



**Commission on
Fire Accreditation
International**

Commission on Fire Accreditation International

Accreditation Report – Seventh Edition

**Bloomfield Fire Department
375 Franklin St
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
United States**

**This report was prepared on December 23, 2008
by the
Commission on Fire Accreditation International
for the
Bloomfield Fire Department**

**This report represents the findings
of the peer assessment team that visited the
Bloomfield Fire Department
on October 26-30, 2008**

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PREFACE – BACKGROUND ON CFAI

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International is dedicated to assisting fire and emergency service agencies throughout the world in achieving excellence through self assessment and accreditation in order to provide continuous quality improvement and the enhancement of service delivery to their communities.

The idea for fire service accreditation originated in the mid-1980s with a Memorandum of Understanding between the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). This MOU led the way for the creation of the National Fire Service Accreditation Program, the predecessor of the CFAI.

In December 1996, the Agreement and Declaration of Trust for the CFAI was signed by the Board of Trustees and the new organization was created. That five member Board of Trustees is now the Board of Directors of the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc., and has financial oversight of the organization.

The CPSE Board of Directors are:

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The CFAI is made up of 11 representatives. The commission is responsible for the general governance of the organization and the decisions regarding agency accreditation, the self-assessment process and any other CFAI activities.

The Commission Members are:

Chief William F. Jenaway, King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company, Pennsylvania
IAFC Fire Agency Head Representative for a population of up to 24,999

Chief Robert L. Ridgeway, West Palm Beach Fire Rescue, Florida
IAFC Fire Agency Head Representative for a population of 25,000 to 99,999

Chief Raymond Allan Cain, Jr., Cary Fire Department, Cary, North Carolina
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Chief Ernst Piercy, USAFA Fire Department, USAF Academy, Colorado
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Insurance Industry Representative

Mr. Frank Florence, National Fire Protection Association, Boston, Massachusetts
Consensus Standards Representative

Mr. Ronald W. Holt, County Manager, Sedgwick County, Kansas
ICMA CEO County Government Representative

Mr. Jeffrey A. Pomeranz, City Manager, West Des Moines, West Des Moines, Iowa
ICMA CEO City Representative

Mr. Barry McKinnon, Office of the Fire Marshal, Province of Ontario, Canada
International Fire Service Representative

Dr. Lori L. Moore, Assistant to the General President, Washington, D.C.
IAFF, Labor Representative

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INTRODUCTION

On April 21, 2008, the Bloomfield Fire Department requested consideration for accreditation candidate status. On April 30, 2008, the agency asked the CFAI for a site visit to determine if they could be recommended for accreditation. On June 20, 2008, the CFAI appointed a Peer Assessment Team. The Peer Assessment Team conducted an on site visit of the Bloomfield Fire Department between October 27 – 30, 2008.

In preparation for the on site visit, each team member was provided access and reviewed the Bloomfield Fire Department's Self-Assessment Manual on the CPSE SharePoint Site. This manual produced by the Bloomfield Fire Department represented a significant effort by the staff of the agency and other community agencies.

The Township of Bloomfield was settled by the British and the Dutch in 1666. It was originally a part of Newark but eventually separated from Newark and was incorporated in 1812 as the Township of Bloomfield. By 1830, the town had grown to 4,309 residents with numerous textile mills and factories and in 1840; the New Jersey Legislature passed the Township Act further formalizing township governments. The township's population reached 41,600 in 1940, increased to 49,300 by 1950, was as high as 52,029 in 1980 but by the 2000 US Census had settled to 47,683.

Composition

The township, as recently as the early 20th century, was made up of heavy industries. Today these heavy industries are virtually gone. Redevelopment of those properties has increased the commercial, retail, and residential uses. Today Bloomfield is primarily a residential community with commercial and retail occupancies of all types. One industrial component remains from its earlier commerce however that property is in negotiation for sale to be developed for future commercial/residential combination type occupancy.

The 5.3 miles comprising the Township of Bloomfield is divided into three wards Central, Northern, and Southern. The population is made up of a small middle-class managerial cross section, a heavy working class, and many senior citizens and semi-skilled workers. The population breakdown shows 63% are white, 15% Hispanic, and 12% are Black Americans. American Indians, Asians, and Latinos make up the remaining 10%. Foreign-born citizens make up approximately 23% of their entire population.

Government

Mayor

Township Administrator: appointed by the Mayor and Town Council

Town Council

Council consists of three members elected at large and three members elected by wards. All members serve 3-year terms.

