



Fire Chief Search  
Staff & Volunteer Survey  
April 6, 2023

12 responses and the results are as follows:

1. How should we perform candidate searches?
  - a. Internally – 4
  - b. Externally – 1
  - c. Both – 8
  
2. Should the candidate live in district?
  - a. Yes – 6
  - b. No – 4
    - a. If no, what is the max time allowance in order for the Chief to respond to the station if they live outside of the district?
      1. 20 minutes – 4
      2. 30 minutes – 1
      3. 40 minutes – 1
      4. 60 minutes – 1
      5. Over 60 minutes – 1
  
3. What specific character traits would like to see in our next Chief?

Our next Chief should be someone who not only cares about the District but also about the community as well as the neighboring Districts. Someone who is a fair leader that will stick to our core values and has the ability to improve moral and is a talented problem-solver. The Chief needs to be empathetic, supportive, humble, patient and trustworthy.

In addition to caring attributes, the next Chief should show proficiency in both administrative tasks and hands on work and have the ability to delegate, teach and provide constructive feedback, train, mentor and build trust among team members. They will need to be able to collaborate and work well with both staff and volunteers as well as guide the Board of Directors on issues that matter most to the District. It is preferable if they have already earned the respect of our current staff and team and can motivate volunteers to reduce the load on Shift Captains.

A Chief should be a hard-worker, honest, accountable, credible, persistent and dedicated.



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4. Do all of the job duties of Chief need to be met by one person/job description?  
(i.e. grant writing, mechanic, leadership mentor, recruiting, retention, political, ALS, nozzle forward fire attack, public meetings, etc.)
  - a. Yes – 2
  - b. No – 10
    - a. Would administrative strengths eliminate the need for the Chief to play a response roll?
      1. Yes – 3
      2. No – 8
    - b. Do we need a full-time Fire Chief?
      1. Yes – 4
      2. No – 9
  
5. Please rank the following list of qualifications in order of importance:
  1. Applicable operational leadership experience
  2. Paramedic
  3. Fire service leadership mentoring experience
  4. Mountain all-hazards leadership experience
  5. Fire service leadership training
  6. Urban/Wildland Interface management experience
  7. Degree in emergency management
  8. Proven success business management
  9. Engine boss
  10. Chief experience
  11. Grant writing expertise
  12. MBA
  
6. Please rank the following experience/attributes in order of importance:
  1. Working with combination departments
  2. Establishing cooperation with local municipality/county/federal and other local jurisdictions
  3. Leading volunteers



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4. Board of Directors/committee-based governance
  5. Proven experience with volunteer recruitment and retention
  6. Community risk reduction 1
  7. Mechanical aptitude
  8. Public education
  9. Diesel mechanic
  10. Fund raising
  11. Politician
  12. CEO
7. Please list anything else you believe is of importance in the search for our next Fire Chief:

Experience is a MUST! In addition to the options provided above, staff and volunteers alike wanted to see the next Chief experienced in the following fields:

- a. EMS calls as a Paramedic and ensuring quality patient care
- b. Supervision
- c. Command (on both structure and wildland fire)
- d. Delivering public education on fire prevention, safety and mitigation
- e. Communicating and coordinating response and training with neighboring agencies
- f. Fundraising
- g. Budget management
- h. Establishing, approving and implementing standard operating procedures and guidelines

The Chief needs to inspire people to stay, people to join, and people to put in effort. They need to handle all types of personalities well and not get distracted with trivial issues. Nederland has countless different opinions, with different levels of energy and we need to find someone who will not disenfranchise the public in the face of large event but be able to accurately show how Nederland Fire did the correct and responsible actions based on our abilities.

Most importantly, the staff and volunteers need someone who is going to stay and invest their knowledge, time and energy in the District.

**Response 1**

1. Should we perform candidates searches? Internally first and then if that fails, we open it up externally.

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2. Should the candidate live in district? Yes

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3. What specific character traits would you like to see in a chief?

-truly cares about the community of Nederland and neighboring districts (that's why preferrably they live in district).

-deeply cares about helping people in our community

-someone who can or already has earned the respect of our staff and team.

-proven track record as a hard worker but also knows how and when to delegate work

-honest, accountable and empathetic

-inspiring leadership qualities

-willing to teach and provide constructive feedback

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4a. Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description?

