

From: Robert Stedman <RStedman@mtpleasantwi.gov>

Sent: Thursday, January 31, 2019 11:39 AM

To: Steve Hansen (steve.hansen@cityofracine.org) <steve.hansen@cityofracine.org>

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Subject: RE: RCWRRT

Chief Hansen: Chief Remer forwarded your letter regarding the (RCWRRT) you sent to many members of the Racine County Fire Chiefs and it is too bad that the RFD has decided to withdraw from the (RCWRRT) effective July 1, 2019.

I was initially going to ignore your email as it wasn't addressed to the SSFD or to me, but after thinking about it for a few days I decided I do have an obligation to make some comments regarding your letter.

First of all, if there are differences in dispatching protocols then they should be addressed as quickly as possible.

I do strongly support the Racine County Dispatch Center and throwing Dispatch under the "Bus" is not acceptable. Many of us believe that Racine County Communications Center and the Dispatchers do an excellent job. Are they perfect? Of course not but neither are all the fire departments.

In addition, there is no need to criticize the (RCWRRT) especially with all the services they have provided in Racine County and often times with very little support from the Fire Chiefs in the County.

It seems like this entire issue revolves around the unfortunate incident when the young lady drove her car into Lake Michigan in the City of Racine recently. I would suggest that instead of throwing Dispatch and the RCWRRT under the bus perhaps you should take some ownership in what happened on that response. If you haven't already perhaps you should go back and review the Dispatch tapes and call logs as to what happened that night on the call.

We all realize that RFD has significant water rescue response resources including 28+ certified open water, ice rescue and swift water certified divers, but the fact is none of those resources made one difference that night except for the need for the RCWRRT to respond to the scene.

Why I say that is because everyone knows the RFD resources on the scene decided there was no need for a rescue or to even get off their vehicles before they packed up and left the scene? At the time the woman that have driven into the lake was on the phone with the Dispatcher so Dispatch certainly knew there was an emergency.

I don't know all the facts, but however RCWRRT was called and dispatched it sounds like it was a blessing, because when they arrived they did what most emergency response agencies would do they started investigating the scene using the information provided. The RCWRRT at least launched their boat and were able to make a recovery. It would certainly have been embarrassing if the RCWRRT would have just stayed on their vehicles and left the scene without making an attempt like the RFD. Can you imagine if RCWRRT had left without doing anything and days, weeks, months later the vehicle and patient were found?

Who knows maybe if the RFD would have taken the same steps perhaps a life could have been saved?

So please instead of blasting Dispatch and the RCWRRRT and even more importantly dividing the paid departments from the volunteer fire departments take some ownership for what the RFD did or did not do that night of the drowning. Make it a learning experience as we all have and need them!

One last comment, you can preach all day long about MABAS and your knowledge about MABAS, but the fact is your actions tell a different story. The story as seen by others is you really don't support MABAS and your MABAS cards reflect that along with your statement that the RFD won't do a Change of Quarters for a MABAS call. Wow, if every member of MABAS had that attitude then MABAS probably would be dead in the water.

Respectfully,

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Fire Chief

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