Fire Department

4 Fire Stations

89 Paid members

25 Volunteer members

2 Civilian members

3 Engine Companies with one being a “tele-squirt” apparatus

1 Ladder Company

1 75 ft. Quint

1 Rescue Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) has completed a comprehensive review and appraisal of the Bloomfield Fire Department based upon the 7th Edition of the Fire and Emergency Services Self Assessment Manual. The Commission's goals are to promote organizational self-improvement and to award accreditation status in recognition of good performance. The assessment team's objectives were to validate the agency's self-study accreditation manual, identify and make recommendations for improvement, issue a report of findings and conclude if the agency is eligible for an award of accreditation.

The Bloomfield Fire Department was assisted in their accreditation process by Chief John Gilbert of Key Biscayne. Chief Gilbert served as their mentor from April 24, 2008 when the agency's documents were first uploaded onto the SharePoint site until his review was completed. He gave assistance to the accreditation manager on the agency's SAM and SORC manuals.

The Bloomfield Fire Department is to be commended for its participation in this very comprehensive and detailed accreditation process. All members of the agency and city staff were very open, responsive, and candid. This approach greatly aided the team in its limited three-day site visit. The benefits obtained will improve the quality of the fire service delivery system and the community's emergency services.

The Bloomfield Fire Department's accreditation self study reflected a genuine appraisal of current performance and improvement needs. This study represents a very time consuming detailed analysis of the agency and their personnel are to be commended for their efforts.

The summaries of findings by the Peer Assessment Team are as follows:

Governance and Administration

The department met all core competencies.

The agency has been legally established through the Township Code, and the relationship built over the past ten years between the present Fire Chief and the AHJ is a very healthy and productive relationship. Open communication and mutual respect generates confidence in proposed programs, initiatives, priorities, organizational structure, and budgetary issues of the agency. The environment is a very positive one where the agency can achieve its mission, strategies, and goals and objectives due to this confidence and trust.

The process used to choose the Fire Chief is a tested and proven process whereby the candidates take a written exam, are put on a priority list then pared down to the top three. From here, the AHJ has the opportunity to hold personal interviews and choose the most qualified person for the position.

Assessment and Planning

The department met all core competencies.

The township has been divided into four geographic zones. Fire protection services are provided from four fire stations, one in each zone. Fire data, i.e. property and fire loss, civilian and fire fighter injury and death, both in electronic and hard copy format, are kept by the agency through its Fire Prevention Bureau and at present, go back as far as 1988. The ability to rapidly gather or recall this data allows the agency to keep abreast of trends, problem areas, safety, and prevention concerns.

Through its use of the operations and capital improvement budgets, the Deputy Chiefs keep abreast of the agency issues and utilize those tools to help in current and future planning. These Deputy Chiefs are tasked by the Fire Chief to provide him with valuable feedback and information gathered from their field personnel as well as through the tools mentioned above that in turn helps him in planning for the agency's future.

Community risk reduction assessments have been conducted and have been helpful in identifying strategies necessary for fire protection in the identified zones. Their first ever Standard of Response Coverage and Strategic Plan manuals were created from these assessments as a by-product of the accreditation process.

The agency's Fire Official has a strong understanding and control of the record keeping for the fire data (NFIRS), workmen's' comp, and water source data. His overall passion for keeping up-to-date with software programs and systems technology is commendable and an integral component to the agency's success in this area of assessment and planning.

Goals and Objectives

The department met all core competencies.

The agency has a well-defined goals and objectives program for directing the organization. The shift commanders, or the agency's Deputy Chiefs, are responsible to hold regularly scheduled meetings and conferences with their station Captains and personnel to ascertain concerns and problems at the field personnel's' level. From here, the Deputy's create their own prioritized list that they then present to the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief then reviews the potential of each list and comes up with an annual list of goals and objectives. The Fire Chief discusses his list with the Deputies and finalizes what will be submitted for the year. This annual submittal of the goals and objectives are provided to the agency staff as well as the AHJ every year during the budget review period.

There is an annual review of the agency's goals and objectives. This review allows the Fire Chief to eliminate those that have been reached, or to renew a list of those that need to be reconsidered for future planning. These goals and objectives are communicated to the Deputies who are then responsible to communicate them down through the ranks to the fire fighter level personnel.

Fiscal Resources

The department met all core competencies.

The Mayor and Town Council provide authorization for the Fire Chief to conduct planning, management, and operation of this agency. A township ordinance directs the Fire Chief to be responsible for the annual budget and its submittal for review and acceptance by the AHJ.

Deputy Chiefs are very active in the agency planning efforts and hold regularly scheduled meetings with the House Commanders, or Captains, as well as the Fire Chief. The Deputies all hold different assignments for fiscal responsibilities. Resource allocations for building improvements are discussed in meetings between the Deputies and the House Commanders. Budgetary issues, current and future spending, as well as the resource allocations mentioned above are discussed between the Fire Chief and the Deputies, which helps the Fire Chief to prioritize his annual budget, which he then presents to the AHJ.

