

**Job Satisfaction Among Fire and EMS Employees
of the Washington Township Fire Department**

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.
2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was discovering the level of satisfaction among employees of Washington Township Fire Department, pinpointing areas needing improvement for morale. Causes for dissatisfaction needed to be determined; this problem was assessed using a thirty one-question descriptive research method survey to determine correlations between employee satisfaction and pay, available resources, or administrative management style; also, discovering if employment status had any effect on satisfaction levels. The survey was constructed and distributed along with a cover letter explaining the survey rationale. Results indicated overall satisfaction in terms of resources and pay, however there was dissatisfaction with aspects of the administration. For continued success, the department needed to continue monitoring employee satisfaction and seeking improvement in management areas.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Within every organization, the idea of customer service plays a vital role in the development of strategic goals and values to address the needs of the customer. In the fire service, customer service is no less important--spawning classes, seminars and workshops to train individuals in ways to gauge and meet the expectations of the citizens being served. However, fire department administrations have inadvertently overlooked perhaps the most important of the customers: the firefighters themselves. For the line firefighters, receiving good customer service from department administration can be equated with job satisfaction. It is imperative that this job satisfied workforce, sent to provide services with an emphasis on the customer, do so not just from what they are told but more importantly from first person experience. These firefighters who have experienced good customer service will not only serve the citizens better but also stay in the organization longer, and are more committed to the organization. The private sector has long recognized the benefits job-satisfied employees. The following example demonstrates the power not only ascertaining if employees are satisfied, but also the benefits to having happy, fulfilled workers.

Bavendam Research Incorporated has included measures of job satisfaction in all our employee surveys. Clear patterns have emerged. Employees with higher job satisfaction:

- believe that the organization will be satisfying in the long run
- care about the quality of their work
- are more committed to the organization
- have higher retention rates, and

- are more productive (Bavendam, 2000)

In order to provide job satisfaction to the men and women of the fire service, each organization must utilize methods to ascertain the expectations of their unique work force. To date, Washington Township Fire Department has not attempted to determine the level of job satisfaction of its employees. Because employees of Washington Township Fire Department feel that their input is neglected by the administration, their attitude towards work is often negative. The administration can take steps to address this issue, thus increasing employee satisfaction regarding the work environment. There are many methods for assessing the job satisfaction including exit interviews, focus groups, and surveys. This research will use the descriptive method to determine job satisfaction.

The problem this study will address is to determine the level of job satisfaction experienced by Washington Township firefighters.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to discover the level of job satisfaction in department employees and pinpoint areas in which the administration can improve morale in the overall workforce.

Research Questions

The research questions this study will investigate are:

1. What is the current job satisfaction and organization attitude of the employees in the Washington Township Fire Department?
2. Is the level of job satisfaction affected by the pay rate?

3. Is the level of job satisfaction affected by the rank held in the organization?
4. Is the level of job satisfaction affected by the tools and equipment provided?
5. Is the level of job satisfaction affected by the management style of the administration?
6. Is the level of job satisfaction affected by employment classification (full time, part time, volunteer)?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Washington Township Fire Department has spent significant time, effort and money to monitor and assess the customer service the organization provides the citizens of the community. Random surveys are sent to households that have requested and received department services. Any survey results that indicate any dissatisfaction with our service generates a personal phone call from the chief or deputy chief. Further investigation is conducted through personal contact and every effort is made to remedy the dissatisfaction. These questionnaires have proven to be invaluable in correcting and fine tuning the methods in which the department interacts with the public. Ironically, the department has never surveyed employees to assess their satisfaction with the job in general--or the department specifically. By surveying employees, the administration will gain insight into what areas employees are satisfied with and in which areas the department has failed to meet their expectations. The organization can continue to focus on the areas that fall short in satisfying department members, thus increasing overall morale.

In the case of Washington Township Fire Department, the administration's perception is that job satisfaction is low and in administrative staff meetings, the increase in poor employee performance, the chief has noted griping, and specific complaints. As a captain in the department, it is my hope that the simple act of surveying employee's feelings will generate a positive, temporary boost in employee satisfaction. One employee set up an internet message board to enhance communication for the department, but the site evolved into a forum for criticism and complaints. The recent growth of the community is challenging the organization to evaluate the methods in which it provides services. These potential changes will be encompassing nearly every aspect of the current system. It is important to have a tool to

regularly examine the employee's response as the organization works its way through these changes.

The potential impact this study could have on the Washington Township Fire Department:

- By assessing job satisfaction, the administration can ascertain areas to provide better service to employees who will in turn provide better service to citizens
- Employee retention rates will improve
- Avenues of dialogue with the administration can be opened
- A method is established to regularly monitor employee satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review section will discuss information and the findings of others related to the topic of job satisfaction surveys. The information will be linked to the research questions listed above and include a review of their findings as they pertain to these specific areas.

1. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Attitude

A satisfied internal customer will provide the organization other benefits according to the *1999 Work and Trend Report* published by the University of Cincinnati's Kunz Center for the Study of Work and Family. After studying a number of different company survey responses, similarities and trends were recognized, including one demonstrated by the communications giant, MCI. MCI said:

We know employee satisfaction increases both customer satisfaction and productivity. Satisfied employees were more efficient and even a 5% drop in employee efficiency cut revenue by ‘a couple of hundred million dollars.’’’ Also, a Gallup/Intracorp poll found that employees who employers offered a full range of work-life benefits and ACTIVELY supported their use were the most satisfied. And it turns out, the most satisfied employees had the least work-family conflicts, the lowest stress levels, and the fewest minor health problems (Tangri, 2002).

Rees W. Morrison states in his article:

Why should a law department take the temperature of its employees? The short answer is to improve. The information helps the department improve communication, attitudes (especially toward compensation), morale, cooperation between lawyers, paralegals and secretaries, and retention. In the war for talent, satisfaction surveys are potent weapons. (2002, March)

On page six, the article further describes other valuable information derived from surveying corporate attorneys.

The obvious advantage of finding out what employees of the law department think derives from the guidance that such feedback gives to management. Another advantage accrues inevitably from simply asking people what they think. Being asked, or simply venting is cathartic. (2002, March)

The article also provides insight into basic survey questions and topics on page seven:

Recall but don't be deterred by a basic truism in litigation practice: Never ask a question for which you don't know the answer! The point holds true for satisfaction audits as well. If you can't abide bad news or criticism, don't ask the people for their views. All satisfaction surveys risk the surfacing of dissatisfactions that can't be fixed, but it's the ostrich's plight to refuse to hear what you very well may need to hear in any event. At the very least, you'll know what, as the department's manager, you are up against.

An article entitled "Most Federal Workers Like Jobs" from the *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN) March 26, 2003 indicates that "Most U.S. government civilian employees like their jobs and say pay and benefits are ok. But many also complain that management fails to reward good work or penalize poor employees, and 35 percent of those responding to a federal questionnaire are thinking about leaving their jobs." This article points to an issue that management style or the perceived failure of management can be one factor in job dissatisfaction even when wages are not an issue. The article also showcases a potential response to questionnaires when it states that "More than 200,000 surveys were sent out to workers in all areas of the government; a little more than half were returned, with 56 percent saying they were very pleased with their pay and 64 percent saying they were happy with benefits."

Another article titled, “Management Style and Staff Nurse Satisfaction” after surveying “all full-time registered nurses working in the medical-surgical and critical care areas of a large university-affiliated acute-care hospital” found that, “Analysis of the satisfaction data revealed a statistically significant relationship between management style and job satisfaction ($r=0.58$; $P<.001$). In other words, the more participative the nurses perceived their managers’ leadership style to be, the more satisfied they were” (2003, March/April).

The preceding studies all indicate the importance of the perceived organizational climate in the satisfaction levels of employees. Organizations that foster a positive, open and participative management style toward its workers found a strong correlation to increased job satisfaction.

