STUDY OF GREENWICH FIRE SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carroll Buracker and Associates, Inc.
Fire, Ems and Police Consultants
2070 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 500
Vienna, Virginia  22182
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Study Team would like to extend appreciation to Chief John Titsworth for his support in conducting this analysis. Although some of the data required had never been made available to him, he manually prepared information for this study.

Mr. Leonard LaLuna, President of the paid fire fighters union, and members of the local contributed a great deal in describing current practices and identifying opportunities for improvement.

The volunteer chiefs, officers and members of each of the volunteer fire companies were most helpful. Moreover, the insights of former volunteer chiefs provided valuable historical information about operations and administration.

A special thanks goes to Ms. Paula Belmont and Mr. John Wetmore for assistance in scheduling community leaders and members of the Department.

The proposed recommendations in this study have been developed to provide guidance to the Town of Greenwich in considering current and future delivery of fire services. Clearly, the Town should maintain a combined paid and volunteer system as long as possible. The residents and business people in Greenwich should be proud of the many contributions of the paid and volunteer personnel.

While all the recommendations may not be pursued by the Town, substantial teamwork will be needed from the fire administration, IAFF, and volunteers for these recommendations to be fruitful.

The recommendations in this report are only advisory in nature. The Town and Fire Department, including volunteers, should assess the recommendations and determine which recommendations should be implemented.
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The development of this study report involved research, data collection, on-site observation of employees and volunteers, meetings, analysis and interviews.

The interviews included the RTM Fire Committee, First Selectman, Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, training captain, Fire Marshal, inspectors, Town officials, members of the business and civic communities, career fire fighters, volunteer fire fighters, volunteer officers and chiefs, former volunteer chiefs and officers, and the former and current President of the paid fire fighters union.

The workload, staffing, supervision, operations, apparatus, facilities, administration, training, suppression and prevention were reviewed and appropriate analysis conducted. Specific recommendations were developed to address the study areas.
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study report is organized into an executive summary, chapters and appendices. Each chapter has a brief introduction to the study areas. Exhibits are utilized to depict relevant data.

At the end of each major study area, there are specific recommendations to that topic; however, because the study areas overlap, there are overlapping recommendations. There are over 180 recommendations. The recommendations are numbered in sequence by chapter with the chapter number listed first.

In order to provide the Town with a list of recommendations without referring to chapters, a copy of all the recommendations are placed in Appendix A. Since the Town asked specific questions to a large number of issues, the issues and recommendation number(s) are included in Appendix B. Although not part of the RFP, the Study Team has included specific job descriptions, training guidelines and other information. These are included in Appendix C through Appendix G.
The Greenwich Fire Department does not have an automated management information system to provide data on operational activities. The Fire Chief had to manually compile some of the data in this report.

The Fire Marshal has a computer system that reflects workload in various categories. There seem to be problems with lack of data and sharing of data within the Town's fire services.

The recommendations call for major changes in data collection, processing, storage, sharing, utilization and reporting to the Town government.

Because of manual recordkeeping and some questions about the quality of data as presently collected, caution is required in interpreting the workload data. These data should not be viewed as absolute.
STUDY TEAM MEMBERS

This study of fire services in Greenwich was conducted by four consultants. Each of the team members has served as practitioners in local government. All four have practical and consultant experience in fire services delivery. Combined, the team members have lectured in or provided consultant assistance to municipalities in all 50 states. Very brief credentials include:

WARREN ISMAN

Mr. Isman has managed two very large, modern fire and rescue departments each serving over 600,000 residents. He has lectured in ten foreign countries and 50 states on fire-and-rescue related subjects. Mr. Isman has authored over 100 articles which were published on fire subjects and hazardous materials and conducted previous fire studies. He is author of the book, *Hazardous Materials* and two books on fire administration.

TERRY EISENBERG, Ph.D.

Dr. Terry Eisenberg, a licensed psychologist, earned his Doctorate in Psychology at Maryland University. He specializes in police and fire selection, recruitment, promotions, assessment centers, training and labor relations. He also lectures and serves as an expert witness for jurisdictions on personnel management in police and fire agencies. Over the past 15 years, he has assisted 150 local, state and federal agencies. Dr. Eisenberg and Mr. Buracker have worked together on consultant projects in 16 states.

He coordinated the National Community Fire Prevention program for a number of agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Governors' Association.

