



Stewart Steps Down From Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue

Fire Department Grows Under Chief Stewart's Leadership & Direction

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO-May 20, 2020-Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue (SSFR) Chief Mel Stewart has submitted his resignation to City Manager Gary Suiter ending his active service with the city and stepping down as Fire Chief.

"Mel has provided exceptional leadership and showed a strong commitment over this tenure to ensure the community receives the best Fire/EMS services available," said City Manager Gary Suiter. "We will greatly miss Mel, especially his calm demeanor in the face of difficult situations and I wish him the very best on his road to recovery and next chapter of life."

Chief Stewart suffered a head injury in an off-duty accident in September 2019. Since that time, he has been recovering and working to return to full duty. However, based on a recent evaluation and consultation with healthcare specialists, Stewart's recovery is anticipated to be long-term and led to his decision to step down.

"I have been blessed to work with the wonderful men and women of Steamboat Springs Fire Rescue and for the city," said Chief Stewart. "The department has come a long way since I first joined, and the community is in extremely good hands as I depart."

Stewart joined the department in 1997 when it fell under the responsibility of the Steamboat Springs Area Fire Protection District before moving into the city in 2002. During that time, he served as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Battalion Chief until 2012. With the departure of the city's Public Safety Director in January 2012, Stewart assumed the Deputy Fire Chief position before being promoted to Fire Chief a month later. As Fire Chief, he guided the department for the past eight years overseeing its strategic direction, expanding EMS services and response capabilities while further diversifying the staff.



Deputy Fire Chief Chuck Cerasoli will continue to serve in the role of interim Fire Chief, which he has held for the past eight months. The city anticipates conducting a search to fill the position in the coming months.

SSFR serves the city and surrounding Steamboat Springs Area Fire Protection District, a 387-square-mile area with an estimated base population of 20,000 people with upwards of 35,000 people with visitors. SSFR provides Fire and EMS assistance when requested by other fire agencies in the county through mutual aid agreements.

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