Attached is an update regarding the Charlotte Fire Department’s (CFD) improvement plans based on the Management Partners report that was issued about a month ago. The report included 18 recommendations, which are addressed in the attached.

CFD, in collaboration with a new Fire Advisory Committee, is addressing the improvement areas identified with key actions that will be implemented over the next six to eight months.

Four employee work teams are being established to develop solutions that address recommendations in the following areas:

- Workload and accountability
- Disciplinary policies and procedures
- Organizational culture and communication
- Training and succession planning

Over the next several months, action plans will be reviewed and implemented.

The Fire Chief is also working with his leadership team, HR and other departments on employee/supervisor training, performance and succession planning, which is also addressed in his memo.

In addition, at the city-wide level, we have completed revisions to the City’s Code of Ethics and the Social Media Policy. We are nearing completion of a revised Grievance Policy to address concerns raised in the Van Laningham Report.
TO: Ron Carlee,
City Manager

FROM: Jon B. Hannan
Fire Chief

DATE: June 9, 2015

RE: Update on Fire Department Improvement Plans

**Background**

Earlier this year, the Charlotte Fire Department requested a comprehensive review of Fire Department management processes, including the disciplinary process, and to identify opportunities to improve oversight, accountability, communication and performance. In late April, Management Partners released its Fire Department Management Systems Review.

Overall, Management Partners was very complimentary of the department, including in its conclusion:

"The Charlotte Fire Department is highly valued by the community, performs well and is accredited, and has employees who are well-trained in firefighting and emergency medical service. The results of our work confirm that the Charlotte Fire Department employees are pleased to be part of the organization and take pride in serving the community.

While the department uses many positive practices, Management Partners identified improvements to the management system in the areas of communications, organizational culture, and professional development that will make it even better. We have provided specific suggestions for making positive changes that will further drive excellence in the department.

The report also included 18 recommendations focused on the following four areas:

- Workload and accountability
- Disciplinary policies and procedures
- Organizational culture and communication
- Training and succession planning
I and my command and administrative staff have carefully reviewed the report and considered all recommendations. The next step in the process is to craft a plan to respond to those recommendations, in order to make a great department even better.

The aim of this document is to address the improvement areas in the Management Partners Report and to outline key actions that the Fire Department is taking to learn, grow and create an open and consistent environment for all employees.

**Formation of the Fire Advisory Committee**

The Fire Advisory Committee was formed to work with me to address the Fire Department Management Systems Review. The committee will continue to serve over the next six to eight months to support the ongoing efforts of the CFD and to receive updates on the items discussed in this document. The committee includes:

- Ron Kimble, Deputy City Manager
- Ann Wall, Assistant City Manager
- Sheila Simpson, Deputy Human Resources Director
- Willie Ratchford, Director of Community Relations
- Candy Phillips, Organization Development and Learning Manager

This update was developed in collaboration with the Fire Advisory Committee.

**Framework to Address Areas for Improvement**

The Charlotte Fire Department is committed to addressing areas of need using a cost-effective approach, drawing from the skills, dedication, and capacity of the CFD and the City of Charlotte. The plan to address the recommendations concentrates primarily on three major items:

1) Employee Work-Team Development
2) Management Development and Training
3) Fire Department Capacity Building

**Item 1) Employee Work-Team Development**

Any successful organization must work with its employees to ensure they are a part of continued improvement. The Charlotte Fire Department is committed to addressing the Report’s recommendations and wants employees to be part of that process. Therefore, the department will establish four employee work teams to develop solutions to directly address the Report recommendations. Work teams will provide platforms for employees to voice their ideas and offer meaningful input into decisions.
The goal is for everyone to have an opportunity to participate in improvement efforts and to expand the number of employees contributing. I will also develop a new survey to gather more-detailed information about some items mentioned in the Management Partners Report. The survey will be available electronically and in writing, in order to encourage greater participation within the department.

Team Composition and Selection Process

The employee work-team selection process will be conducted by the Charlotte Fire Department in conjunction with Human Resources and the Fire Advisory Committee. Before selecting team members, information will be sent out explaining the selection process, the work-team goals and objectives, the time commitment and expectations for deliverables, and how the work-teams’ input will be reviewed.

Work teams will be diverse, and employees from all areas of the department will be encouraged to volunteer. Committee meeting times and dates will be scheduled to allow members from all shifts to participate in as much of the process as possible, based on the limitations of shift-based work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Team Focus Area</th>
<th>Recommendations to Address</th>
<th># of Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workload and Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendation 1. Establish a procedure for conducting quality assurance reviews of incident reports and patient reports.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommendation 2. Review the duties of the department safety officer to identify opportunities for improvement.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 3. Revamp the employee performance evaluation form to make it useful for discussing performance and providing guidance about improvement opportunities.</td>
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<td>Recommendation 4. Create a separate performance evaluation form that will be applicable for management positions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommendation 6. Develop a procedure for implementing performance improvement plans and provide training for supervisors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Up to 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disciplinary Policies and Procedure</td>
<td>Recommendation 9. Establish a process to regularly analyze investigation timelines, recommendations, and actions taken. This will help ensure consistency in holding individuals accountable and in the consequent disciplinary actions taken.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommendation 10. Evaluate the costs and benefits of creating a Professional Standards Unit for investigating complaints (and reviewing chain-of-command investigations), reports of rule violations, and employee misconduct, including complaints by residents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommendation 11. Clarify the grievance process to be used if the supervisor is the subject of the grievance.</td>
<td>Up to 15</td>
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</table>
Within six to eight months, team action plans will be brought to a combination of Charlotte Fire Department leadership and the Fire Advisory Committee for review and endorsement. Based on the complexity of the specific recommendation(s), teams may propose to extend the timeline of their work.