The articles also demonstrated the importance of simply providing a forum for employees to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the management of the organization.

2. Level of Job Satisfaction vs. Pay Rate

While a correlation between job satisfaction and salary might be expected, not all research indicates that an increase in pay will guarantee employee happiness. However, as indicated in the *Los Angeles Times* article by Jonathan Peterson titled “‘Mass exodus’ of Agents leaves INS Scrambling,” situations exist where pay is the driving force behind dissatisfaction. “INS employees have long complained that their pay, particularly in law enforcement positions, lags behind that of similar government jobs and even some urban police departments.

You talk about a mass exodus from the Border Patrol and you’re talking about low job satisfaction, low pay and the inability to transfer to a more desirable location,” added

Hampton, who is looking for another law enforcement job, possibly within the federal government. (2002, August)

The feature article in Gillian Britt Marketing Communication entitled “How to Boost Employee Morale in a Tight Economy” by Edward McKersie, indicates that assuming low pay directly relates to low job satisfaction can be a misconception.

Most people assume that job satisfaction and compensation are tied closely together. But in an April 2002 poll conducted by The Conference board [sic], an overwhelming 73 percent of people said they would accept less money to be happier at work. This seems to indicate that even companies with limited financial resources have plenty of options when looking for ways to increase employee satisfaction. (2002, Fall)

In a study done by Randy Chiu entitled “Does Perception of Pay Equity, Pay Satisfaction, and Job Satisfaction Mediate the Effect of Positive Affectivity on Work Motivation?” he concluded that

Pay and job satisfactions were historically used as predictors of employees’ work motivation, and the results of this study support this position. Both pay satisfaction and job satisfaction played an important role in explaining the variance in employees’ work motivation, and mediating the relationship between PA (defined as the author as “positive affectivity” an overall sense of well being) and work motivation.” (Chiu, 1999)

It appears from these three sources that pay is only a factor based on other intangibles such as the “happiness” of employees. These articles highlight the concept that high pay does not necessarily translate into high levels of employee satisfaction.

3. Level of Job Satisfaction vs. Rank in the Organization

This area of research was the most difficult to gather because such a limited number of occupations are defined by rank. However, surveys among fire departments, police departments, and military organizations have been published and analyzed. According to the *Report of Findings from Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Employee Survey 2000* published by the Opinion Research Services of Wales Swansea, “By area, over half (51%) of the employees based in ‘C Division’ did not feel valued as an employee of the Service compared to only 36% of those in ‘A Division’ and 35 % of the respondents from Headquarters.” The feelings of dissatisfaction were far greater among the lower ranked employees. More than half of those responding from the lower ranks felt as though they were not valued. In the same report on level of pay and benefits,

Nearly three-fifths (58%) of all employees were satisfied with the level of pay and benefits they receive. 42% of all employees were dissatisfied with their level of pay and benefits. Dissatisfaction appeared to vary with rank. Just over two-fifths (42%) of “Sub Officer” or below employees were dissatisfied with their pay and benefits compared to 55% of ‘scale 6 or below’ personnel. (2000)

Another study conducted by Australasian Centre for Policing Research titled *The Influence of Police Specialization on Job Satisfaction: A Comparison of General Duties Officers and Detectives* reported that “Those older officers, with more experience, also tended to hold higher ranks and were more likely to report higher satisfaction with their current duties, although the relationship was not strong” (Report Series No. 109). It is apparent in these articles that the rank of the individual may have some correlation to overall job satisfaction.

The articles underscore that the individuals “rank” or place of importance in an organization does play a role in how satisfied and employee is with their job. The explanation is, those higher up in an organization take on more of the values of the organization or perhaps are promoted to those supervisory levels based on their alignment with the goals and ideals established by the administration.

4. Level of Job Satisfaction vs. Equipment

Another survey investigated was from the Broken Arrow Fire Department in Broken Arrow Oklahoma. One of the questions simply asked “What is the (3) most significant challenges facing the B.A.F.D. at the present time?” In this full-time department serving a community of 80,000 residents, there is a lot of dissatisfaction--much of it blamed on poor equipment and apparatus. The following is just one example of an inordinate amount of firefighter dissatisfaction based on equipment:

Old apparatus and antiquated radio system. I am actually embarrassed to be seen driving around town and on EMS runs in a 15yr old unsafe truck. The reserve engines are unsafe for the firefighter. No room, no enclosure, exposure to environment. Radio system is at best life threatening. Radios to [sic]big, no way to carry, very short battery time, unable to communicate w/other depts. such as Tulsa. Radios have been a significant cause of ff deaths and will be here if not addressed and update. (Broken Arrow Department Survey, 2002)

Fire departments are not the only organizations that uncovered satisfaction problems related to equipment. In a survey conducted by the Lynchburg Police Department in Lynchburg

Virginia, officers expressed concerns over both vehicles and their issued firearm. The results in these two areas are summarized as follows:

More than one-third of officers disagreed that their vehicle is safe, with many making comments about the excessive mileage and poor maintenance of their vehicles. There were also numerous complaints about newer vehicles being assigned to the command staff, especially to Captains who are not first responders. (2002, November)

On the topic of issued firearms, "Neither officers nor supervisors appeared to have much confidence in their Smith & Wesson firearm, with most expressing a preference for the Glock. There were numerous comments about malfunctions and difficulties in qualifying with the weapon. The Smith & Wesson appeared to be a major source of dissatisfaction among officers and supervisors" (2002, November).

Equipment/supplies were one of the factors studied in a survey entitled "A Qualitative Analysis of Variables Associated with Professional Satisfaction Among Middle School Teachers." The research group questioned five hundred and forty middle school teachers using a survey questionnaire. In the category of Curriculum Features, which includes books, supplies and other equipment, the authors of the study placed these items in the "Encouraging Category." Encouraging categories are areas that the authors felt were strongly associated with professional satisfaction.

It appears from the above studies that equipment when inadequate plays a significant role in dissatisfaction, but if adequate can only moderately increase employee satisfaction. Any tools or equipment viewed as being associated with safety, appeared to decrease satisfaction levels significantly.

5. Satisfaction vs. Management Style

This topic appears to be area most surveyed and universally questioned. Regardless of whether the survey was conducted by the military, private industry or public safety organizations, management was included in the survey. Some studies that reported their findings include Maritz Incorporated News release from a Maritz Poll report on “Reward & Recognition Practices in the Workplace”:

In contrast to what employees say, 34% of supervisors surveyed in the Maritz Poll claim they praise their “direct reports” once a day; 37% praise them once a week; 8% praise them once every two weeks; 8% praise once a month, 7% praise less than once a month and 6% NEVER praise their direct reports. Furthermore, 40% of female supervisors praise direct reports once a day compared to 31% of male supervisors. Supervisors don’t always recognize people in a way that’s meaningful or valued by the employee resulting in employees not feeling they are truly being recognized. Feeling valued is an important component of employee satisfaction, so supervisors need to understand effective methods for delivering recognition. (2003, September)

From the *Report of Findings for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service’s 2000 Employee Survey* given by Opinion Research Services University of Wales Swansea in the area of Quality of Leadership, findings were summarized as, “Nearly three-quarters (74%) of all employees felt that their immediate boss provides effective leadership, while a quarter of all employees did not share this view. More than a third (34%) of Headquarters personnel did not believe that their immediate boss provides effective leadership” (2000, January). As a management style, rewarding employees had far reaching positive effects on employees. These articles demonstrate

the importance of recognition of individuals regardless of your level in the organization. This recognition resulted in employees feeling valued and consequently raised satisfaction levels.