ROBERT WILSON

Mr. Wilson has served as the chief administrative officer of three large municipalities, each with a population of over 600,000 residents. The budgets for these municipalities were between $500 million and $1 billion. He was responsible for the delivery of all local government services in each jurisdiction, including fire and rescue services. He appointed and managed fire chiefs in his career as a municipal manager.
Mr. Wilson is a former President of the Maryland City Managers' Association. He has more than 20 years of local government experience.

CARROLL BURACKER

Mr. Buracker served as Project Manager. He is President of Carroll Buracker & Associates, Inc., a Virginia-based corporation specializing in public safety. He has 22 years of service in public safety. Since leaving Fairfax County in 1985, where he had served for 20 years, his firm has been selected to evaluate public safety agencies by small, medium and large municipalities, including Salt Lake City, Seattle, Milwaukee, Annapolis, Kalamazoo, and 19 other communities.

He has lectured in China on public safety practices and procedures in the United States.
EXCLUSIVE SUMMARY

Volunteers

The Town of Greenwich has eight volunteer fire companies in seven stations which provide basic assistance in fire suppression. These volunteers seem to be very dedicated personnel. A number of volunteers have moved to the paid Fire Department. This reflects very favorably on the Town and the volunteer companies.

The Study Team found that tension has increased over the years between the paid and volunteer personnel. In combination career and volunteer systems, this is not unusual. Basically, the volunteers want to continue providing this valuable service to the community; however, there appears to be a need for specific coordination and recognition of this service.

Based on the Study Team's analysis of costs, the Town would have to spend more than $2 million additionally on an annual basis to staff and equip a fully paid fire department. This does not seem realistic, nor is it recommended for the future.

The major recommendations include the following:

1) The Town is encouraged to develop a policy statement encouraging the utilization of volunteer fire fighters.

2) The residents of Greenwich are encouraged to continue supporting the volunteer fire companies. The return-on-investment for continued volunteer participation is high.

3) The Town is encouraged to provide incentives for volunteers in order to attract new volunteers and help retain current volunteers, such as job preference, beach cards, retirement benefits based on number of calls and standby duty, and tax breaks on real estate and/or personal property taxes.

4) The Town should provide funds to ensure that volunteers and paid personnel have an opportunity to upgrade their skill level and certification in fire fighting.

5) The senior volunteers who no longer meet the physical standards for fire fighter should be incorporated into the delivery of fire services, such as training and traffic control. These personnel have dedicated many years to the Town and need recognition.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Volunteers (continued)

6) The Town, Fire Department and volunteer companies should work together to provide formal recognition of paid and volunteer fire fighter of the year.

7) The volunteers should be trained to a level that allows them to assume command of a fire scene, regardless of whether paid or volunteer personnel are involved. Volunteer officers should assume the responsibility to accept the training to the Officer I level within five years in order to operate effectively as a combined paid and volunteer system. (The Town should accelerate the delivery of training for volunteers.)

8) The Fire Chief should ensure that volunteer officers are incorporated into the management of fire service delivery.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staffing

The Town has 67 paid personnel assigned to fire prevention and suppression or 1.12 per 1,000 population. In addition, there are two clerical positions and a mechanic position in the budget. Based on an analysis of current staffing levels, the Town of Greenwich does not have an adequate number of fire fighters.

When comparing the number of fire personnel with other cities, the issue of volunteer services must be taken into account.

In the International City Management Association's 1988 Municipal Year Book, the data for 152 cities with a population of 50,000-99,999, reflect a ratio of 1.68 paid personnel per 1,000 residents for calendar 1987. For 1,082 cities that reported statistics to ICMA, the ratio was 1.65 per 1,000 population. For non-uniformed personnel in 148 cities of comparable size, the mean number is 6 per department.

When geographic region is utilized for comparative purposes, the Northeast reflects a ratio of 2.0 paid fire personnel per 1,000 population. The ratio for other regions is 1.39 for North Central, 1.40 for the West and 1.92 for the South. Over the period 1977 - 1987, the national ratio of paid personnel to 1,000 population ranged from 1.61 to 1.69.

Although interpretation of the data requires caution, especially with the nonreporting of volunteer participation, Greenwich would need approximately 34 more paid personnel to equal the average for the 152 cities in the narrow population group.

The major staffing recommendations include:

1) The Town should immediately fund and add four lieutenants to the Department.

2) The Town should add five fire fighters to improve response to fires and other emergencies.