No, in fact the new chief will need to have the ability to effectively delegate many of the things we need to get done. No one person can do everything. But with good leadership and delegation, we can get these things done as a team.

4b. Would administrative strengths eliminate the need for them to play a response roll? No. I think the long term chief needs to have the ability to respond to calls if needed especially when we are short staffed or it's a big call. The Chief needs to be able to take Command as needed on certain calls.

4c. Do we need a full-time fire chief? Probabaly yes. We need the Chief to delegate some work that needs to get done to other staff and volunteers.

In addition, I think we need a hands on chief that is not only willing to perform adminstrative tasks but to also get their hands dirty training staff, working/coordinating with other agencies, hiring the correct personnel for building and apparatus issues, and running calls as needed.

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5. Rank the qualifications:

Top 3:

-Paramedic

-Applicable Operational Leadership experience

-Fire Service Leadership Training

Bottom 3:

-Mountain All-hazards leadership experience

-Proven Successful Business management

-MBA

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6. Rank the following experience/attributes

Top 3:

- Experience leading Volunteers
- Experience with combination departments
- Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.

Bottom 3:

- Diesel Mechanic
- CEO
- Politician

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7. Please list other qualifications or attributes not included in above list.

- Experience leading EMS calls as a Paramedic and ensuring quality patient care and transport along with safety of staff and volunteers.
- Experience as supervisor, command, and control of structure and wildland fire, rescue, and EMS operations.
- Experience leading, managing, and training fire department staff and volunteer firefighters.
- Ensures department staff and volunteers are provided an adequate amount of regular training opportunities necessary to be a department filled with proficient and effective first responders.
- Ensures each staff and volunteer member is held to a consistent set of standards, values, and job requirements that will make us an effective emergency response team.
- Experience with delivering public education on fire prevention, safety, and mitigation.
- Fundraising and budget management experience.
- Experience with communicating and coordinating response and training with neighboring agencies and fire departments.
- Skilled at communicating and collaborating with regional, state and federal authorities as needed.
- Experience establishing, approving, and communicating standard operating procedures and guidelines.
- Effective written, verbal, and listening communications skills.
- Ability to solve conflict and problems and make timely decisions.
- Ability to research and hire the right contractors or personnel to repair department apparatus as well as handle building maintenance issues as needed.
- Ability to delegate work as needed to the right staff and volunteers.

## Response 2

1. Should we perform candidate searches? **Both**
2. a. Should the candidate live. **Preference for within 20 minutes. Not reasonable to have someone long term commuting from Highland Ranch everyday**
3. What Specific character traits that you would like to see in a chief? **A reasonable support person who can admit when they are in the wrong.**
4. a. Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description? i.e: grant writing; mechanic; leadership mentor; recruiting; retention; political; ALS; nozzle forward fire attack; etc; public meetings; etc. **ALS and basic fire attack should be mandatory, being that we are a rural department with few resources. Everything else is important, however if they cannot do a specific need task (grant writing, mechanic, etc than those specific duties should be assigned to make sure they are covered**
  - b. would administrative strengths eliminate need for them to play a response roll? i.e. would an amazing grant writer who has published books on fire service leadership or is an emergency vehicle repair technician? **Not for such a small rural department**
  - c. do we need a full-time fire chief?  
**Yes. If not, the budgeted salary should be split among the employees that are picking up the excess work of not having a chief (captains/admin staff)**

Please rank your top three qualifications

**Paramedic**  
**Applicable Operational Leadership experience**  
**Mountain All-hazards leadership experience**

Please Rank the following experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important)

Experience with combination departments **3**  
Experience with Pub Ed **Least(more of other members of the department to do besides budget presentations)**  
Mechanical apptitude(I think this includes diesel mechanic) **2 (if a mechanic position is not created)**  
CEO **3rd least**  
Politician **2nd least (hard to get members to stand behind and support a politician)**  
Proven Experience with volunteer recruitment and retainment **1**

Please list other Qualifications or attributes not included in the above list:

### **Response 3**

1) external hire

2) in district or 30 min response to Ned

3) a fair leader

4) i see it as more of a political position. leadership, public meeting type of job. but will need to be capable of running calls

5) strong paramedic and/or fire background a must

6) doesn't need to be full time but if not full time there needs to be another position for mechanic and admin

#### Response 4

1) Preference for internal candidate, largely because we already have an internal candidate(s) with strong experience in the district, and who bring(s) no surprises or risk in terms of their commitment to the district. Plus, why spend thousands of dollars to recruit someone whom we do not know if we already trust existing internal candidate(s)?

