

Fire Rescue Task Force

February 13, 2014

6:00 p.m.

City Manager Conference Room

City of Whitewater Municipal Building

312 W Whitewater Street, Whitewater, Wisconsin

MINUTES

1. Call to order and roll call.

Meeting was called to order by Ken Kidd at 6:02 p.m. Present: Don Gregoire (Fire Chief), Todd Lindert (Rescue), Jan Bilgen (Police Commission), Ken Kidd (Council), Cameron Clapper (City Manager). Absent: Phil Frawley (Council). Also present: Mark Taylor, Wally McDonell (City Attorney), Mike Higgins (2nd Asst. Chief), Steve Chene, John Peache, Chris Christon.

2. Approve minutes from the January 28, 2014 meeting.

It was moved by Lindert, seconded by Bilgen to approve the minutes for the January 16, 2014 meeting of the Fire Rescue Task Force. Ayes: Gregoire, Lindert, Bilgen, Kidd, Clapper. Noes: None. Absent: Frawley.

3. Follow-up on changes to previously discussed items.

Gregoire stated that a temporary contract, 501(c)3 application, and by-laws are being worked on with the help of the city attorney and an attorney the Fire Department has retained.

Cameron Clapper, City Manager, stated that he would be providing the Common Council with an update of the progress of the Task Force at their next meeting on February 20.

4. Discussion of potential organizational models.

Kidd summarized that the main issue of the committee is to decide how the Fire Department and EMS will relate to the City and how the Fire Department and EMS will relate to each other, reorganizing as needed to ensure long term viability. Lindert presented a variety of options for organization included in a power point to the committee, assuming 501(c)3 status. Organizational models proposed in the PowerPoint are listed below:

- A. Similar to the current organization, with fire and EMS members voting for their officers, all with one vote within the organization.
- B. A corporation with a Board of Directors made up of members outside the fire department with fire and rescue chiefs answering to the board and fire and EMS members equal
- C. A Board of Directors made up of fire department members with fire and rescue chiefs answering to the board and fire and EMS members equal
- D. A Board of Directors with the fire chief answering directly to the board and the EMS chief answering to the fire chief with fire and EMS members equal

- E. The fire department as a separate organization with EMS answering to the City Council or the Police and Fire Commission as a city department
- F. The current situation with the Fire Chief overseeing fire department and EMS operations with unequal representation for fire and EMS members with EMS members not having voting rights

Lindert's power point is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A. The Task Force discussed at length the options discussed at the previous meeting as well as the organization models provided in Captain Lindert's power point. This discussion included the possibility of the Fire Department as a non-stock corporation with a governing board and as a municipal department.

Clapper pointed out that in other parts of the city organization, organizations similar to the non-stock corporation model were being, or had been, discussed and developed. These examples included the current work by the CDA to possibly develop a separate entity to administer their seed capital loan and grant programs and the Whitewater University Technology Park Board which was established as a separate organization to oversee the Innovation Center and the Technology Park. In each of these examples, rules had been established as to how advisory board members were selected and any associated term limits either through articles of incorporation or bylaws. The group agreed that accountability would be very important and the selection of members for a board of directors would be critical whatever the final form of the entity.

The possibility of a stipend program for fire department officers was suggested.

The group further discussed the organization options presented in the power point provided by Captain Lindert and the concept of an advisory board or board of directors. A board would be responsible for organizational governance and not be involved with operational chain of command or related procedures. The board would be responsible for approving, and possibly negotiating, new agreements for fire and EMS services with the city as well as the surrounding towns. The board would also be responsible for supporting and promoting the establishment/maintenance of standards and best practices within the department as well as financial policies and disciplinary issues. The leadership of the fire department would be accountable to the board. It was agreed that the composition of the board would greatly determine how the fire department would be perceived by those inside and outside the organization.