3) The Town should add one staff position to help provide much needed staff support to the Chief. This employee should be assigned the responsibility for research, analysis, strategic planning, fiscal affairs and program development.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supervision

The Department has two operational supervisory officers. The training officer, a captain, is not included as a line officer. Based on the Study Team's experience, this is a very low number of supervisors for over 60 paid personnel. There have been questions about whether the Fire Chief should respond to the scenes of fires. On the one hand, the responses appear to be extraordinary; however, on the other hand, there is no assurance that a volunteer supervisory officer will be at the initial stages of a fire in Greenwich.

The Chief may find himself with a dilemma. If he goes to the scene of the fire call and no oversight is required, there is the potential for criticism. If he does not respond and a firefighter or citizen is injured and no supervisor is on the scene, he runs the risk of being criticized for not being at the fire. In some respects, the Chief is on the scene to protect the interests of the Town. Although the deputy chief and Fire Chief alternate standby duty, their response to calls after hours places additional demands on both.

The Fire Chief does not have sufficient staff to manage the Fire Department. The study calls for the addition of four lieutenants to act as supervisors for the Greenwich Fire Department. In the Study Team's judgment, the lack of assurance that trained supervisors will always be at the early stages of fires poses a serious issue of safety to the career and volunteer fire fighters and the public. Clearly, the volunteers have very talented personnel and they should continue to provide quality services for the foreseeable future. The anticipated benefits from the addition of four lieutenants are as follows:

1) Improved management of the Greenwich Fire Department that should result in greater efficiency.

2) Additional time for the Fire Chief and deputy fire chief to devote to administration of the Department.

3) Improved opportunities for upward mobility among the paid personnel.

4) Improved coordination between the paid and volunteer personnel.

5) Improved compliance with the Department's rules, regulations and operational procedures.

6) Improved training of personnel.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization

The Fire Department is organized with a Chief, deputy chief and a captain. The Fire Marshal currently reports to the First Selectman. As a result of this organizational structure, the First Selectman is required to coordinate the delivery of fire suppression and fire prevention/inspections. While there may have been valid reasons for moving the Fire Marshal out of the Fire Department, the Town should transfer the position and responsibilities to the Fire Department. The Fire Marshal should be a line officer in the Fire Department.
EXEClIVE SUMMARY

Standard Operating Procedures

The Department's manual of operating procedures is very outdated and not routinely issued to new personnel. Most of the procedures were last written in the early 1970's and most have the signature of the former fire chief.

The Department has no dedicated staff to research and prepare modern operating procedures. Most of the efforts are ad hoc and lack a strategic approach. Operating procedures are the basic guideline for paid and volunteer personnel in performing this very critical public safety service. Without updated operating procedures for fire fighters, the Town has substantial liability exposure.

In order to help insulate the Town, to provide guidance to supervisors and to ensure compliance with basic operating procedures by paid and volunteer fire fighters, the Town should develop a comprehensive set of operating procedures.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Personnel Management

The Town's recruitment and selection practices appear to be professionally sound. Promotional opportunities are very limited, since there are no supervisory positions below deputy chief in the career system and there are only three fire prevention inspectors. The exclusive bargaining representative for fire fighter and fire inspectors is Local 1042 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. A recent collective bargaining agreement extends through June 30, 1991. A number of grievances have dealt with operating practices.

There is a pervasive feeling that rules and regulations are not enforced and very little documentation exists for infractions of rules. The appearance of a number of career personnel needs improvement.

The major recommendations in personnel management, exclusive of training, are as follows:

1) The Town is encouraged to conduct studies on the validity of selection practices.

2) The Town should develop state-of-the-art promotional procedures for all promotions, including the proposed position of lieutenant.

3) Incentives should be explored for the rank of inspector, thus increasing the number of applicants.

4) The Department should concentrate efforts toward resolving employee "concerns" before they are transformed into formal grievances.

5) Problem employees should be addressed more forcefully by management. Appropriate documentation and action should be taken for violations.

6) The Department should implement procedures to closely monitor workers' compensation cases.

7) A class of "Master Fire Fighter" should be created.

8) In the selection of fire fighters, the Town should explore the feasibility of providing a preference in relation to Greenwich volunteers, as long as the preference doesn't adversely impact the hiring of minorities and women.
9) The Town should implement performance evaluation procedures for the various ranks.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Apparatus

The Town of Greenwich has more than an adequate number of fire apparatus. When the 1975 Insurance Services Office conducted a study, they reported that the Town should have a maximum water flow requirement of 7,000 gallons per minute. Greenwich now has a pumping capacity of over three times the maximum requirement.