6. Job Satisfaction vs. Employment classification (part-time vs. full time)

This research question proved to be the most difficult in finding literature addressing the area. It is essential to look at this question in terms of Washington Township due to the high percentage of part time employees. Washington Township Fire Department employees approximately 200 employees and of those only 28 are full time employees. This imbalance in numbers needs to be addressed to increase the value of any information gathered during a survey of employees. However, two reports did separate some of their employee classification and reported in summary. According to the Nevada *Emergency Medical Services Survey Results* from the University of Nevada, Reno,

Amongst the respondents who were compensated EMS personnel, the single most striking difference between those who would leave in less than 5 years and those who would stay was that they received, on average, much less in compensation. Respondents who were volunteers, however, were no more likely to say they would leave their EMS work than were compensated workers. (Technical Report UCED 2003/04-03, 2003)

The city of San Jose, California 2002 surveyed employees between October 25 – December 2, 2002. The surveying company of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates reported that:

There were several segments of the workforce among which slightly elevated proportions of those polled indicated that they were ‘dissatisfied’ with their jobs. These included part-time benefited employees (17 percent of whom were ‘dissatisfied’ with their jobs) and those classified themselves as direct service providers (20 percent of whom were

'dissatisfied.') However, as was the case in 2001, even among these groups those who were dissatisfied with their jobs were the exceptions to the rule; the vast majority of direct service and part-time benefited employees indicate that they are 'satisfied' with their jobs. (Technical Report UCED 2003/04-03, 2003)

These reports had other sections applicable to research questions, and the studies provided information on governmental positions. The above information from the research indicated that full time or part time status played only a small role in determining job satisfaction. Employees who felt valued or believed they were contributing to the organization were satisfied regardless of whether they served in a part-time or full time capacity.

PROCEDURES

The method selected to research this project is descriptive research using a survey format that will include all paid employees of the Washington Township Fire Department. The questionnaire was in a multiple-choice format with both a positive statement and a similar negative statement. The positive and negative statements were randomly ordered to prevent both statements appearing sequentially. Modifying questions found in a sample questionnaire used by the Jacksonville Florida Chamber of Congress generated the statements to create the survey. The statements reflected the research questions and could be categorized by the focus of each individual topic. The employee had a choice of five responses to each statement, numbered one through five labeled as: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and finally strongly agree. Following the thirty-one multiple-choice statements, an open-ended query was added to provide an opportunity for the respondents to address issues not covered in the previous section. The final section of the questionnaire attempted to collect demographical information on each respondent. A cover letter was created explaining the purpose of the survey both as subject of a research project and as a potential tool for periodically assessing the satisfaction of department employees. Fire Chief Ken Parks was given a draft of both the survey and the cover letter and asked for any input. After consulting Dr. Robert Warmbrod, who taught research utilization, I was advised to “test run” the document with another similar department prior to distribution to Washington Township members. With this suggestion from Dr. Warmbrod, five copies were distributed to the neighboring West Carrollton Fire Department, which has similar demographics to Washington Township, along with a request to take the survey and provide feedback on survey readability, cohesiveness, and typographical errors. The individuals from West Carrollton Fire Department did note a typographical error which was corrected prior to distribution to the

intended survey group of Washington Township employees. The survey and cover letter were enclosed in all employees' paychecks on two separate pay periods. The first survey went out to all part-time day and full time personnel. On the next pay cycle, the volunteers or paid on call member's surveys were distributed. Both group were given one week to return the survey.

Through the literature review, it appears that between 30 and 50% of surveys are returned and I expected a similar return from the employees of Washington Township Fire Department

DepartmentDefinition of Terms

Part-Paid In-House. Individuals scheduled Monday through Friday from 0600 – 1800 hours. They are compensated hourly but do not receive full benefits.

Part-Paid On-Call (also referred to as Volunteers). Individuals who are on call from home Monday through Friday 1800 – 0600 and weekends. They are compensated per call and per hour for hours they are available to respond. They receive limited benefits.

Full Time. Individuals schedule both Monday through Friday 0600 – 1800 and a limited number who work a 24 hours on and 48 hours off schedule. They are compensated per hour and receive full benefits.

Limitations of the Study

Many department employees work sporadically and therefore may not have received a paycheck at the time of the survey. This obviously eliminated them from providing any input on their satisfaction with the department.

The second group of surveys that were distributed to the Part-Paid On-Call employees had an extremely low return rate. Eighty-three surveys were sent out and only eight were returned. This return rate was too low to make any accurate assessment of this demographic

group. There exist two possible explanations for the low response from this group. The first is that since these employees pick up their paychecks and return home they do not have paid time in the station to fill out and turn in the questionnaire, as do the other groups. Some may have filled it out when they reached home, but did not have, nor did they take the time, to return it. The second explanation has to do with the current climate surrounding this group of employees. The department has grown considerably in the last few years and there has been a lot of pressure to alter the way in which we staff our fire stations. This particular group had indicated they feel threatened by the discussions to place members in the stations and eliminate or reduce the number responding from home. Many feel that the full time employees (of which I am a member) are championing this change and the results of this survey may be used to expedite the staffing of stations twenty four hours a day.

Some surveys indicated a fear that their results would not remain anonymous and the fire chief would discover their identities and potentially hold this against them.

Those above limitations could have been addressed by advertising the survey distribution prior to disseminating the questionnaire. This would have provided an opportunity for members to have their concerns addressed prior to the survey being handed out and allowed for a more extensive explanation of the rationale for conducting the survey.

RESULTS

The return results are shown in table 1. The overall percentages of responses were thirty-one percent. The responses did not show any extremes in any particular area as to satisfaction or dissatisfaction demonstrating there was no wide spread discontent with the organization (1. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Attitude) In general, the results on the topic of pay (2. Level of Job Satisfaction vs. Pay Rate) was that employees overall felt the pay was fair, compensable with the workload, skill and responsibility of expected. The questions on officer pay (3. Job Satisfaction vs. Rank in the Organization) scored the most neutral responses from all those surveyed. Among the full time employees the greatest concern was expressed regarding adequate compensation for increased responsibility facing officer and general salary level as compared to other departments. Supervisors as a group did not indicate any greater dissatisfaction than the general population of employees.

When asked about tools and equipment (4. Job Satisfaction vs. Equipment) most employees indicated that those items provided by Washington Township was modern, in good working order and repaired in a timely manner. Vast majorities were satisfied with the resources provided. The part-paid in-house members were the least satisfied with tools and equipment and the opportunity to provide input. In general, all employees indicated some dissatisfaction with the level of input they could provide toward new purchases.

Employees were also questioned regarding the department's management and administration (5. Job Satisfaction vs. Management Style). Both the in-house and full time employees expressed concern regarding the lack of impartial treatment and consistent punishment. The results from employees who respond from home (part-paid on call) suggest a lack of information exchange and connection to the department. The part-time in-house members

indicated more communication between them and their supervisor was needed. Many full time employees showed they were unaware of the department's goals and vision (6. Job Satisfaction vs. Employment Classification). The graphical representation of the results above can be found in appendix 2.

Table 1

Table indicating the number of surveys distributed to employees compared to the number returned, as categorized by employment type (when indicated).

Employment Status	Surveys Returned	Surveys Distributed
Full Time	19	28
Paid On Call	7	83
Part-Paid In-House	21	71
Total Responses*	57	182

*Total includes those respondents who did not indicate employment type

DISCUSSION

The most surprising result of the survey was that employees were generally satisfied with the department. My expectations were that employees would indicate high levels of dissatisfaction in the area of management but that was not the case. I also expected to find greater differences in satisfaction among the various employee classifications but again variations were slight if they existed at all. The tools and equipment results were the least surprising as the department has a sufficient budget to provide adequate resources. The results did show areas in which we as a department can make improvements to increase the morale of our employees.