The finance department of the Township is responsible for monitoring all financial expenditures for the fire department. The Finance Director monitors the spending and budget of the agency and works closely with the Fire Chief in assuring that the agency remains fiscally responsible. In the recent past, the Director cannot remember a time where the agency has gone over budget or where expenditures were larger than the resources allocated proving good fiscal responsibility of the Fire Chief and this agency.

Programs

The department met all core competencies.

The fire suppression program is effective and well developed. The agency has established both SOP's and SOG's that address daily administrative functions and emergency operations. There is an opportunity to refine emergency SOG's by ensuring they are periodically reviewed and updated.

The fire prevention/life safety program is highly effective. The agency conducts fire safety inspections through a combined effort of line suppression personnel augmented by Fire Prevention Bureau staff. Inspections of most occupancies are conducted semi-annually with high-risk occupancies being reviewed quarterly.

The public education program is well established. The agency conducts targeted education programs with the ultimate goal being to reduce or eliminate the risk of fire related property damage and/or injuries to the public as well as their own personnel.

The fire investigation program shows a cooperative effort between the agency and the Essex County Prosecutors Office. The agency prevention program is a well developed program that meets all agency objectives.

The technical rescue and hazardous material programs are developed to the first responder level. For incidents requiring technician level intervention, Bloomfield Fire Department utilizes mutual aid provided by neighboring jurisdictions.

The agency is not charged with and does not provide any level of out of hospital emergency medical care.

Physical Resources

The department met all core competencies.

All facilities are well maintained either by station personnel or by contractors. The Fire Chief has developed a replacement plan for apparatus and facility repair needs within the budgetary process.

There is an active apparatus replacement and maintenance program. The Fire Chief has developed an apparatus replacement schedule and it is used as a planning tool for budget preparation.

Facility replacement/relocation was noted as a need because all facilities with the exception of one were built in the 1930's. As stated in the SAM, these stations were located according to the needs at that time.

Safety equipment is purchased and disseminated to all members according to agency policy. Its replacement is dependent on it being damaged or worn out. Departmental policy outlines the procedures on how to report damaged equipment, and how to have it replaced.

At this point in time, the township is pretty well built out. It is not likely that any growth in facilities, or new stations, will occur in their township. The agency however has recognized the need to update the current stations they have. Facility needs that the agency has identified can be found in the financial and strategic planning documents the Township uses during the budget process.

Human Resources

The agency met all core competencies.

All legal mandates are being met and State law is being followed. There are documented personnel policies and procedures guiding both administration and personnel behavior.

Human Resource activities are consistent with the mission and goals of the organization. All employees are annually evaluated and the hiring and promotional practices are effective.

Training and Competency

The department met all core competencies.

The agency's training programs are well established. They also conform to all State mandates. Additional topics are included in a monthly training schedule that includes objectives to be completed on a daily basis. Training reports are completed electronically allowing for periodic tracking of individual and company performance. Safety is a high priority and nationally recognized training materials and standards are used.

The training program is operating effectively but there is an opportunity to expand the current inventory of educational resources and provide more access to industry periodicals on a more programmed basis. Additionally, there is an opportunity to rebuild a training tower at one of the agency's fire stations. This would enhance the agency's training program by reducing the number of times personnel would have to travel to the Middlesex County Fire Academy for training. With a training tower in the community, a greater amount of training could be conducted without reducing the availability of response personnel. The feasibility of rebuilding the training tower should be evaluated and included in the agency's long-range plans.

Essential Resources

The department met all core competencies.

The agency maintains a proactive working relationship with the Public Works Department. Agency personnel play an integral role in the periodic testing and maintenance of the Town's hydrants. An opportunity exists to strengthen the program by having agency personnel periodically evaluate available water pressures in the system. The agency should also seek to develop a method for better identifying hydrants that are out of service or in need of maintenance.

Dispatch services are provided under the general direction of the Police Department. The current Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system allows key data elements to be captured and reviewed on a periodic basis. An opportunity exists to better align the CAD system clock with the 911-system clock that will help in accurately evaluating the call processing time.

The agency's office and administrative support systems are highly effective and represent a proactive approach to keep up with the latest available technology. An opportunity exists to expand on the agency's technology by integrating computers into the response apparatus. Information that is currently only available in hard copy (water distribution system maps, pre-fire plans, etc.) can be better assimilated in electronic form and available on responding fire apparatus.

External Systems Relationships

The department met all core competencies.