The equipment carried on the apparatus in Greenwich varies significantly between each of the stations. A pumper in one station does not necessarily carry the same inventory of equipment as a pumper in another station. Much of the equipment carried on pumps is old and outdated. A number of career personnel indicated a lack of familiarity with the equipment they are supposed to staff. Some ax handles and pike poles were rusty.

The major recommendations include:

1) The Fire Chief should establish a preventive maintenance program for all apparatus.

2) The Fire Chief, in conjunction with district chiefs, should establish the criteria for apparatus replacement.

3) The Fire Chief, in conjunction with the deputy chiefs, should inventory the current equipment on the apparatus and develop a standardized list of equipment for pumpers, aerial devices and rescue vehicles.

4) If Central is closed and a new station opened, all apparatus for Central should be moved to the new station.

5) If Central is kept open and a new station is constructed, the new station should have a pumper and a tanker.

6) The Fire Chief should visit the stations on a regular basis.

7) The Town should consider abolishing one pumper, one rescue, one patrol wagon and two aerial ladder trucks. Two aerial ladder trucks seem sufficient; however, three are recommended.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Facilities

The Town of Greenwich is served by seven fire stations. Five of these stations are a combination of paid and volunteer services. Two are all volunteer companies, Banksville and Round Hill. The locations of the stations are not based on workload. If Greenwich were a new community with a grid system for development, the Town would not need as many stations.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of response to various parts of the Town, there is substantial overlapping of services by the Central Station, which houses two companies. An analysis disclosed that the north central part of Town is not within a desired five-minute response area from the current stations.

The current space at the Central Fire Station for the Fire Chief, deputy chief, training officer, Fire Marshal, inspector and clerical personnel is very inadequate and seems to prevent orderly management of the Fire Department.

The Town should consider the following options on stations:

1) The Town should immediately locate and fund sufficient space for the Fire Chief and the support staff to administer the Fire Department.

2) Construct a new station in the area of North Street and Dingletown Road.

3) Either relocate the Central Station to the new area and provide for a five-minute response time to the north central part of Town; or retain Central with one company and relocate one of the companies to the proposed new station. Retaining the Central Station should ensure a three-minute response time from dispatch from Central to the downtown area.

4) The Town should remodel the fire stations to accommodate women fire fighters and increase the maintenance and upkeep funding for the stations which do not present a professional image of cleanliness and good repair. The mere assignment of fire fighters to clean the station is not sufficient.

5) The Town should install door bells and an emergency telephone at all fire stations for the public to access personnel after hours.
6) The Town should promote public access to the fire stations for public education, particularly school children. Obviously, the fire fighter's appearance should be very professional for the program to be successful.

7) The Town should ensure that there are strict procedures on the dispensing and consumption of alcoholic beverages at fire stations. On a long-range basis, consideration should be given to the abolishment of the use of alcohol in fire stations. In any event, personnel under the influence of alcohol should not respond on fire apparatus.

8) The current fire districts are not based on workload and have been in place for years. For operational purposes, the boundaries should be abolished and the nearest apparatus dispatched to a fire or rescue call.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Communications

The Town has a 9-1-1 emergency telephone system for accessing emergency calls, including fire response. In addition, there are seven-digit numbers for accessing fire service. Currently, the Police Department receives the call and if the call is fire-related, the police dispatcher receives information and calls the fire dispatcher on a telephone and verbally relays the information. In some cases, the fire dispatcher at Central telephones a fire fighter at another station for response.

There is no computer terminal in the fire dispatch center. The emergency playback system for calls on the seven-digit number has been broken for an extended period. The Fire Department does not have automated files for determining response apparatus that should be dispatched. For a jurisdiction the size of Greenwich, this is unusual in fire services.

With the assignment of career staffing in the Central Station to answer the telephone and serve as dispatcher, the Town is constrained from optimum utilization of staff; moreover, keeping one fire fighter in the other stations to answer a telephone impacts staffing availability.

There are four radio frequencies utilized for dispatch and coordination of fire services in Greenwich. On some fire calls, the Fire Chief cannot communicate with fire fighters from other stations. The Town plans to implement an 800 mhz radio system which will improve the radio communications.

