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Fellow Firefighters, Alderpersons, City Officials and Others,

Thank-you for taking the time to review and familiarize yourself with the new Monroe Fire Department Member Handbook, January 2015 edition. This handbook represents a large commitment by administration, department officers and members to codify the operational philosophy, goals and objectives of our department. This book also represents the largest single shift and rewrite of our policies and procedures since I have been your Fire Chief.

These significant changes are largely driven by the change to a multi-station operation and new equipment purchases over the last several years which have, and are causing, modification to response profiles. This handbook and the policies it contains provide for a superior level of public safety to our city and rural fire district while providing assistance to our neighboring departments and the MABAS system.

As you will see when you look through the following pages, the book is organized into multiple sections that list organization structure, common human resource policies, safety related policies, training, and department specific operational policies, guidelines and statutes which govern the organization.

There are a number of new or changed policies including new stipend re-imbusement, minimum participation and social media policies along with modified response profiles. It also includes changes to our mutual aid policy and adds a level of accountability to all members in respect to training commitment and participation. These new policies also reflect a membership that is as diverse and in some ways, divergent as we have ever seen in this department. That, in my opinion, is a great thing since it brings new ideas, allows for new ways of thinking and challenges status quo so long as we take the time to ensure those voices are heard.

Over the last several years I have participated in quite a number of leadership trainings as both a student and an instructor and because of that enhanced exposure and discussions with many of you, my management philosophy is transforming to one of not telling you what you can (*or can't do*) do but to primarily let the department functionally evolve and allow you all to do the jobs were originally hired to do and do so well. That being said, I also believe any well-run organization should have clear expectations and limitations concerning acceptable acts, levels of service and individual performance. The policies, procedures and guidelines in this handbook reflect that philosophy.

These new guidelines are driven by the need for our department to be more responsive to the needs of the community and to be good stewards of our constituents' tax contributions while continuing to look at new and enhanced service delivery models. I believe this book strikes a fair balance between those needs, the operational objectives of the department and the needs or desires of the members. I expect this policy manual will carry the department at least five years into the future and that it will, with your help, continue to provide a path towards an even more exemplary, cohesive and cost effect fire protection force to the community and the region.

In closing, I would say, thank-you for your support over the last 10 years. I look forward to the coming years and with your assistance, we will continue to make our department better...*not better than anyone else, but better than we were it before.*

Chief Rausch

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