The agency is proactive in the area of external system relationships. The agency's participation in the Essex County Mutual Aid Plan and State of New Jersey Mutual Aid plan provides a wealth of resources for the agency. This system consists of enough departments to provide resources out to a 9th alarm. This plan is kept on file in the Fire Officials office who is the agency designee to maintain the program. The plans are also available on the agency's internal computer servers. Confined Space, and Hazardous Materials teams are planned for and these are resources that would not be otherwise available to smaller communities.

The agency's accreditation self-assessment manual reflected a genuine ability to work cooperatively with external agencies and systems. The on-site peer assessment team concurs with the agency's descriptions, appraisals, and plans.

CONCLUSIONS

The self-study manual produced by the Bloomfield Fire Department was of high quality. The manual represented a significant effort by the staff of the agency to produce and present a quality document.

- The Bloomfield Fire Department has demonstrated that all core competencies have been met and received a credible rating.
- The Bloomfield Fire Department has demonstrated that all applicable criteria have been met and received a credible rating.
- The Peer Assessment Team recommends Accredited Agency Status for the Bloomfield Fire Department from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Peer Assessment Team conducted an exit interview with the agency consisting of the Fire Chief and his staff that participated in the self-assessment study. The purpose of the meeting was to review the team's findings and recommendations. The agency was given an opportunity to respond to any errors in findings of fact.

Strategic Recommendations

Strategic recommendations were developed from information gathered from the on-site assessment visit and the evaluation of the criteria and core competencies.

1. The township is anticipating possible changes in some areas of the four planning zones due to future redevelopment of industrial sites. It is recommended that the agency research other risk assessment models, and utilize the same, to compare with the military model they used for this accreditation process. Having other assessment models may give them different options to consider during future risk assessment planning. (2B.1)
2. It is recommended that the agency continue to improve and update their SORC. Although acceptable, continual gathering of more information for the SORC regarding fire risks, demographics, economic indicators, service level objectives, etc., will assist in their near future risk assessment. Future planning for the possible township redevelopment may necessitate the need for a more detailed and formal SORC. (2B.4)
3. The agency must begin to review and update its Strategic Plan as it was distributed in late 2006 and is at the end of year two in a five year plan especially in light of the possible redevelopment of the industrial areas. (2D.1)
4. All standard operating guidelines should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure that the guidelines reflect current expectations. (5A.4)
5. The agency should consider placing all policies, procedures, and standard operating guidelines on a computer network accessible at every station to simplify the process of updating and distributing revisions. (5A.4)
6. The agency should pursue the possibility of acquiring grant or other means of funding the construction of a fire training tower to replace the 1930's tower that was demolished some years ago at station number 3. The replacement tower would facilitate the ladder drills, standpipe drills, and training necessary to hone the skills of all of their personnel, at a centralized location for the agency. If appropriate funding can be found, the possibility of including a better equipped classroom facility should be sought at the same time for the same building. This would assist in the conducting of formal seminar or training type class activities. (8C.1)

Specific Recommendations

Specific recommendations were developed from the appraisal of performance indicators in each of the ten categories.

Category II Assessment and Planning

Criterion 2C: Non-Fire Risk Assessment and Response Strategies

Performance Indicator

2C.2 The frequency and probability of occurrence of service demands other than fire are identified in each planning zone.

Since the agency's main focus is fire related incidents, the non-fire risks and hazards to the township must continually be identified and monitored in order for the agency to be proactive in its efforts to provide all the necessary emergency response services to their citizens.

The agency must stay on top of all the services needed by the township and provide their personnel the appropriate classes, training, knowledge and information for the non-fire risks.

Category III Objectives

Criterion 3A: Goals and Objectives

Performance Indicator

3A.3 Published materials accurately portray the agency, mission, goals and objectives.

With the recent addition of their Strategic Plan and Standard of Response Coverage manuals, the agency should consider providing these as well as all of their other published materials in a central storage/archiving area where all the agency personnel can get immediate access for review as in a computer network server

Category V Programs

Criterion 5A: Fire Suppression

Performance Indicator

5A.2 There is appropriate and adequate equipment on fire apparatus.

The agency should develop a form to standardize the documentation of apparatus inventory checks.

Category VI Physical Resources

Criterion 6A: Fixed Facilities

Performance Indicators

6A.2 Building and grounds are clean and in good repair. Maintenance is conducted in a systematic and planned fashion..

Opportunities exist for improvement in the area of facility maintenance documentation

6A.3 Physical facilities are adequate and properly distributed in accordance with stated service level objectives and standards of response coverage.

Facility replacement/relocation was noted as a need because all facilities with the exception of one were built in the 1930's. As stated in the SAM, these stations were located according to the needs at that time.

Criterion 6E: Safety Equipment

Performance Indicator

6E.4 Maintenance on all safety equipment is conducted by qualified personnel and appropriate records are kept.