There was concern expressed as to whether or not the fire department would be able to make it as a separate entity. Kidd pointed out that one of the important goals for the Task Force is to see where the city can help ease the burden on fire department officers and others. The City could provide help with financial and administrative services by agreement with the fire department.

It was generally agreed that all members should have equal voting rights but that a single person should oversee the department. It was further agreed that the selection and appointment of the chief and any assistant chiefs would be an important issue to address and

that, while the advisory board might have authority to select a chief or to select officers, it would be important for the membership of the department to be involved in selecting/nominating finalists for those positions and that each division (fire and/or EMS) should have a say in selecting their respective officers as well as the chief. It was also suggested that the duration of the appointment for the officers (1 year? 2 years? 3 years?), especially for the office of chief, be considered. It was also suggested that the current bylaws, with different rules for fire vs. EMS, be consolidated into one set that would be the same for all the membership.

Regarding the position of fire chief, all agreed that, under a new organizational structure following a model like those suggested in the power point (primarily Option D), the fire chief would not have the same duties and responsibilities held by the chief currently. All agreed that, whatever the responsibilities, the chief officer for the organization should still be identified as the fire chief.

The goal for the next meeting will be to discuss:

- 1) The duties and responsibilities of the fire chief
- 2) The duties and responsibilities of the city toward the fire department
- 3) The composition of the board.

It was also suggested that compensation for all volunteers and officers, as well as the role of the Communications Center in any new organizational structure, be discussed in March. Clapper indicated there were questions regarding the future of the Communications Center at the council level and that there would be a meeting between UW-Whitewater, Walworth County, and the City (including fire/EMS leadership) to discuss the issue on March 10. Council members would also be invited to attend the meeting.

5. Confirmation of next meeting dates:

February 27, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
March 13, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.
March 20, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

6. Adjourn.

A motion by Clapper, seconded by Bilgen to adjourn. Ayes: Gregoire, Lindert, Bilgen, Kidd, Frawley, Clapper. Noes: None. Absent: None. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cameron Clapper
City Manager