The major recommendations include:

1) Establishing a consolidated public safety communications center and centralizing dispatch.

2) Utilizing 9-1-1 for all requests for emergency services.

3) Automating response criteria for dispatch of fire apparatus and for identification of fire hydrants.

The Town has funded a computer-aided dispatch system; however, the system has not been installed.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Training

In the Study Team's judgment, there is a serious lack of training within the Greenwich Fire Department. The Greenwich fire fighters have complained about lack of training and their complaints seem justified.

The lack of adequate training emerged as a major issue by both paid and volunteer personnel. There is a strong interest in more training for paid and volunteer personnel; however, with the lack of funding and clear direction, the comprehensive training of personnel has not occurred. The Town allocated a position of training captain which was supposed to improve training. However, one person cannot adequately provide the necessary ongoing specialized training as well as train new personnel.

The ubiquitous discussions about whether the correct person was selected for the training job should be placed to rest. Continued discussions of this nature are counterproductive for both paid and volunteer personnel and constrain the development and administration of needed training. Because training is so important, there are 37 recommendations in this area.

The major recommendations include:

1) Provide immediate funds for the training of career and volunteer personnel at convenient times.

2) Review the relevancy of the job assignments given to the training officer.

3) Develop a five-year master plan for training that includes certification of paid and volunteers to specific levels within five years.

4) During the phase-in period, the Fire Chief should work with the Connecticut OSHA agency to allow the supervisory chain of command to remain as long as the individuals are participating in the training classes at the appropriate level for that specific year.

5) The Fire Chief and the district chiefs should agree on the most convenient meeting times and contract with the State to conduct training classes to ensure certification of paid and volunteers to specific levels.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Training (continued)

6) The training officer should purchase the 16 training packages which the State has available for a total cost of $1,600.

7) The Fire Chief should arrange for all new lieutenants to attend the basic officer courses at the National Fire Academy.

8) The Fire Marshal should arrange for all of the inspectors to attend the fire prevention series of classes at the National Fire Academy.

9) The training records should be automated.

10) The Board of Selectmen should establish a capital improvement project for additions to the Fire Training Center.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cost for Fire Service

The 1987 - 1988 Annual Report for Greenwich reflects a budget of $3,630,392 for the Fire Department. Based on these expenditures and a population of 60,000, the per capita cost for fire services in Greenwich was approximately $60.50. For 135 cities reporting to the International City Management Association (ICMA), the per capita cost for total expenditures in 1987 was $69.45. For the New England area, the per capita costs for 53 reporting cities with a population of 50,000 to 99,999 was $89.28. The 1988/1989 recommended budget for the Fire Department is $3,714,459, or approximately $61.91 per capita.

The data must be viewed with caution, but if Greenwich were spending $69.45 per capita for fire services the additional costs would have been $537,000. If the New England per capita cost were utilized for comparison purposes with 53 cities reporting a population of 50,000 to 99,999, the Town would need to spend $1,726,800 additional on fire service. It is important to note that these comparisons are of cities in the same population range as Greenwich, and the costs on a national basis are higher in New England.

There are efficiencies with the proposed changes in the number of fire apparatus; however, substantial funds will be required to implement the proposed changes. The Town should assess the report and establish a final plan of action.

The costs to implement these recommendations will vary depending on the implementation schedule of any recommendation.

In the Study Team's judgment, immediate action should be taken to ensure quality fire services and the safety of fire fighters, volunteers and the public. The recommendations are quite numerous; however, the Town's request for proposal was exhaustive. It is difficult to establish a precise list of priorities and costs. The major fiscal impacts are as follows:

1) Ten (10) positions as soon as possible at an anticipated additional cost of $400,000 per year.
   - Four lieutenants
   - Five fire fighters
   - One management staff

2) Increases in training to provide certification. In order to provide the recommended training, the costs will approximate $20,000.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Costs for Fire Service (continued)

3) Remodeling of fire stations; costs will depend on level of effort.

4) Establishing a line-item budget for all equipment by fire station.

5) Providing funding for the development of a comprehensive updated manual of Operating Procedures.

6) Considering construction of a new station within five years.

7) Acquiring a Fire Department management information system that is compatible with the Fire Marshal's data system.
EXHIBIT VI-2

Greenwich Fire Stations
5-Minute Response Areas

NOT TO SCALE - APPROXIMATE AREAS