Inventory for the agency's small tools, PPE, and other equipment is available but is not in a standardized format. This needs to be standardized as stated in the agency's SAM. Turnout Gear repair records need to be kept on file when gear is sent to the contracted repair and maintenance vendor.

Category VII Human Resources

Criterion 7B: Recruitment, Selection, Retention and Promotion

Performance Indicator

7B.8 There is an employee recognition program in place.

The agency should develop a policy or procedure to ensure deserving members receive recognition.

Criterion 7F: Risk Management and Personal Safety

Performance Indicator

7F.6 The agency has a health/physical fitness program and provisions for non-compliance by employees/members are written and understood.

The agency should consider implementing a total Firefighter Fitness and Wellness Program. There are currently no physical training requirements, nor any mandatory periodic medical evaluations of all agency members. Consideration should be given to adopting the IAFF/IAFC Firefighter Wellness Program as a model for the agency.

Category VIII Training

Criterion 8A: Training and Education Program Requirements

Performance Indicator

8A.4 The Department has identified minimum levels of training for all positions in the organization.

It is recommended that the Agency establish minimum levels of training for each position and include them either in the individual job descriptions or in a general guideline (SOG).

Criterion 8C: Training and Education Resources

Performance Indicator

8C.3 Instructional materials are current, support the training program, and are accessible.

The current training materials provided to the individual stations are somewhat limited. The agency currently provides a Company Officer and Firefighter's Handbook for reference and company level training. It is recommended that the Agency plan to provide additional training materials for each station (ie: trade journals, videos, etc.)

Category IX Essential Resources

Criterion 9A: Water Supply

Performance Indicators

9A.5 The fire agency should maintain current water supply and hydrant maps for its respective response areas.

Maps indicating main size and hydrant locations should be posted at each station and easily accessible on each response apparatus to ensure that members have the ability to locate the nearest hydrant prior to initiating an emergency response. These maps should be updated on a periodic basis to ensure accurate information is relayed to emergency response personnel.

9A.8 The fire agency should periodically evaluate the maintenance, inspection and testing to ensure the adequacy and availability of public or private water for fire protection.

The agency should seek to develop a method for better identifying hydrants that are out of service or in need of maintenance.

9A.10 The fire department should have standard operation procedures outlining utilization of available water supply.

The current SOG for use of available water supply resources is relatively comprehensive. While water supply issues have not been troublesome in the past, it is recommended that the additional available water supply resources of the Town sewer and street sweeper be included as possible alternatives. Company personnel should be made aware of these options in case the need should arise.

Criterion 9B: Communication Systems

Performance Indicator

9B.3 The agency's communication center is adequately equipped and designed.

Currently, the dispatching data that is available to be captured sits on two separate systems, the 911 system, and the CADs. An on-site review revealed that the clocks on these two systems are not synched, which results in the inability to accurately review the time sequence between when a 911 call is received and when it is transmitted to Agency personnel. It is recommended that the current systems be evaluated to develop a method to ensure periodic synchronization of both clocks. This will help in the data collection requirements necessary to create a standard of response coverage document.

OBSERVATIONS AND RATINGS

Category I — Governance and Administration

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The Bloomfield Fire Department has been legally established. The agency has produced exhibits that clearly identify its authority to engage in various programs, provide staffing levels commensurate with its mission, and to provide the physical resources required to achieve its assigned tasks.

The Township organizational structure places the fire department in a hierarchical role. The fire department enjoys a certain amount of organizational and operational independence that works well for the department.

The AHJ maintains a strong two-way relationship with the agency and allows the Fire Chief to work within the agency organizational structure to meet its goals and objectives. Open communication between the AHJ and the agency, allows them to work within the Townships established procedures and processes. This makes for a credible agency governance and administration.

The Bloomfield Fire Department's organizational structure is well founded and provides for fire protection effectiveness and efficiency for their identified citizenship.

The established process for selecting the agency Fire Chief has proven to be an effective means of finding the most qualified person to run the agency.

The team concurs with the Governance and Administration Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Governance and Administration Category is Credible.

Category II — Assessment and Planning

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The current Fire Chief has, through past planning and vision, established a well-rounded and dynamic assessment and planning effort with his key personnel. Quarterly staff meetings and as well as regularly scheduled Township meetings have helped the Fire Chief to shape the agency's current needs and has also helped in assessing, and planning for their future needs.

The annual budgetary process assists the agency in making internal assessments and through these assessments, planning for their future needs and expectations helps the agency to accomplish many of their goals and objectives.

The agency's Fire Chief utilizes many of his staff and personnel to gain insight as to the agency's needs. Through a collaborative effort, plans are created to help move the agency forward into current times and also to provide visionary future plans as well.