Exhibit A

**WHITEWATER
FIRE & RESCUE
TASK FORCE STUDY**

February 13, 2014

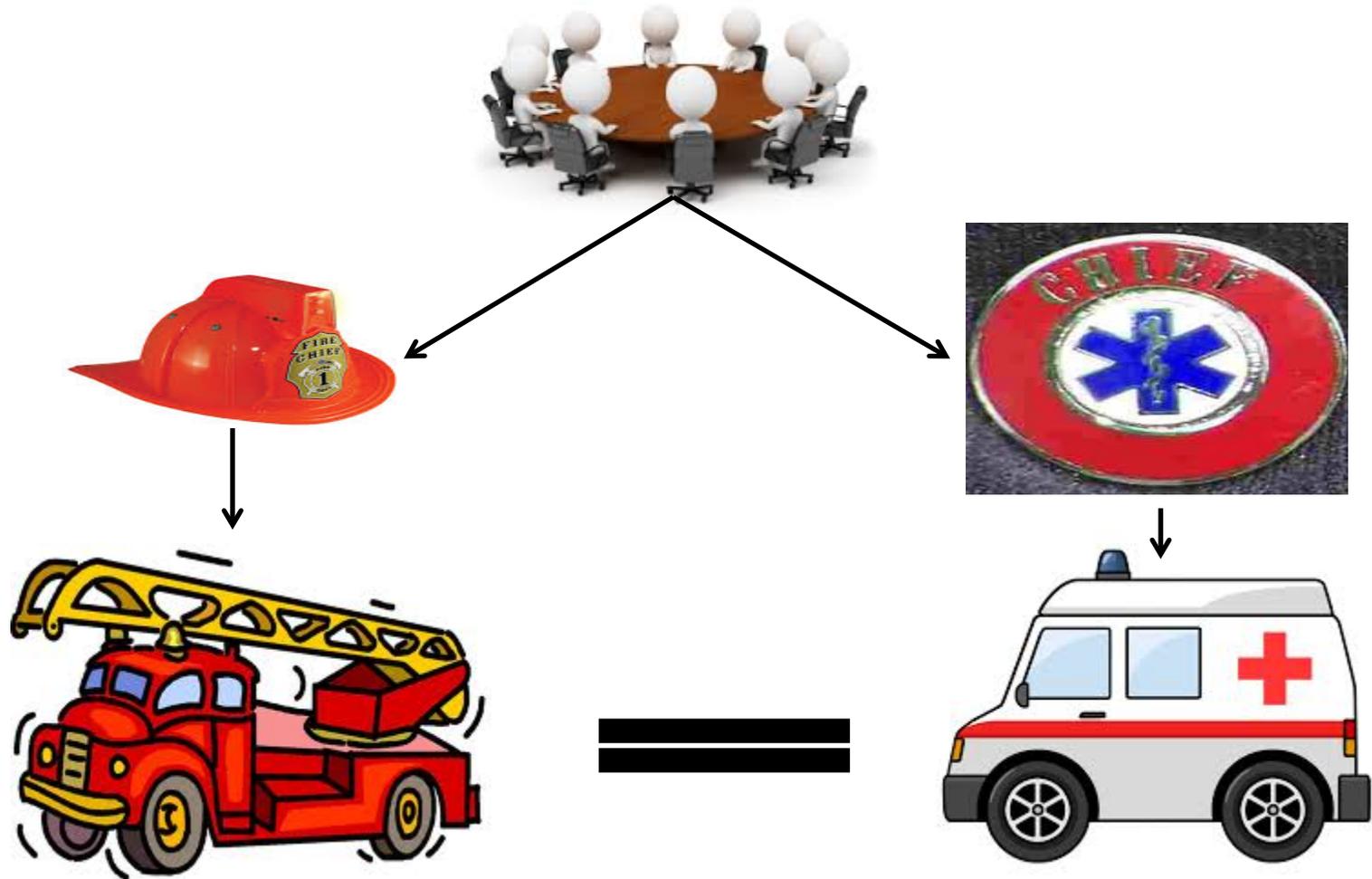
Whitewater **Fire** & **Rescue** Organizational/Oversight Options

(with pictures)