2) Strong preference that the Chief live in district.

3) Character traits that I favor would be:

a) Ability to motivate, train, mentor, and build trust among team members

b) Unquestionable experience & credibility as Fire/EMS professional

c) Empathy for community members

d) Empathy for volunteers

e) Willingness to learn when to do, and when to delegate

4a) I think a Chief needs to have knowledge of how to get all parts of the Chief's job done, but does not necessarily need to be the day-to-day point person for every task. That means that the Chief needs to be able to delegate certain tasks to others who are particularly skilled at grant writing, recruiting, nozzle-training, etc... while taking ultimate responsibility for outcomes. So, the Chief should be able to delegate well, and perhaps also should be able to hire the right contractors to get some things done.

4b) I think the Chief role should be full-time even if administrative tasks do not add up to a full-time job.

A pure administrator does not sound like a good solution. Example: an awesome grant-writer who has published books but has little knowledge of apparatus and no actual patient care experience would not be a good Chief for us.

I think, ideally, we need a Chief who (a) understands all the responsibilities and administrative work of the Chief role, (b) performs a portion of it and delegates well for the rest, (c)



can run calls and take command as needed, and (d) can effectively hire good contractors for other important work, like mechanics and grant writers and building maintenance.

The most important skill for a Chief might be inspiring trust, hard work, and participation within the membership. And much of that comes from experience and real-world knowledge.

4c) Yes, I think we need a full-time Chief, even if the administrative tasks do not take up 40 hours per week. Maybe a strong fit would be a Chief who does 20 hours per week on grants, public outreach, and other Chief work; then 20 hours per week mentoring officers & members, overseeing mechanics and contractors, and occasionally running calls.

5)

Top 3 qualifications:

Paramedic

Applicable Operational Leadership experience

Fire Service leadership Mentoring experience.

Bottom 3 qualifications:

MBA

Engine Boss

Degree in emergency management

6) Ranking of experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important)

Top 3:

Experience with combination departments

Experience with Community Risk Reduction

Proven Experience with volunteer recruitment and retainment

Bottom 3:

CEO

Politician

Diesel Mechanic

7) Other qualifications or attributes that I favor would be:

- a) Years of experience in Fire/EMS industry
- b) Comprehensive knowledge of various aspects of managing a fire dept
- c) Experience in district
- d) Bonus points for living in district

**Response 5**

1. Should we perform candidate searches?
2. a. Internally
3. b. Externally
4. **c. Both**

2. a. Should the candidate live
3. in district?
4. b. max time to station?
5. **c. preference points for under 20min?**
6. d. preference points for living in district?

3. What Specific character traits that you would like to see in a chief?

**Integrity, communication, vision, follow-through.**

4. a. Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description? i.e: grant writing; mechanic; leadership mentor; recruiting; retention; political; ALS; nozzle forward fire attack; etc; public meetings; etc.

**No.**

b. would administrative strengths eliminate need for them to play a response roll? i.e. would an amazing grant writer who has published books on fire service leadership or is an emergency vehicle repair technician?

**They need to have the knowledge/skills/ability to respond and bring other skills to the Dept.**

- c. do we need a full-time fire chief?

**Yes.**

Please rank your top three qualifications and your bottom three from the list below

Qualifications:

**Paramedic  
Applicable Operational Leadership experience  
Proven Successful Business management  
Mountain All-hazards leadership experience**

**\*I know, that's 4\***

Please Rank the following experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important)

Attributes:

Experience with combination departments

Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.

Experience leading Volunteers

Experience with Board of Directors/Committee based Governance.

Proven Experience with volunteer recruitment and retainment

Experience with Community Risk Reduction

Mechanical aptitude

CEO

Politician

Fund Raising

Experience with Pub Ed

Diesel Mechanic

Please list other Qualifications or attributes not included in the above list:

## Response 6

1. Internal candidates first, or both. Conor/Kyle for chief!

2. Seems like a fantasy, only one captain lives in district. Very difficult to find a place but it would be better.

3. Firefighter focused, professional without being too serious. Great with administrative tasks and also proficient with hands on work. Does he need to be a medic?