The team concurs with the Assessment and Planning Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Assessment and Planning Category is Credible.

Category III — Goals and Objectives

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The Fire Chief provides the AHJ annually, with Goals and Objectives. Old goals are reviewed whether they have been met or need to be carried forward, and new goals are discussed to replace those obtained or to add to those already being worked upon.

The process chosen by the Fire Chief to assess the current standing of the agency's goals and objectives allows participation at all levels throughout the agency. One on one, Deputy to group, and Fire Chief to Deputies type of gatherings allow input and feedback exchange to occur. All culminates in a final set of goals and objectives presented to the AHJ on an annual basis.

The message then is passed to all personnel via the chain of command back downhill to the fire fighter level personnel to keep everyone informed as to the agency's current status and its future visions.

The team concurs with the Goals and Objectives Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Goals and Objectives Category is Credible.

Category IV — Financial Resources

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The strength of the Township and governing laws helps set the agency on a good financial course. The Township's Financial Director, Administrator, Mayor, and the Town Council along with the Fire Chief annually review the agency's budget, its goals and objectives, and its capitol improvement and financial needs. Together this process keeps the agency in financial check and on budget.

The Fire Chief has successfully found alternate funding through federal grants to fund some of the agency's programs. In the past five plus years, the agency has never had the need for emergency funding of any sort, nor have they ever gone over their projected budget, which is a good reflection on the agency's fiscal responsibilities.

The Mayor, Town Council, and the Township Administrator work very closely with the Fire Chief and their mutual respect and confidence goes a long way in making this agency as successful as it is with the limited funding it receives through its annual operating budget.

The team concurs with the Financial Resources Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Financial Resources Category is Credible.

Category V — Programs

Criterion 5A – Fire Suppression

The agency met all core competencies in this criterion.

The agency has a defined response plan. The Bloomfield Fire Department's standard of coverage document outlines their response time, concentration, apparatus, and equipment objectives for fire calls. Mutual aid is obtained utilizing the Essex County mutual aid response plan.

The agency has consistently ensured that there is adequate staffing, apparatus, equipment, supplies and materials to meet the stated objectives. Standard operating procedures are in place and are available to all personnel. There is an opportunity to improve the agency's standard operating guidelines by ensuring the guidelines are periodically reviewed and updated.

The agency utilizes a standardized incident command/management system that was developed by the State of New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. Use of this system is mandated by the State of New Jersey.

The agency participates in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) by utilizing a program from Emergency Software Products, Inc. The software allows the agency to record and analyze fire incident data. An appraisal of the fire suppression program is conducted annually through meetings held with the Fire Chief and the Township administrator during the development of the annual budget.

The team concurs with the Fire Suppression criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Fire Suppression Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5B – Fire Prevention / Life Safety Program

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The fire prevention/life safety program is highly effective. The agency conducts fire safety inspections utilizing the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code, which is locally adopted through Town ordinance. The agency conducts fire safety inspections through a combined effort of line suppression personnel augmented by Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) staff. Inspections of most occupancies are conducted semi-annually with high risk occupancies reviewed quarterly. Construction plans are reviewed by FPB staff as they are received. The agency provides FPB staff with adequate supplies and equipment. Inspection personnel operate under a standard operating procedure that details the who, what, where, when and how of fire inspections.

Utilizing the information system that is in place, a periodic appraisal is conducted to determine if there is a balancing of risk against fire suppression capabilities. Fire prevention is appraised on a regular basis through the evaluation of NFIRS reports, inspection reports and loss data. Changes are made based on the results of this review.

The team concurs with the Fire Prevention / Life Safety program criterion report of the self- study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Fire Prevention / Life Safety Program Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5C – Public Education Program

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The public education program is very well established and it includes a lot of community participation. Education is provided through a combined effort of FPB staff and line suppression personnel. The agency provides plenty of educational materials and supplies to carry out their mission. The agency conducts targeted education programs with the ultimate goal being to reduce or eliminate the risk of fire related injuries to the public.

The agency utilizes their information system to conduct a periodic analysis of the public education program to determine its effectiveness.

The team concurs with the Public Education Program criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Public Education Program Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5D – Fire Investigation Program

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The fire investigation program shows a cooperative effort between the agency and the Essex County Prosecutors Office. Agency personnel are guided by a SOP that sets the criteria for when a fire investigation must be completed. Adequate staffing is available between the agency and the Essex County Prosecutors Office. The agency utilizes the NFIRS records management system for tracking of fire reports involving fire investigations.

A periodic appraisal on the effectiveness of the investigation program is conducted on a case-by-case basis. The Fire Investigation program is well developed and meets all agency objectives.