The study reflected much of what the research had indicated. For example, in the article by Jonathan Peterson, discussing border patrol officers leaving in great numbers, due in part to low pay mirrored the experience at Washington Township. Pay levels did not surface as an issue of dissatisfaction among those surveyed and predictably we do not experience a great amount of employee turnover. In addition, research showed inadequate or unsafe equipment leads to high levels of dissatisfaction as shown in the open-ended question responses from the Broken Arrow Fire Departments. Frustration over equipment issues was apparent when a Broken Arrow Fire Department employee stated, “I am actually embarrassed to be seen driving around town and on EMS runs in a 15 yr. Old unsafe truck.” (Broken Arrow Fire Department Survey, 2002). In the Washington Township Fire Department survey, there were high marks across all the participants in the area of tools and equipment. The officers of Washington Township did not reflect the research findings in the study done by the Australasian Centre for Policing Research, “Those older officers, with more experience, also tended to hold higher ranks and were more likely to report higher satisfaction with their current duties, although the relationship was not strong”

(Report Series No. 109). The department officers showed no notable increase in satisfaction over their non-supervisory counterparts. Those officers surveyed were also the only group that implied a lack of knowledge on the department's goals and mission. This finding was both unfortunate and disheartening as the officers should be the purveyors of the organizations objectives. Classification status research also reflected what was found in the survey conducted on members of this department. From the Emergency Medical Services Survey Results, "respondents who were volunteers, however, were no more likely to say they would leave their EMS work than were compensated workers." (Technical Report UCED 2003/04-03, 2003). The segment of part-time employees surveyed here expressed no greater dissatisfaction than their full-time coworkers. In general, the Washington Township Fire Department did not prove to be any different than other organization surveyed for the same types of information.

The open-ended question asked at the end of the survey (Appendix 3) provided an opportunity for employees to express other department concerns not addressed in the multiple choice questionnaire. However, these results did not imply that the department does not have room for improvement. The survey served as only a beginning point and that the organization must address issues which were shown to be a concern by current employees. The department should also remain aware of their "internal customers" satisfaction in order stay competitive with other organizations in the areas of personnel recruitment, hiring and retention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The department must be proactive when addressing the concerns of its employees. The part-paid on-call members showed concern with communication. This is a difficult group to maintain a constant flow of information with due to way in which they are asked to work. Typically, they are only in the fire station in response to a call for service and when that is completed they return home until the next request. They are also asked to attend training and complete house duties one time per week. The department currently uses the training time as an opportunity to communicate information. The department also utilizes a newsletter to disseminate necessary updates and other important communications. The organization has started limited use of email to officers which could be expanded to include all employees. A department web site along with a message board has also been initiated. However, there remain opportunities to further maximize the potential of these technological tools. The department needs to continue to employ our current methods and look for other varied ways to facilitate the exchange of information between all employee groups.

The part-time in-house and full time employees surveyed indicated a desire to have more input into equipment purchases. Currently, a limited group is usually involved in the acquisition of major purchases such as vehicles. A recommendation would be to form small committees made up of representatives from various group with a variety of back rounds. This committee would be tasked with gathering suggestions from other department members in order to formulate recommendations for major department purchases.

The above group of employees also expressed concern over lack of consistency in the enforcement of policies and procedures. This concern above all the others has the potential, if not addressed, to cause the greatest damage to morale. If the employee's perception is that some

groups are not being treated equally, resentment toward those groups is assured. The resentment can not only manifest itself through poor morale but can also create potential legal issues. Since discipline comes from its officers, extensive and ongoing training must be provided in the areas of policies and procedures. The administration must also make clear what the expectations are for all of its supervisors.

Finally, the department should regularly survey its employees. External customers are surveyed routinely and as a good management practice so should the internal customers. If regularly surveyed any potential trends can be distinguished and addressed. The budget percentage dedicated to personnel expenses should highlight the necessity in ascertaining the workforce's satisfaction level. Due to the difficulty in preparing surveys and in interpreting the results, I would recommend an outside agency be contracted to perform the assessment. This would also limit the distrust of the survey results which may increase the number of responses.

In general, the department has worked on many of these above issues and must diligently continue to find alternative methods to address these and other employee concerns. The organization that constantly seeks to have satisfied employees will be rewarded with a stable workforce who provides good customer service based assistance to its consumers.

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APPENDIX 1 – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: For each statement below circle the response that most closely expresses your feeling on the following statements.

1. The pay at Washington Township is comparable to other area fire departments.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2. The pay differentials for officers are fair.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3. The pay differentials for increased qualifications (D/O, Paramedic, Crew Chief etc.) are fair and reasonable.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4. Employees are fairly compensated for their workload.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5. Officers are not adequately compensated for their added responsibilities.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

6. The pay is not adequate as compared to other fire departments.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

7. Those with additional qualifications (D/O, Paramedic, Crew Chief etc.) are not fairly compensated.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

8. The pay does not match the expected workload.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

9. The firefighting and EMS equipment provided is well maintained

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

10. The firefighting and EMS equipment provided is outdated.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

11. The fire and EMS equipment provided is replaced or repaired in a timely manner.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

12. The fire and EMS equipment provided constantly needs repaired.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree disagree neutral Agree Strongly agree

13. The fire and EMS equipment is purchased utilizing employee input.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

14. Fire and EMS equipment is purchased without employee input.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

15. I have the resources and supplies to perform my job effectively.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

16. I do not have adequate resources and supplies to perform my job effectively.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

17. There is a free and unrestricted flow of information employees and supervisors.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

18. There is no communication between employees and supervisors.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

19. I know what my supervisor's expectations are for me.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

20. My supervisor does not tell me what his/her expectations are.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

21. My supervisor lets me know when I'm doing a good job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

22. My supervisor does not communicate when I'm doing a good job.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

23. I know the department's goal and objectives.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

24. I do not know what the department's goals and objectives are.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

25. The department administration cares about its employees.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

26. There is no concern by the department administration for its employees.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

27. Employees are treated fairly by the administration.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

28. The administration does not treat each employee impartially.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

29. Discipline is fair and reasonable.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

30. Favoritism is shown in discipline.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

31. If I had a friend looking for a job in the fire service I would recommend working for Washington Township.

Are you employed as a:

Part paid In-house	Paid on call	Part paid In-house & Paid on call	Full time
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If you are part paid are you:

Firefighter only	EMS Only	both Fire and EMS	Administrative staff
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How long have you been with Washington Township?

Less than 1 year 1 –5 years 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 >20

Do you have a supervisory position?

Officer Squad leader Crew Chief

If you have anything additional to say in regards to the organization please respond below:

