS 9			
Station 11	E-11	TKR 11	LS 11	RE 2, RE 4	LS 6,LS 8,	Br 11, HV 1, HV 2, Log 2,
Station 12	E-12	TKR 12				
Station 14 (Closed)	E-14	TKR 14				
Station 15	E-15	TKR 15				
Station 16	E-16	TKR 16				
Station 17	E-17	TKR 17	LS 17		LS 7,	
Station 18	E-18	TKR 18				
Station 19	E-19	TKR 19	RES 1,	RE 1, RE 3, RE 4		FS Truck, FS Trailer,
Station 20	E-20					

Table 9: Apparatus Assignments