The team concurs with the Fire Investigation Program criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Fire Investigation Program Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5E – Technical Rescue

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The agency provides first responder level intervention for technical rescue incidents and meet their staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment objectives as outlined in the standards of coverage document. For incidents requiring specialized equipment or technical expertise, the agency utilizes mutual aid to obtain specialized resources from the City of Newark. Standard operating procedures are in place and are available to all personnel.

The agency records and analyzes technical rescue incident data utilizing software from Emergency Software Products, Inc. An appraisal of the technical rescue program is conducted annually as part of the budget process.

The team concurs with the Technical Rescue criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Technical Rescue Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5F – Hazardous Materials

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The agency provides first responder operations level capability for hazardous materials incidents and meet their staffing, response time, apparatus and equipment objectives as outlined in the standards of coverage document. For incidents that require intervention beyond the defensive initial response capability of the agency, technician level personnel and equipment are available utilizing the mutual aid. The county hazardous materials team is operated by an adjoining jurisdiction, the Nutley Fire Department. Standard operating procedures are in place and are available to all personnel. The agency records and analyzes hazardous material incident data utilizing software from Emergency Software Products, Inc. An appraisal of the hazardous materials program is conducted annually as part of the budget process.

The team concurs with the Hazardous Materials criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Hazardous Materials Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 5G – Emergency Medical Services

Not applicable. The agency is not charged with and does not provide any level of out of hospital emergency medical care.

Criterion 5H – Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response

Not applicable. The agency is not charged with developing domestic preparedness planning or response. This responsibility is carried by the Office of Emergency Management for the township.

Criterion 5I – Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting Services

Not applicable. The agency does not have any aviation infrastructure that would require them to provide aviation rescue or fire fighting services.

Criterion 5J – Marine and Shipboard Rescue and Fire Fighting Services

Not applicable. The agency does not have any marine or shipboard firefighting infrastructure that would require them to provide marine and shipboard rescue or fire fighting services.

Criterion 5K – Other Programs

Not applicable. The agency does not have any other programs other than already discussed and validated.

Category VI — Physical Resources

The department met all the core competencies in this category.

The agency has done a commendable job upgrading apparatus to the current NFPA standard. The agency also takes great pride in their equipment and this is demonstrated by care and maintenance the fleet vehicles receive.

The agency has an effective capital improvement program. The program includes radios, apparatus, and remodeling of stations and other necessary capital needs.

Facility planning is also done in a systematic fashion in that the needs of each station is budgeted and planned for through the normal budget formulation and capital planning process.

The team concurs with the Physical Resource Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Physical Resources Category is Credible.

Category VII — Human Resources

The agency met all core competencies in this category.

The fire agency works with the township personnel director to perform all necessary human resource functions. The township's human resource program is adequately staffed to accomplish the agency's mission, goals, and objectives.

The agency and the township's personnel director work together to ensure that an efficient and effective program is being carried out in recruitment, promotions, payroll, compensation, risk management, health & safety and employees assistance programs.

Human Resource activities are consistent with the mission and goals of the organization. All hiring and promotional practices are dealt with in a joint manner between the fire agency and the Human Resources department, which appears to be an effective system. All legal mandates are being met and State law is being followed. There are documented personnel policies and procedures guiding both administration and personnel behavior.

The Human Resources Department provides new members a three (3) day orientation to Township policy and procedures. After the three (3) day orientation, new employees receive a six (6) week orientation by the Fire Department focusing on agency specific operations, policies, and procedures. Newly hired or promoted employees have a one (1) year probationary period during which time they must demonstrate the proper knowledge, skills, and ability for the position. New recruits are given quarterly performance evaluations and the results are documented on a checklist.

Language identifying the prohibition of racial, sexual, disability harassment is present in material provided to the employee and the Township's administrative regulations and personnel policies are available to all members at all times via the city's intranet system.

An adequate number of personnel for recruitment and promotional examinations are available. There is no evidence of a poor working environment (e.g. high turnover rate). Exit interviews are conducted with employees upon submission of their resignation or at termination. The agency maintains a list of employee certifications and special skills that allow a person with one glance to determine what certifications an individual holds.

The Township has a well-developed risk management program that works closely with all city agencies including the fire department. Information on workplace injuries is collected and analyzed. Annual statistical information is available to employees. Documented periodic training and annual station inspections provide an adequate means of accident prevention.

The agency adequately described each criterion and performance in Category VII and the descriptions were adequately supported by valid reference material, which were available through the reference library and numerous exhibits. The appraisals for each criterion and performance indicator adequately addressed issues that were raised.

The team concurs with the Human Resources Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Human Resource Category is Credible.