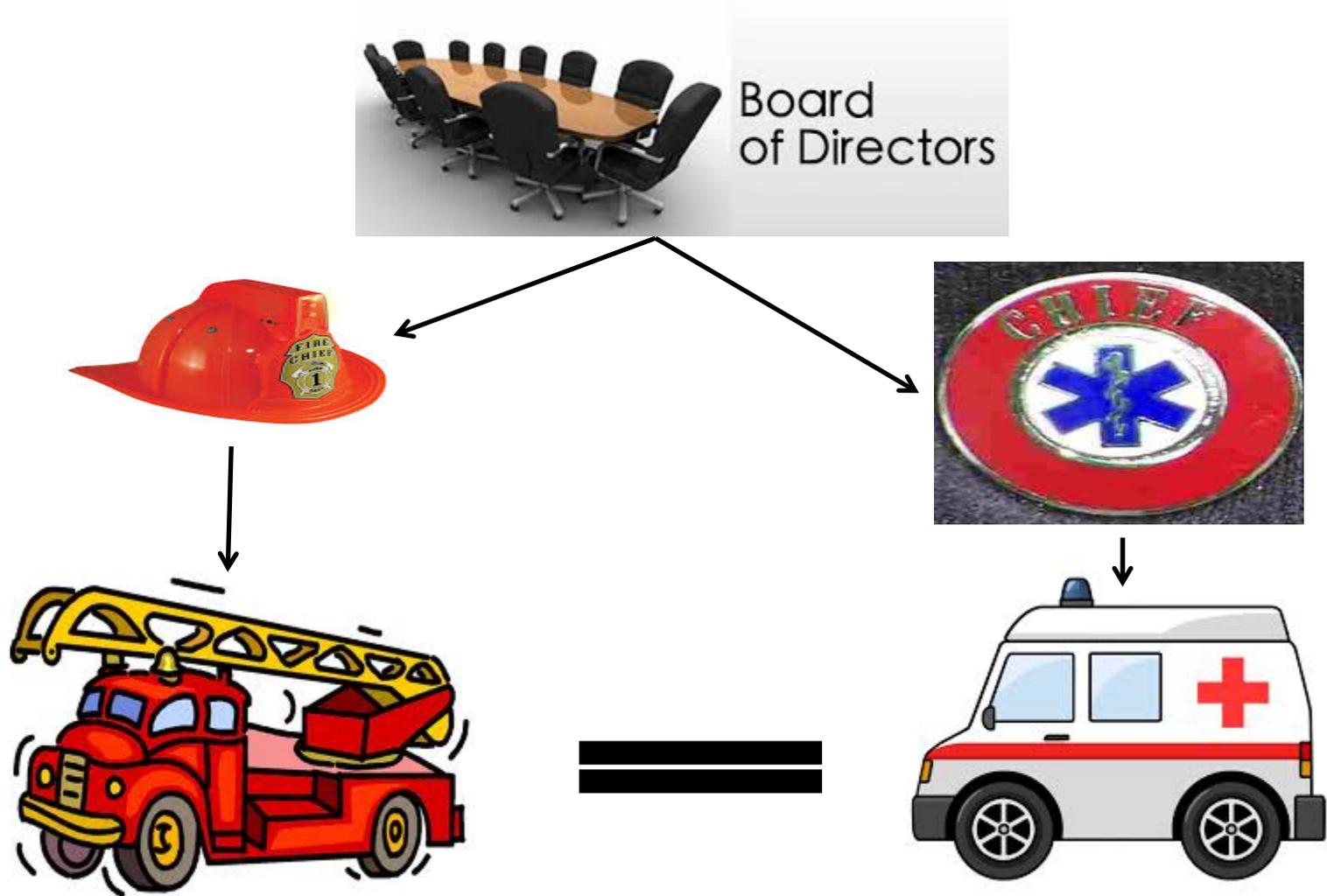
OPTION A

(Police/Fire Commission)



OPTION B

(combination board oversees FD Corp.)