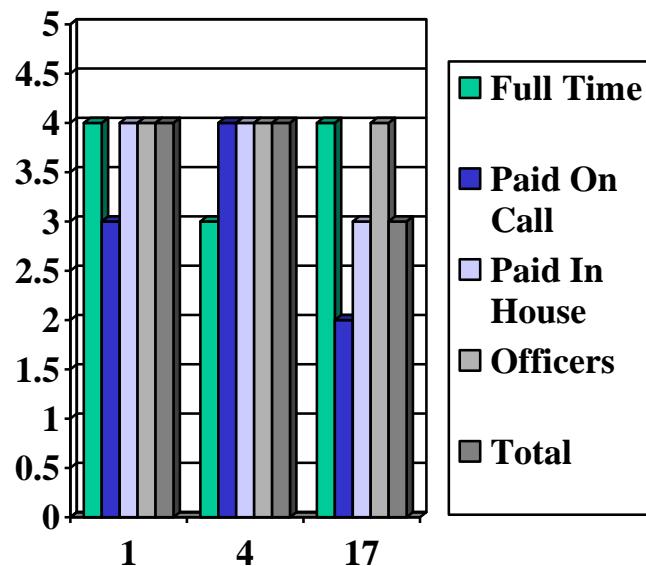
APPENDIX 2 – GRAPHS OF RESULTS

Pay Rate Satisfaction: Positive Statements *MODE*

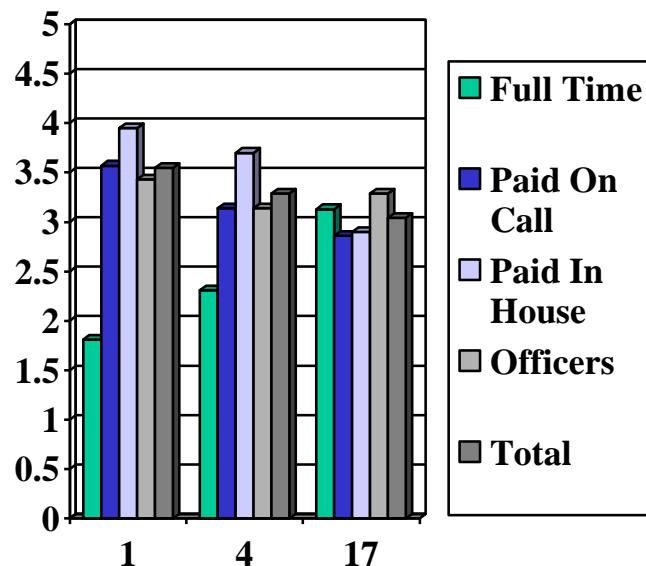
Question 1: WTFD pay is comparable to other fire departments

Question 4: Pay differentials for qualifications are fair

Question 17: Employees fairly compensated for work load



MEAN



Pay Rate Satisfaction: Negative Statements

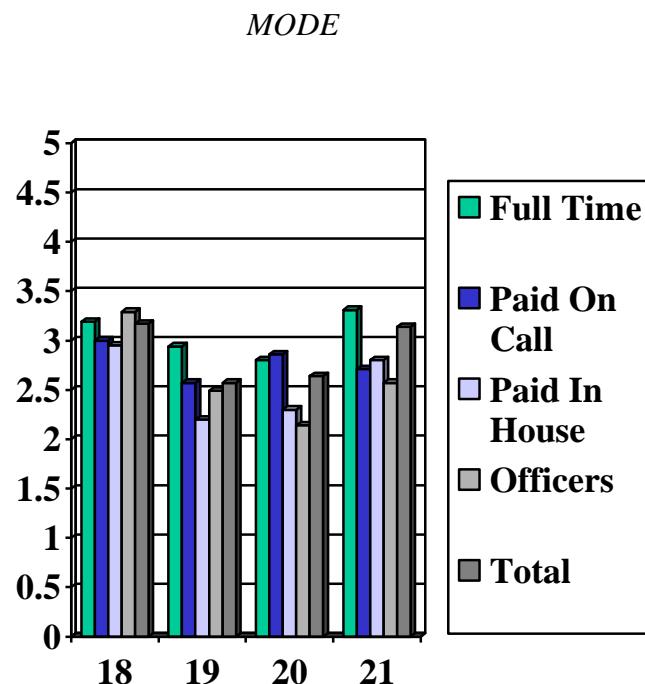
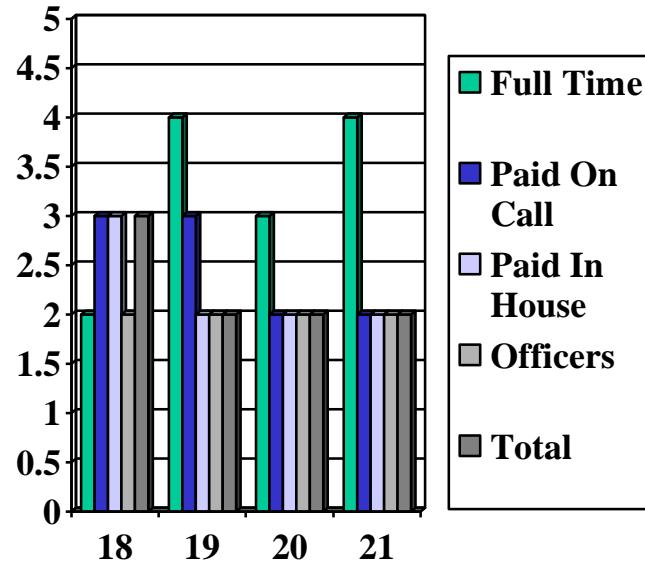
MODE

Question 18: Inadequate compensation for officer responsibilities

Question 19: Pay inadequate compared to other departments

Question 20: Inadequate compensation for additional skills

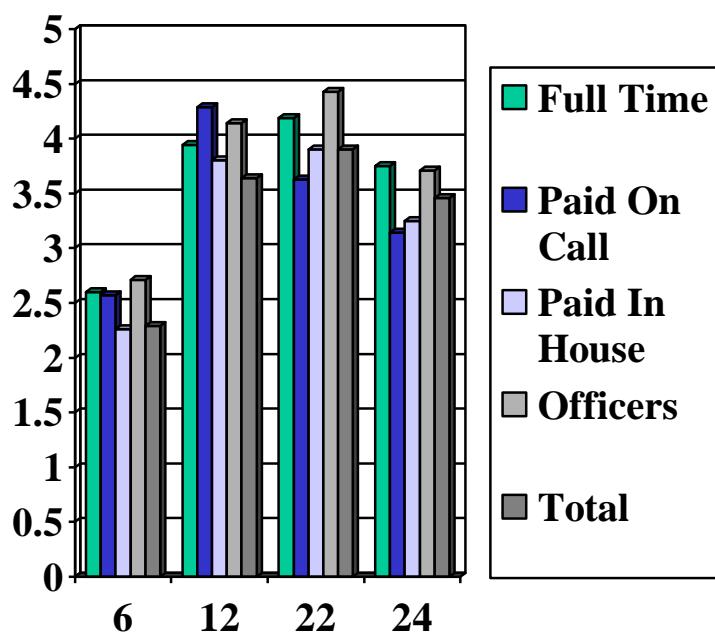
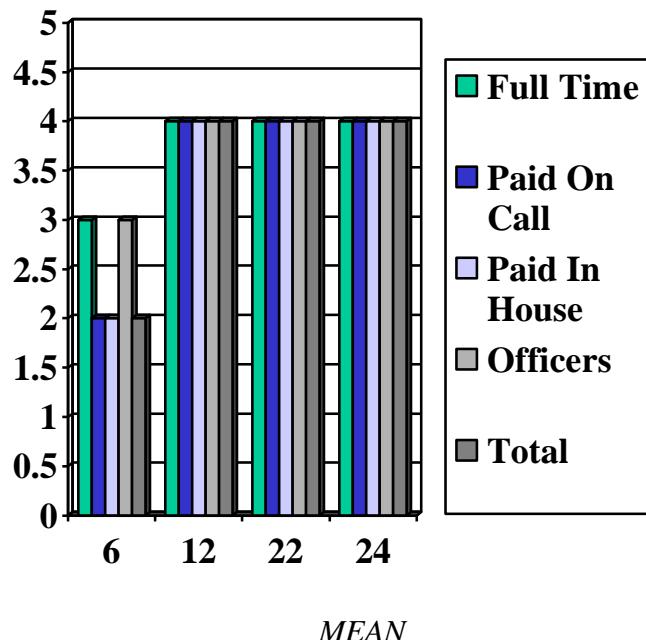
Question 21: Pay does not match workload