Category VIII — Training and Competency

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The training program is well established and includes processes to identify training needs. The program is consistent with the agency's mission and conforms to State mandates. Additional topics are included in a monthly training schedule that includes objectives to be completed on a daily basis. Training reports are completed electronically allowing for periodic tracking of individual and company performance. Safety is a high priority and nationally recognized training materials and standards are used. The agency conducts semi-annual live burn training at the Middlesex Fire Academy. This is a great opportunity, one that should be capitalized on and continued.

The training program is operating effectively but there is an opportunity to expand the current inventory of educational resources and provide more access to industry periodicals on a more programmed basis. There is also an opportunity to identify the minimum levels of training required for each position within the organization. Additionally, there is an opportunity to rebuild a training tower at one of the agency's fire stations. The feasibility of rebuilding the training tower should be evaluated and included in the agency's long-range plans.

The team concurs with the Training and Competency Category report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Training and Competency Category is Credible.

Category IX — Essential Resources

Criterion 9A – Water Supply

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The agency maintains a proactive working relationship with the Public Works Department. Agency personnel play an integral role in the periodic testing and maintenance of the Town's hydrants. The water distribution system is gravity fed with minimum flow requirements being easily met. As part of the development review process, fire flows are assessed to ensure adequate system design. The agency is benefited by hydrant spacing of 300' in the newer areas with 500' being the longest distance to any structure.

An opportunity exists to strengthen the program by having agency personnel periodically evaluate available pressures in the system. The agency should also seek to develop a method for better identifying hydrants that are out of service or in need of maintenance. The agency should also develop a plan to ensure that the most up to date hydrant maps are available in the apparatus bay of each station and on each response apparatus. Their SOP for available water supply should also be updated to include the available alternatives in the Town.

The team concurs with the Water Supply criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Water Supply Criterion is Credible.

Criterion 9B – Communications Systems

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

Dispatch services are provided under the general direction of the Police Department. The current Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system allows for key data elements to be captured and reviewed on a periodic basis. The communication center is relatively adequate and well designed to allow for a good flow of information. The CAD system and related components are surge protected and serviced by an uninterruptable electrical power supply. The agency has recently implemented an MOU to clarify that dispatchers will follow the agency's SOP for communications. Dispatchers receive continuing training and receive adequate supervision and management.

An opportunity exists to better align the CAD system clock with the 911 system clock. This procedure will help in accurately evaluating the call processing time.

The team concurs with the Communications Systems criterion report of the self-study, its appraisal and action plan.

The overall performance rating for the Communications Systems criterion is Credible.

Criterion 9C & D – Administrative Services & Office Systems

The department met all core competencies in this criterion.

The agency's office and administrative support systems are highly effective and represent a proactive approach to keep up with the latest available technology. The management process in place allows for an efficient flow of information from the top down as well as from the bottom up. The agency relies very heavily on their two administrative support personnel who have faithfully provided exceptional service for many years. The agency has seized the opportunity to implement several key pieces of technology to better monitor their activities and provide for communications throughout the agency.

An opportunity exists to expand on the agency's technology by integrating computers into the response apparatus. Information that is currently only available in hard copy can be better assimilated in electronic form and available on responding fire apparatus.

The team concurs with the Administrative Services and Office Systems criterion report of the self-study, its appraisals and action plans.

The overall performance rating for Administrative Services and Office Systems Criterion is Credible.

Category X — External Systems Relationships

The department met all core competencies in this category.

The agency is proactive in maintaining and attracting opportunities for additional external system relationships. The agency participates in the Essex County and State of New Jersey mutual aid plan. This system provides a wealth of resources to Bloomfield Fire Department as well as other agencies. The agency is also actively engaged in local and State associations that help provide the necessary networking to help develop external relationships that strengthen the agency.

The agency maintains mutual aid agreements with other fire departments in Essex County that provide apparatus and personnel to assist with meeting the response criteria outlined in the Standard of Cover document. In addition, agreements have been created for the resources that the town cannot provide such as Hazardous Materials response to the Technician level, Urban Search and Rescue and Confined Space. All of these agreements are long-term agreements that are evaluated annually and rewritten every four years.

The Strategic Plan encompasses the above external relationships within the structure of the organization and these relationships are correlated into the agency's mission, operations, and cost effectiveness.

A conflict resolution policy is not in place but is being discussed for the mutual aid plan to have a formal policy to address this need.

The agency plans to continue to maintain, evaluate, and create external relationships as appropriate. The agency's initiative to work with and develop these relationships is a statement to the organization's credibility.

The team concurs with the External Systems Relationships criterion report of the self-study, its appraisals and action plans.

The overall performance rating for the External Systems Relations Category is Credible.

Bloomfield Fire Department

Organizational Chart