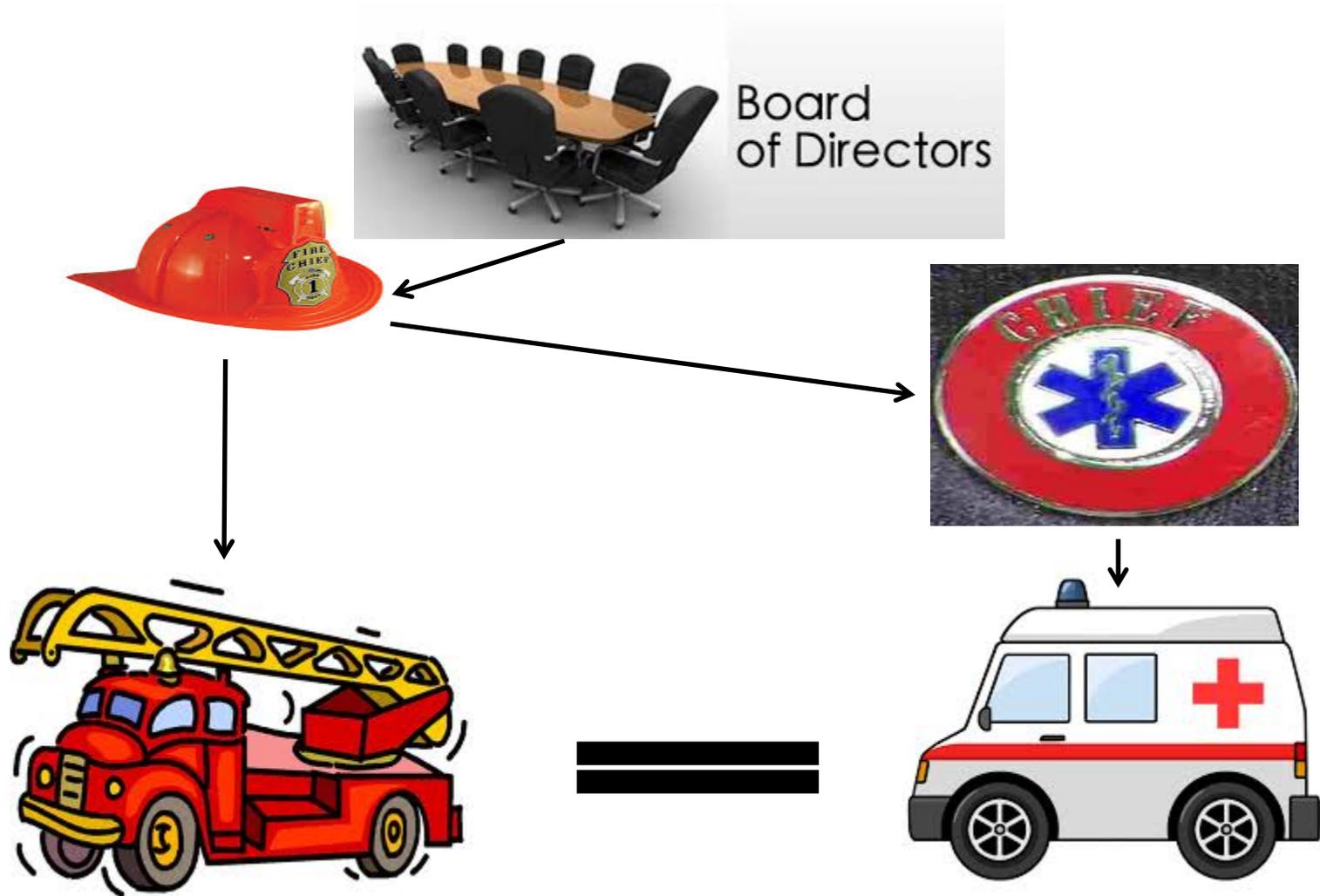
OPTION C

(all firemen board oversees FD Corp.)



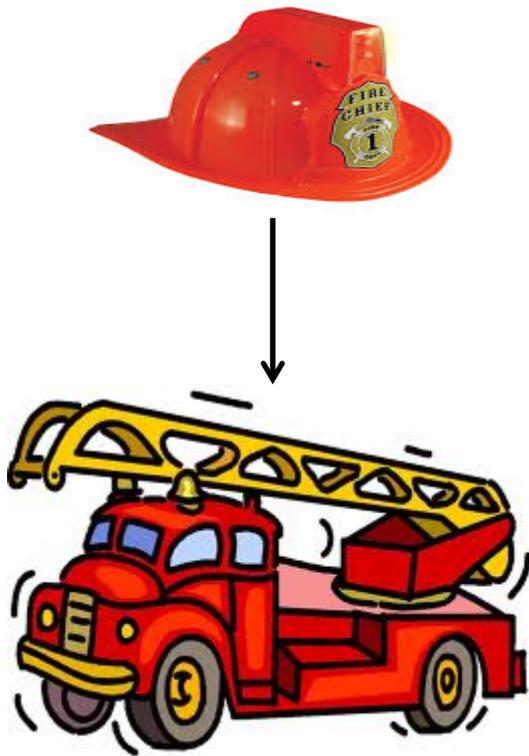
OPTION D

(all firemen board oversees FD Corp.)



