

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM**

**Inter-Office Memorandum**

**SUBJECT:** Addition of Lieutenants - Fire Department

**FROM:** George Barkanic, Fire Commissioner

**TO:** J. William Reynolds, Chairman Human Resources and Environment  
Committee

**DATE:** February 18, 2009

Chairman Reynolds,

In January, I sent the following letters to Dennis Reichard requesting the promotion of four firefighters to the rank of Lieutenant and the temporary addition of a Captain. Dennis approved my request and forwarded it to Mayor Callahan who also approved my request. I would like the opportunity to bring these requests before the Human Resources and Environment Committee.

Respectfully,



George J. Barkanic  
Fire Commissioner

## CITY OF BETHLEHEM

### Inter-Office Memorandum

**SUBJECT:** New Lieutenants – Fire Department

**FROM:** George Barkanic, Fire Commissioner

**TO:** Dennis Reichard, Business Administrator

**DATE:** January 26, 2009

Dennis,

In order to increase accountability, safety, productivity, and fire-ground operations I am proposing a restructuring of the fire department. In 2008, we had six engines, two aerials, and three squad trucks in service at all times staffed by twenty personnel. In 2009, we removed one squad truck from service and increased staffing to twenty-two at all times. At present, fire units from our three fire districts respond to any two-engine response in the City of Bethlehem. This increases the chances of the vehicles being involved in an accident while responding. It also increases fuel and maintenance costs for the responding vehicles as well and shortening the lifespan of the apparatus.

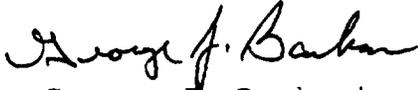
The ultimate goal is to have five engines manned with two firefighters and one officer, two aerials with two firefighters, one engine with two firefighters and one command vehicle with one officer and one firefighter. This would place an officer at each of our five fire stations, which increase the safety and accountability of our employees, and the citizens we serve. It also increases the productivity and operational effectiveness at emergency scenes. It would allow us to eliminate two out of the three squad trucks we now operate. Twenty-three personnel are needed for this plan to function. Now, we have a twenty-two personnel minimum manning which makes us one short of making the changes. We are looking at options, which would accomplish our goals while maintaining the manning at the current twenty-two.

I took the first step in our plan by maintaining four officers positions at all times starting January 1, 2009. The problem we have encountered is to maintain four officers it is costing the City too much in overtime. So far this year we have spent \$15,000 on officer overtime. The problem is two-fold, first it is not fiscally responsible to continue to spend at this level, and secondly the basic firefighters feel they are not getting their share of the overtime. This has a negative effect on the morale of the firefighters.

My solution to the problem is to increase the number of Lieutenants on each platoon from the current two to three. This can be accomplished through the promotion of four firefighters not increasing the size of the department. The cost difference between a Class E firefighter and a Lieutenant is \$3,213.86. To promote a new Lieutenant to each of the four platoons would cost a total of \$12,855.44. The savings realized by keeping the squad truck out of service would offset the cost. It cost the fire department \$5,440.49 for fuel and maintenance in 2008. The cost of replacement is \$7,000 per year at current prices. This is a total expenditure of \$12,440.49 per year. To promote four firefighters to Lieutenants is a cost of \$12,855.44 per year. The difference of \$414.95 is a small price when you consider the increases in operations, safety, accountability, and productivity.

Without additional officers, I will have to place Truck 1 back into service so that we maintain the level of service we now provide.

Respectfully,



George J. Barkanic  
Fire Commissioner

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Subject: Temporary Addition of Fire Captain  
From: George J. Barkanic, Fire Commissioner  
To: Dennis Reichard, Business Administrator  
Date: February 12, 2009

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Recently our Training Captain was removed from that position and reassigned to a firefighting platoon. He was reassigned for job performance issues. This leaves the position of Training Captain open and one extra Fire Captain on the line. I would like to promote Lieutenant Ken Jones to the position of Training Captain. In doing this, we would have seven lieutenants and five captains on the line instead of the normal eight lieutenants and four captains.

In January of 2010, Assistant Chief Michael Smith will be retiring. When he retires, one captain will be promoted to fill his position. This will leave us with the normal four captains and eight lieutenants on the line. I am asking to temporarily increase the number of captains so that I can promote Lt. Jones to the position of Training Captain. This will not require any increase in the Fire Department budget. The additional cost for another captain will be \$3,217.00. No additional funds are needed since the 2009 Fire Department budget contains funding for nine Lieutenants instead of the normal eight.

The position of Training Captain is an important one for the Fire Department. They schedule all training and public relations programs. They handle all requests for outside training from the firefighters. In addition, they are the department's liaison with the communications center. They also ensure that all firefighters maintain their current certifications. They are in charge of all new firefighters hired by the Fire Department making sure they are enrolled in the fire academy and acting as our liaison with the academy. They respond to all multiple alarm fires and assume the position of safety and accountability officer. It would create a great hardship on the Fire department if we had to wait until January to fill the position.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George F. Barkan".

Fire Commissioner

cc:file