

The 6th Fire District Commissioner

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OVERVIEW

- Commissioners rely upon a number of appointed officials/ outside advisers to conduct the affairs of the fire district
- These critical roles are defined by statute, contract or traditional parameters of service
- Commissioners need to effectively utilize these resources without becoming de facto 6th commissioners



OVERVIEW

- **The Commissioners' Team**
 - **Secretary**
 - **Treasurer**
 - **Chief**
 - **Counsel**
 - **Others?**



OVERVIEW

- **The 6th commissioner phenomenon occurs when either authority or influence is appropriated by the team member, abdicated by the board or a combination of the two**
- **Just as we don't encourage commissioners doing the jobs of others, eg chiefs, likewise we don't encourage others to take on the role of commissioner**



The Fire District Commissioner – Town Law 176

- Manage the fiscal and budgetary requirement of the fire district
- Oversee personnel matters
- Ensure the efficient operation of the fire department including property management and policy implementation
- The “business side” of the firehouse



The Fire District Commissioner

- Budget development
- Claim auditing
- Property management
- Insurance
- Benefits
- Personnel matters



The Fire District Secretary – Town Law Section 178

- The fire district secretary's primary duties involve administrative and clerical support of the Board of Fire Commissioners, including attending meetings, keeping records and overseeing compliance with laws like FOIL and Open Meetings Law.
- Secretaries also have ministerial role in supporting District's board of elections in the conduct of referenda and commissioner elections



The Fire District Secretary

- Administrative support
- Meeting attendance
- Legal compliance
- Records management
- Procurement policy
- Financial Matters
- Receipts and Public Records

And

Additional powers and duties as determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners



How can these two positions work together???

- Agenda
- Budget
- Minutes
- Expectations
- **COMMUNICATION**

Let us role play some scenarios of working together.....



The Fire District Treasurer - Town Law Section 177

- Budget
- Audit of Claims
- Disbursements
- Account Reconciliation
- Annual Financial Audit
- State-mandated Fiscal Reports
- COMMUNICATION

Let us role play some scenarios of working together.....



The Fire District Chief - Town Law Section 176-a

- “CEO” of the Fire Department
- Responsible for Firematic Operations
- Responsible for Enforcement of District Policies
- Responsible for Management of District Firematic Property
- Human Resources Officer
- COMMUNICATION

Let us role play some scenarios of working together.....



The Fire District Counsel

- Chief Legal Adviser to the Board and District
- Provides Advice and Counsel to the Board
- Represents District in Legal Matters
- Adviser on Policies
- COMMUNICATION

Let us role play some scenarios of working together.....



Who else could potentially be perceived as the 6th Commissioner?

How can this affect your fire district?

How do you manage them?



Tips to making the 6th commissioner a good working relationship

- A detailed job description
- Appropriate vetting of candidates
- Clear communicating of expectations
- Opportunity for input
- Ongoing effective communications



What can happen when these positions work together?

- Public perception
- Recruitment & Retention
- Operating efficiently
- Work performance
- Accountability
- Longevity of officers
- Shared experiences
- Learning from each other

**TEAMWORK MAKES THE
DREAMWORK!**



Questions



Association of Fire Districts of the State of new York

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