Tools & Equipment: Positive Statements

MODE

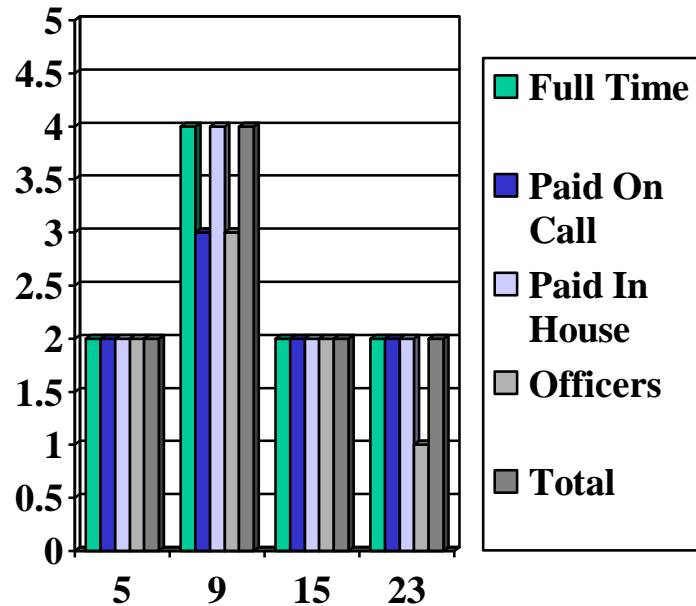
- Question 6: Employee input for purchases
- Question 12: Adequate resources and supplies
- Question 22: Well-maintained equipment
- Question 24: Timely equipment repair or replacement



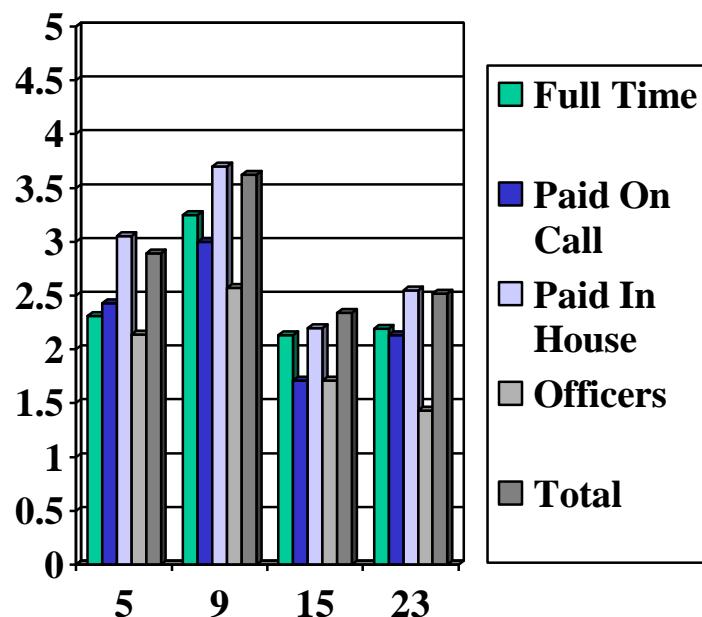
Tools & Equipment: Negative Statements

MODE

- Question 5: Equipment in constant need of repair
 Question 9: Equipment purchased without employee input
 Question 15: Inadequate resources and supplies
 Question 23: Outdated equipment



MEAN



Management & Style: Positive Statements

MODE

Question 2: Discipline is fair and reasonable.

Question 28: The department administration cares about its employees.

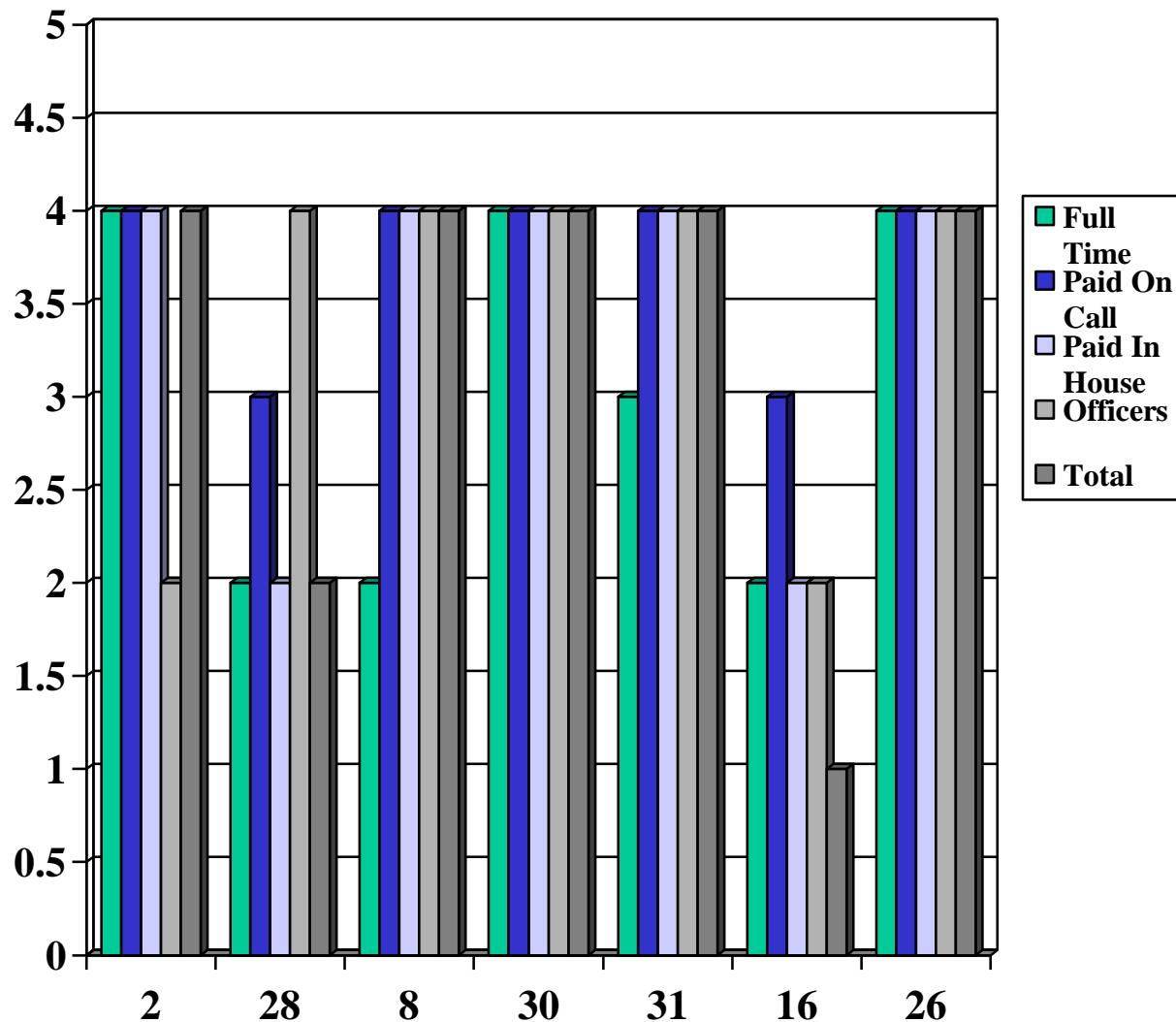
Question 8: I know the department's goal and objectives.

Question 30: Favoritism is shown in discipline.

Question 31: If I had a friend looking for a job in the fire service I would recommend working for Washington Township.

Question 16: There is a free and unrestricted flow of information between employees and supervisors.

Question 26: I know what my supervisor's expectations are for me.



Management & Style: Positive Statements

MEAN

Question 2: Discipline is fair and reasonable.

Question 28: The department administration cares about its employees.

