



Fire Department

Mark Rohlfing
Chief

John Schwengel
Assistant Chief

David Votsis
Assistant Chief

Aaron Lipski
Assistant Chief

October 29, 2019

To the Honorable
The Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
200 East Wells Street, Room 706
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

Dear Commissioners:

I respectfully request that your Rule XI, Appointments, Section 12 C, be modified. Currently, the Assistant Chiefs' terms are tied to the Fire Chief's term, and per the rule, when the Chief leaves the department's service, the Assistant Chiefs are "subject thereafter to reinstatement to the last previously held non-exempt position in the Fire Department," which would be Fire Captain. This mandatory reversion to Captain can be a deterrent for bright young officers to move up in rank.

The modification I am seeking, which would provide for a smoother management transition and better use of the Assistant Chiefs' abilities, would be to allow them to be reinstated to the rank of Battalion Chief, which is an exempt position, if the new Fire Chief does not wish them to continue to serve as Assistant Chiefs. Currently, the way the rules work, a reversion by the new Fire Chief is punitive and sends the Assistant Chiefs back to the firefighters' union. At the point the member asks to return to the union, the union membership must vote whether to take the member back, and the member must pay all back dues, or a "reasonable fine," per the union's Constitution and By-laws.

Until 2003, the Battalion Chief position was civil service, which allowed for the selected candidates to take leaves of absence, in effect, from the Battalion Chief position to accept an Assistant Chief position. Furthermore, a Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) Battalion Chief is equal in rank to a Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) Captain, which is a civil service rank in the MPD.

I look forward to discussing my request with you and answering any questions or concerns you may have.

Respectfully,


MARK ROHLFING
Chief

MR/jlb
FPC/Rules/Rule XI Revision 1019