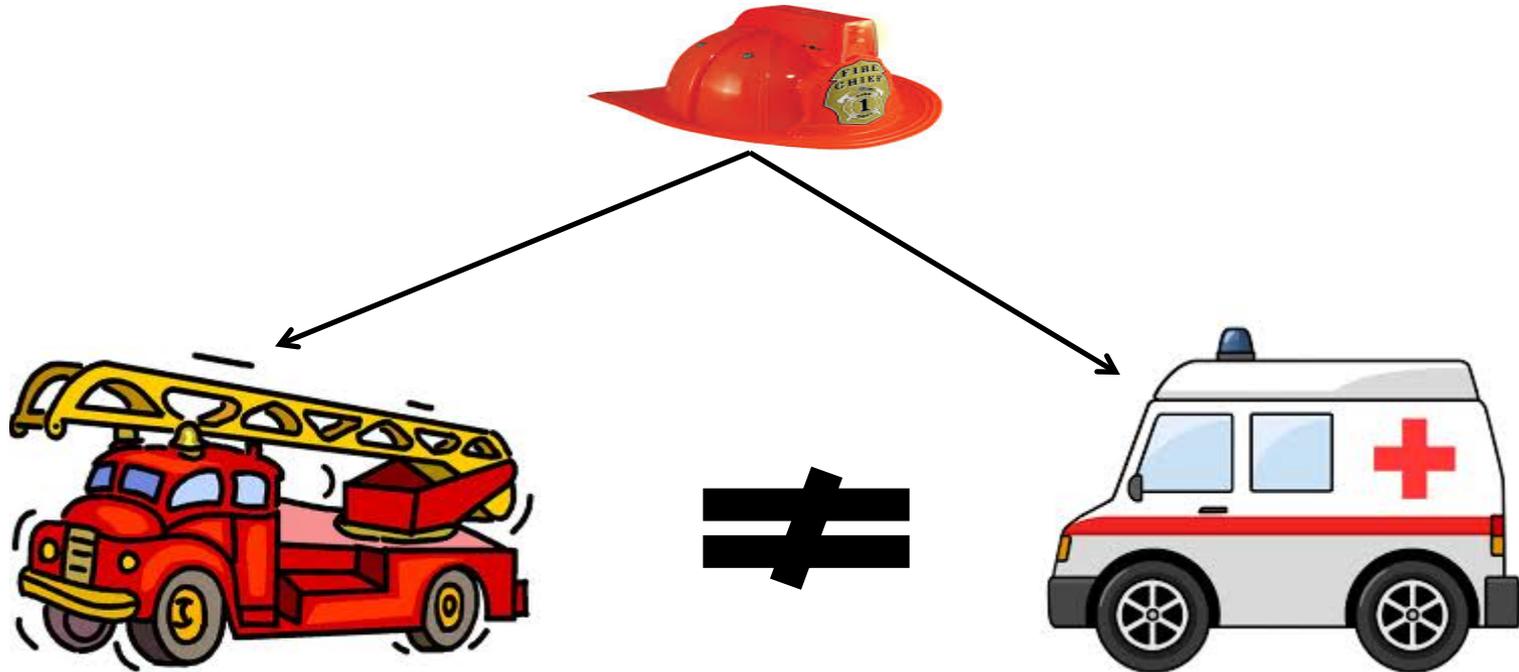
OPTION E

(FD separates from Rescue; Rescue = city dept)