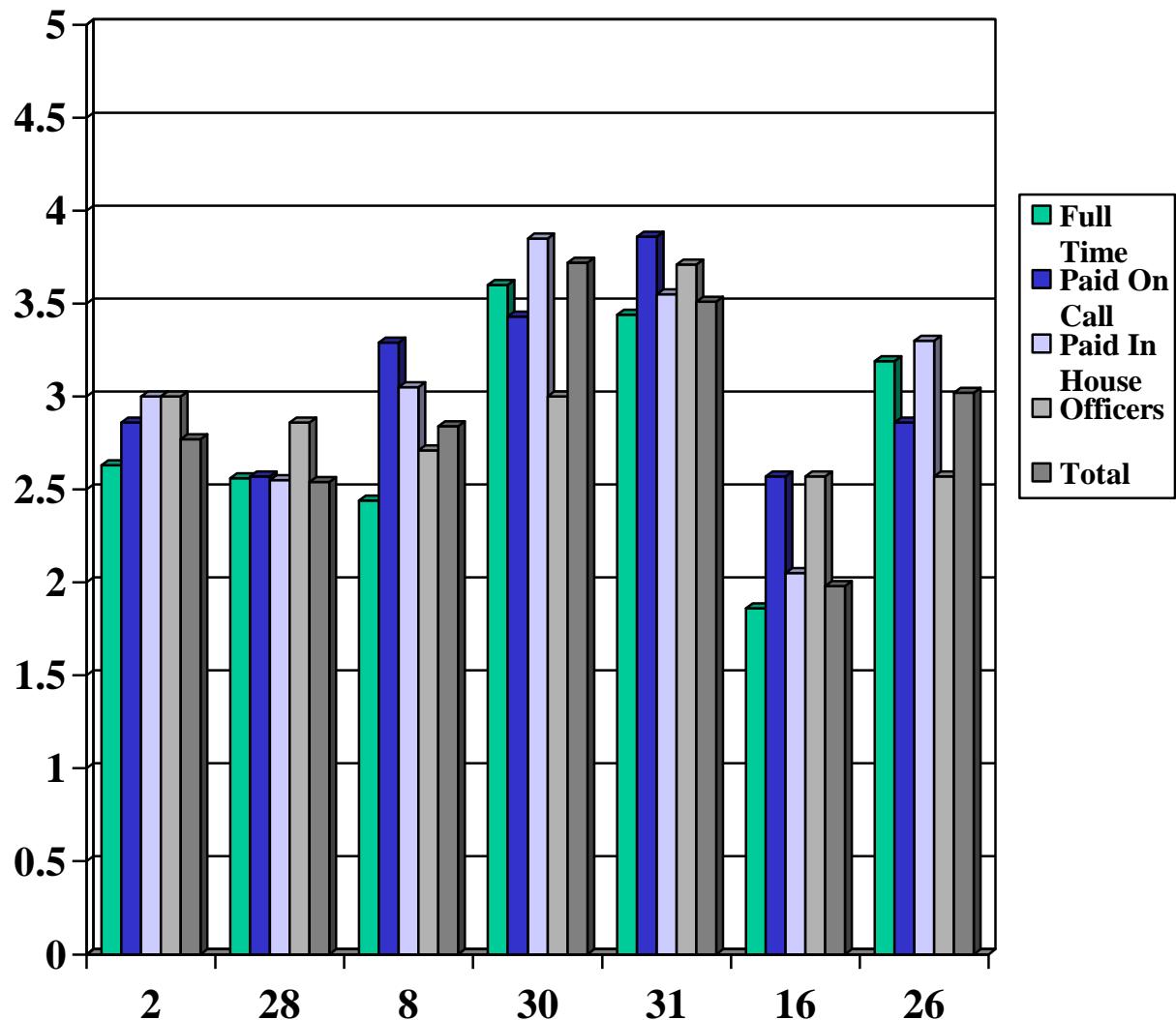
Question 8: I know the department's goals and objectives.

Question 30: Favoritism is shown in discipline.

Question 31: If I had a friend looking for a job in the fire service I would recommend working for Washi Township.

Question 16: There is a free and unrestricted flow of information between employees and supervisors.

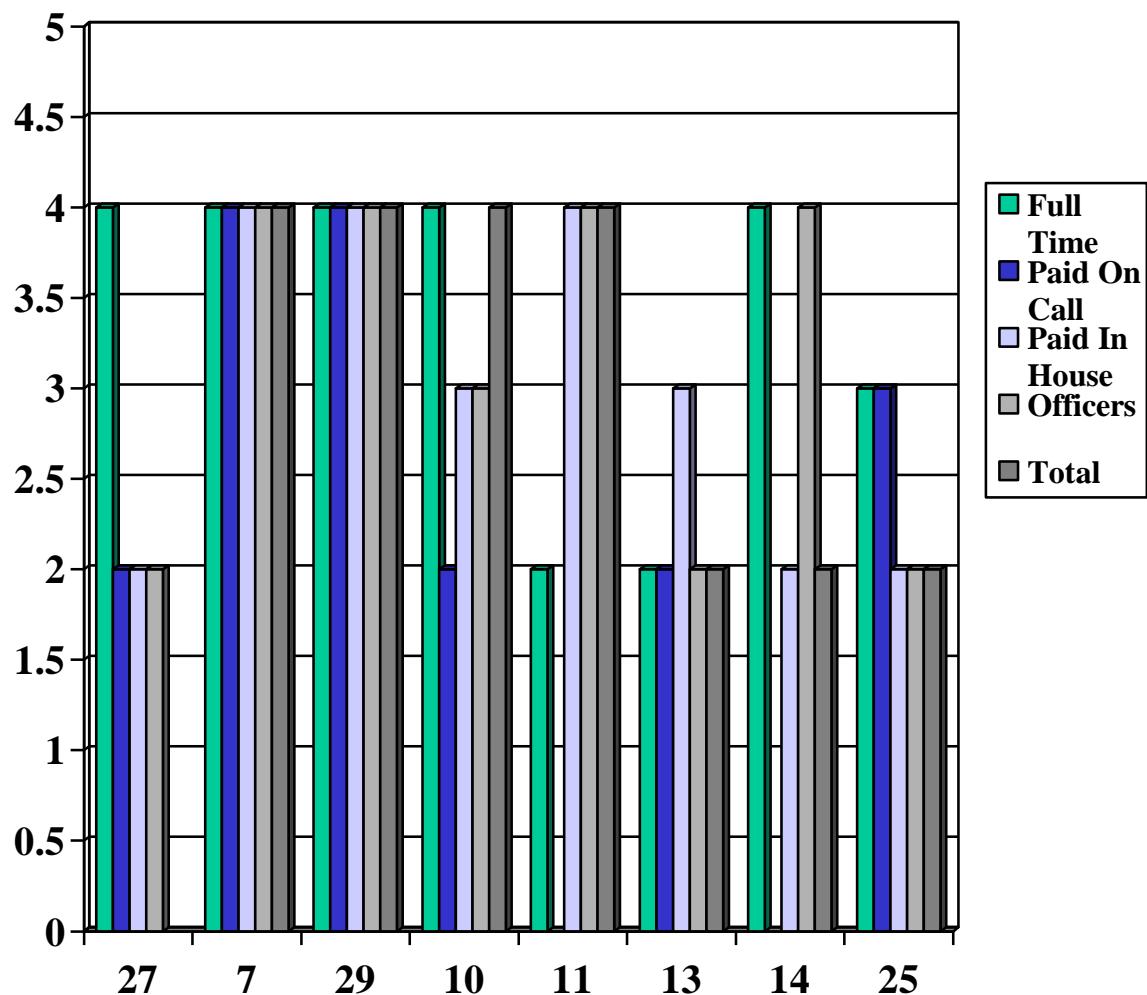
Question 26: I know what my supervisor's expectations are for me.



