

Board Members,

My name is Dan Drayton, and I am a Battalion Chief on A shift. I am informing the board of my decision to leave the organization next month. I realize it is uncommon for an employee to notify the board of their intent to go, but it is essential to address you directly. In this letter, I aim to provide context for my departure, as it reflects broader challenges within the organization that deserve your attention.

First, I am grateful for the opportunity to have served this organization and community over the past five years. I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience here and deeply value the people I've worked with and had the privilege to lead. This organization is filled with talented and dedicated individuals and has enormous potential.

When I joined CCFR in 2019, I was excited about the opportunity to contribute to an organization facing significant challenges but with immense room for growth. I have nearly 25 years of career and volunteer experience in multiple agencies, hold a bachelor's degree in fire service administration, and graduated from the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer program. This background made me feel I could bring value and help impact the organization.

With that background and a deep commitment to this profession, I need to share some troubling observations. Over the past five years, I have witnessed a concerning amount of organizational turnover. Since 2019, 11 people have voluntarily left, and my departure will make 12. Another member plans to go next month, and I know many others are actively seeking opportunities elsewhere.

This level of turnover is not normal, nor does it have to be inevitable. It reflects systemic issues that must be addressed for the organization to thrive. While there have been positive improvements during my tenure, the persistence of these issues suggests the need for a fresh perspective.

In sports, there is a saying: "The coach has lost the locker room." This phrase refers to a situation in which the leader, despite their efforts, no longer has the team's trust, respect, or support. This phrase resonates with me when I consider the organization's current state. As the organizational assessment shows, many employees feel frustrated with the work environment and the leadership.

Leadership expert John Maxwell has a law of leadership he calls the "law of the lid," which means that a leader's ability is a limiting factor in an organization's effectiveness. I believe that CCFR has reached the limit of what can be accomplished under the current leadership. While I respect the chief's contributions and unwavering dedication to this organization, I feel that CCFR needs new leadership to unlock its full potential and reverse the cycle of turnover and stagnation.

This decision to leave has been incredibly difficult for me. I love this organization, the community it serves, and the people I work alongside. However, I have had to weigh my desire to stay against the significant limitations preventing meaningful progress here. Ultimately, I

decided to seek an opportunity to use my skills and experience to contribute to an environment where people are empowered to grow and succeed.

Before I close, I want to encourage the board to revisit the organizational assessment. Read it through the lens of the front-line employees--the men and women who are the heart and soul of this organization. Their feedback tells the story of a team craving better leadership, a clear vision, and a culture of excellence.

In closing, I do not intend to diminish the positive work the chief has accomplished or promote myself. Instead, please view leadership transitions as a regular and healthy part of any organization's life cycle. With the organizational assessment's findings in hand, CCFR is now at a critical juncture. With the right leadership, it can achieve the success everyone here knows it is capable of.

Thank you for your time and for the privilege of serving this organization. If you wish to discuss anything I have shared, my contact information is in the letter I have provided.

Sincerely,

Daniel Drayton