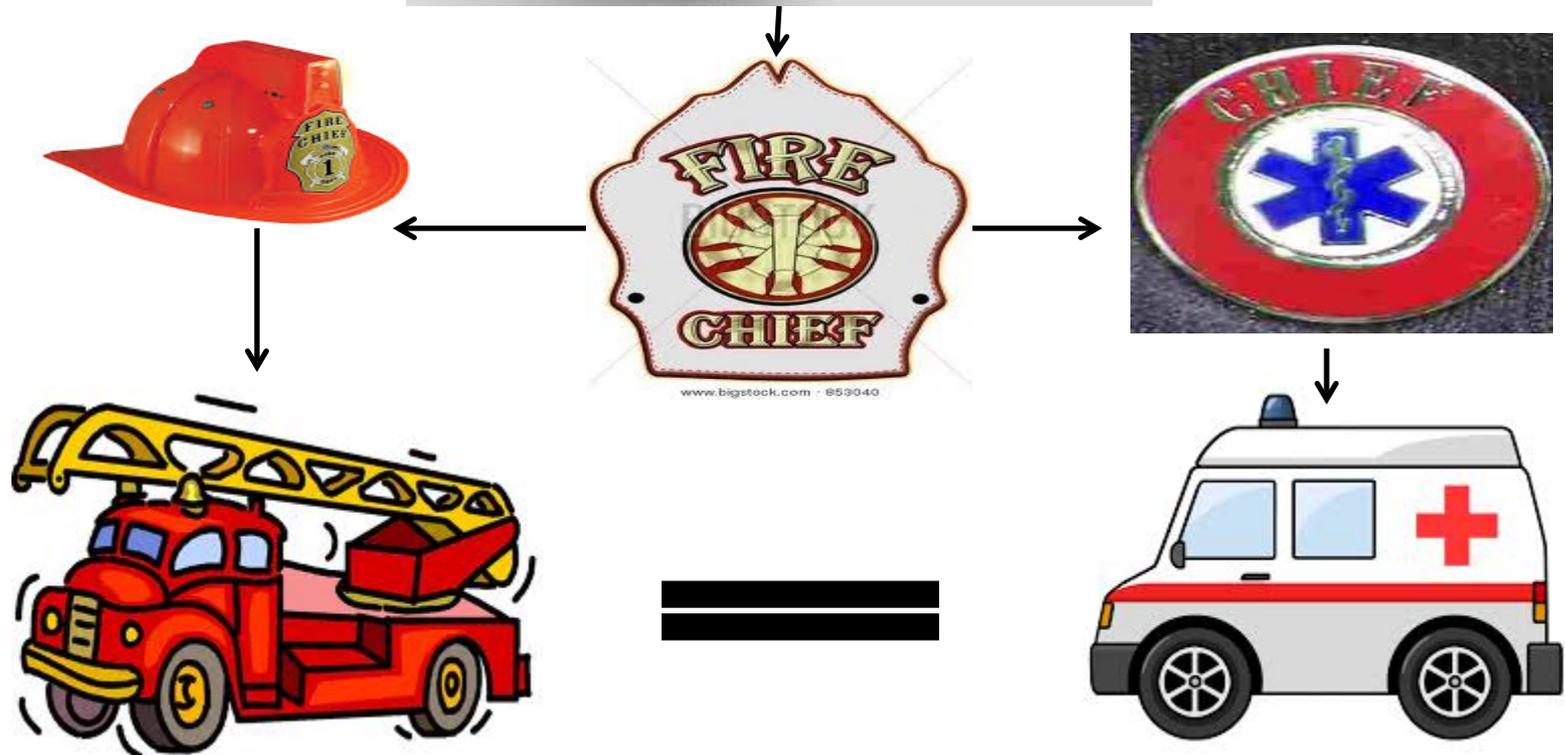
OPTION F

(current structure)



NEW STRUCTURE

(combination board oversees FD Corp.)



OPTIONS

- A) Police/Fire Commission Oversight**
- B) Combination Board made up of various representatives (FD, Rescue, City Hall); all FD/Rescue members equal**
- C) Board elected by FD, oversees Fire Chief & EMS Chief; all FD/Rescue members equal**
- D) Board elected by FD, oversees Fire Chief; all FD/Rescue members equal**
- E) Separate FD & Rescue; Rescue now City Dept**
- F) Fire Chief elected by FD only, oversees Rescue Operations; all FD/Rescue members NOT equal**

**"That's
all
folks!"**