Management & Style: Negative Statements

MODE

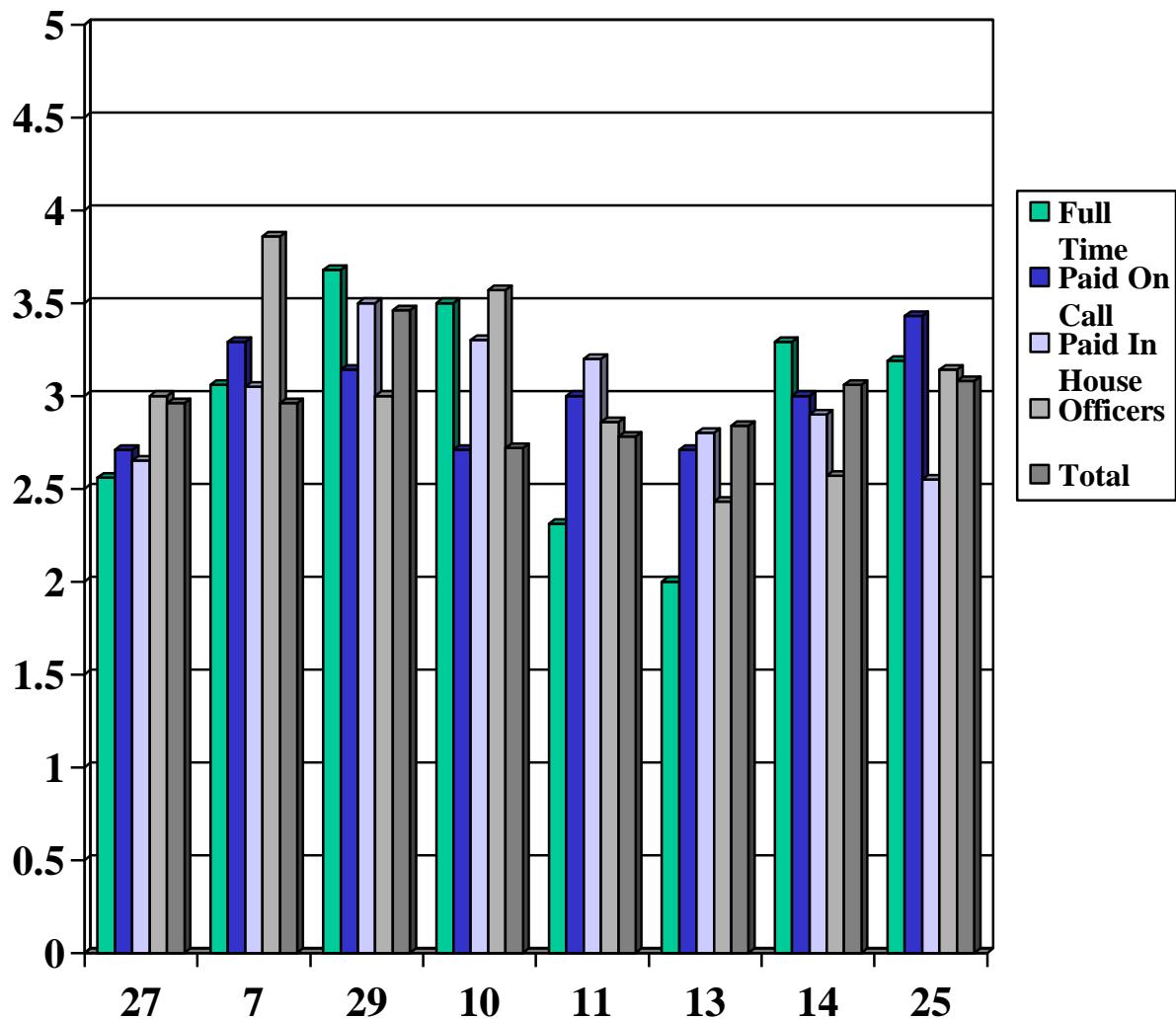
- Question 27: I do not know what the department's goals and objectives are.
 Question 7: My supervisor does not communicate when I'm doing a good job.
 Question 29: The administration does not treat each employee impartially.
 Question 10: There is no concern by the department administration for its employees.
 Question 11: Employees are treated fairly by the administration.
 Question 13: My supervisor does not tell me what his/her expectations are.
 Question 14: My supervisor lets me know when I'm doing a good job.
 Question 25: There is no communication between employees and supervisors.



Management & Style: Negative Statements

MEAN

- Question 27: I do not know what the department's goals and objectives are.
 Question 7: My supervisor does not communicate when I'm doing a good job.
 Question 29: The administration does not treat each employee impartially.
 Question 10: There is no concern by the department administration for its employees.
 Question 11: Employees are treated fairly by the administration.
 Question 13: My supervisor does not tell me what his/her expectations are.
 Question 14: My supervisor lets me know when I'm doing a good job.
 Question 25: There is no communication between employees and supervisors.



APPENDIX 3 – OPENED ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

Best of luck Jim!

I think the Admin. , Officers, etc. need to be more aware of what goes on in the firehouse day to day. We have rules and regulations we need to abide by them for everyone. Rules are not made to be broken.

Most Volleys are not motivated by “pay”. Feedback is typically negative and very, very rarely positive. Administration is isolated behind locked doors. Don’t know what the Fire Department goals and objectives are in quantifiable terms. Couldn’t tell you whether we are contributing or performing to meet expectations. Always being second guessed/compared to the “standard of the day.” Good Fire Department . . . could be great Fire Department. Volley’s are motivated; need to be used; want to be included.

Answers are pertaining to full time status/issues. Employee/supervisor questions are based on my immediate supervisor.

Workload expectations vs. pay is not fair for some Admin. Staff! Communication is one direction! (Usually when something goes wrong)

I think we have a great deal of skilled and exceptional employees here that could go long ways provided the dept. had better leadership higher up. And you call this confidential? [In reference to employee status section of the survey]

I feel WTFD is an excellent organization and have recommend [sic] several of my close friends and fellow workers to apply. Would like to see WTFD provide in House EMS around the clock to better serve the community.

No complaints about this organization but I strongly feel that the citizens of this community would strongly benefit in house EMS 24 hours.

I feel communications between volunteer, part-time, full-time, and administration is lacking greatly. I also feel that thoughts and Ideas should be better addressed and not just thrown on the back burner. This department has a lot of talent and fresh ideas that seem are never utilized. I'm proud of where I work, but dislike the degrading comments that people make about our department. This Fire Department has such great potential, and I want to be around to see the changes and help out whenever possible.

I think Wash. Twp. FD is a great place to work. If the pay and benefits were better for part-time employees I would probably work here more and not consider other employment.

WTFD is a great dept., but to much inconsistency w/ discipline, etc. Admin. needs to look at serving the community in the best manner possible.

Many of the questions are difficult to answer with the multiple choice answers provided.

You never see the Chief unless you are at H.Q. or unless he is running B-40 or happens to be in the area and takes the call. Talking with other departments and being in their community you see the Chief out doing more things with employee and even coming and having lunch with the employees. Over the years I've probably only spoken a few times to the Chief and that's pretty sad. Plus show some appreciation for those employees that are always showing up to work and never calling off and showing up on time instead of negative stuff. (People being later or arrested) Thank you.

I think the department should take a much more pro-active approach to fire suppression, rescue work, and firefighter safety/rescue. Staffing, like anywhere could be better. Better tools should be purchased so I can do my job more efficiently. All things considered this is a good dept. with a lot of potential, and a great deal of room for improvement.

We need a workout program for everyone.

I have never worked for such a piss-poorly communicated company in my life. Even this survey is worded poorly, tricky and makes one wonder your intentions. Since it was so hard to understand some may have been answered incorrectly. If it wasn't for "us" workers, this company would fail. And other than the "workers" no one works together. Do something about all this—fix the problem!

I feel the In House people could be assigned more duties and responsibilities to aid in many of our needs, as well as increase their knowledge.