Item 2) Management Development and Training

Several of the recommendations listed in the Management Partners Report do not fall under the employee work teams. I will work with my leadership team, City HR and other City departments to address those items, including:

Recommendation 5. Provide training to supervisors in the department about how to give feedback on performance, especially when the feedback is negative. The Fire Department’s Human Resources Manager and CFD Chief of Training will work with other City departments, as well as other relevant agencies, to identify overall supervisory training needs and develop a comprehensive training plan to meet those needs.

Recommendation 6. Develop a procedure for implementing performance improvement plans and provide training for supervisors. The Fire Department’s Human Resources Manager has plans in progress to revise disciplinary forms to clarify the section on employee goals and plans for improvement, and to merge and standardize all disciplinary forms on the central Intranet site. In addition, course content is in development for supervisors regarding the importance of setting effective S.M.A.R.T. (S-specific, M-
measurable, A-attainable, R-realistic, and T-time bound) goals. Once training has been conducted, the S.M.A.R.T. performance goals will be added to all performance-review documents.

Recommendation 8. Provide training to command staff on the development and use of performance measures. This recommendation is currently being addressed by City leadership and the budget division of the Management and Financial Services Department as part of an organization initiative to revisit performance measurement and the use of the Balanced Scorecard. As part of this initiative, detailed measures are being updated and brought into alignment with high-level performance measures. Departmental leadership is working through how measures will translate down to front-line staff, for example, through the annual performance review and development process.

Recommendation 17. Establish a succession plan for executive and senior management positions. The Fire Department continues to seek out ways to best prepare for the future. The reclassification of five battalion chief positions to division chiefs will open up another level of management and grow the experienced candidate pool for future senior-level opportunities (See Item 3 below). The Fire Department’s Human Resources Manager and CFD Chief of Training will work with other City departments, as well as other relevant agencies, to develop a plan for identifying and providing appropriate development opportunities for high-potential employees, enhancing the candidate pool for future promotions.

Item 3) Fire Department Capacity Building

The Management Partners Report noted that the deputy chief overseeing operations supervises eight battalions and a total of 30 battalion chiefs, an unusually large span of control not frequently found in the fire service. The report recommended that the Charlotte Fire Department: Add additional management capacity to the Operations Division between the deputy chiefs and battalion chiefs. This will provide better spans of control, more promotional opportunities, and better succession planning. Three positions, one per shift, should be considered. Typically, the positions in this layer are called division chiefs or assistant chiefs. (Management Partners Report Recommendation 7)

Adding these new positions will improve succession planning and increase promotional opportunities within the department. The fire department identified five new division chief positions:

- Operations Division Chiefs (3)
- Training Division Chief (1)
- Aviation Division Chief (1)

Before the Management Partners report was released, the Aviation department, in consultation with the Federal Aviation Administration, recommended a single point of contact at the airport. The airport division chief will be funded by the airport and is already included in the 2015-16 airport budget.

The additional four positions will come as a result of reclassifying existing battalion chief positions, which means marginal increased costs to the City’s General Fund.
In addition, there is still a vacant deputy chief position. CFD went through the selection process to fill this position once, but it was put on hold when positions were frozen during budget discussions.

In order to provide diverse feedback and participation in the hiring process, I am working with the Fire Department’s Human Resources Manager and other City departments to develop a new selection process to fill the deputy chief and division chief positions. The new assessment process will include Fire Department and City employees, as well as several community leaders. Candidates will go through a combination of interviews and exercises; the assessment team will provide recommendations to me, and I will have the final decision-making authority.

The hiring process for the deputy chief position will include three City of Charlotte staff members (which may include department or division heads, chiefs or directors), two community representatives, and the three current deputy chiefs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Process – Deputy Chief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Charlotte staff (may include department or division heads, chiefs or directors) (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Representatives (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFD Deputy Chiefs (3)</td>
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The assessment process logistics, assignments and development of materials is in process. The target week for the assessment center is the week ending June 26, 2015 with selection of the next deputy chief on or about July 1, 2015.

The hiring process for the division chiefs will begin after the new deputy chief is in place, and will include four City of Charlotte staff members (which may include department or division heads, chiefs or directors) and the four deputy chiefs.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Process – Division Chiefs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Charlotte staff (may include department or division heads, chiefs or directors) (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFD Deputy Chiefs (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fire Department has been without one deputy chief position since February. In order to manage the current workload, I redistributed some of the current deputy-level duties, effective June 1:

- Chief Granger oversees emergency management, training and the airport
- Chief Kinniburgh oversees prevention, investigation, information technology and communications
• Chief Key oversees operations (with the exception of the airport)
• I oversee human resources, logistics, facility maintenance, planning, public affairs and the budget

Summary

The Management Partners Report relayed in its conclusion,

   The best organizations strive for continuous improvement, never being satisfied with the accomplishments of the past. They move aggressively and decisively to address problems and seek long-term solutions that address the underlying cause. By implementing the recommendations in this report, the Charlotte Fire Department can take another step towards excellence.

By carefully reviewing and developing plans to respond to the recommendations for improvement contained in the report, the Charlotte Fire Department and the Fire Advisory Committee are reaffirming the City’s commitment to drive excellence and positively impact the work environment for all CFD employees. I appreciate the support of everyone as we continue to maintain the high standards of CFD and to create an even better organization that fully uses the talents of our outstanding employees who are so deeply dedicated to public service.

CC: Ron Kimble, Deputy City Manager
    Ann Wall, Assistant City Manager
    Fire Advisory Committee