4. A. Probably unless we went back to the idea of ops chief (ass. Chief?) and admin chief(chief). That would potentially work well in my opinion.

B. I think admin is the most important quality of our future chief. Our captains are badass and can handle the operational side, especially if one is promoted to ass chief and we hire a new captain. Still a chief needs operational proficiency to be a good leader from the admin side as well. I think only hiring a pencil pusher would lead to misunderstandings and difficulties.

C. For Charlie's sake.. probably. But could be part time as well, as long as the needs were being met.

Top 3:

Good looking (jkjk, Conor would be the obv #1 if this were the case)

Fire Service leadership Mentoring experience

Applicable Operational Leadership experience (versus mountain experience, that can be learned we have a lot of knowledge that can be shared)

Grant writing experience

Bottom 3:

MBA

Engine boss

Medic

Top 3:

Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.

Experience with combination department's

Experience with board of directors

Bottom 3:

CEO

Politician

Nothing else I would really put in a bottom category.

Other:

Learning oriented!! Chief with the mind of a student

Humble

Integrity

Leads by example, doesn't force their authority

Likes weirdos

## **Response 7**

1. Internally if Charlie is applying (which he is). Externally if he is not applying. Candidate searches are expensive. I don't want to waste money on a search if we are considering Charlie for the position.
2. Absolutely the candidate should live in-district, or close (like you do Conor). Max time to the station should be ~20 min. Preference points to those living in-district.
3. Characteristics needed for our next Chief: Humility, perseverance, dedication, experience, and patience (with our overly opinionated, think-they-know-best board members).
4. Yes, we need one person to be Chief and he/she should meet all the job duties as a full time Chief. We do not need an administrative Chief only, but it's ok to have someone who's getting older and might not be able to always be certified in things our younger members do easily (i.e. red card pack test).
5. Top three qualifications should be: Paramedic, Urban/Wild-land Interface management experience, and mountain all-hazards leadership experience
6. Bottom three qualifications should be: Proven successful business management, MBA, and degree in Emergency Management.
7. Three most important experience attributes should be: Experience with combination departments, proven experience with volunteer recruitment and retainment, and experience leading volunteers.
8. Three least important experience attributes should be: CEO, Political, and Fundraising

## Response 8

Perhaps too short and ill-informed of a response, but I'll skip to:

### **4c: Do we need a full-time fire chief?**

**No.** If it saves us money I think our Chief position should be occupied by a shift-leader, as long as that does not impact our ability to collaborate with neighboring districts. Administrative/personnel duties can be distributed between other staff and volunteers.

Some ideas for which we could spend any saved operational budget:

- Preemptive equipment replacement
- Raises for current staff
- Shifting EMT/FF on holidays/weekends
- Member benefits
  - Broader equipment reimbursement
  - Personal climbing gym/Eldora passes
  - Higher stipend per call



**Response 9**

1. Should we perform candidate searches?

**c. Both**

2. a. Should the candidate live
3. in district? **Ideally**
4. b. max time to station? **45**
5. c. preference points for under 20min? **Yes.**
6. d. preference points for living in district? **yes**

3. What Specific character traits that you would like to see in a chief?  
**deeply community minded and a talented problem solver.**

4. a. Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description? i.e: grant writing; mechanic; leadership mentor; recruiting; retention; political; ALS; nozzle forward fire attack; etc; public meetings; etc.  
**Admin talents can preclude operational skills and the reverse.**

b. would administrative strengths eliminate need for them to play a response roll? i.e. would an amazing grant writer who has published books on fire service leadership or is an emergency vehicle repair technician?

c. do we need a full-time fire chief?

**No, we are in a great place operationally. A part-time admin chief who is a talented grant writer and an amazing mentor could groom internal command staff for chief level leadership.**

Please rank your top three qualifications and your bottom three from the list below

Qualifications:

TOP:

Paramedic

**Fire Service Leadership Training**

**Fire Service leadership Mentoring experience.**

**Urban/Wild-land Interface management Experience**

Bottom:

MBA

Chief exp

Please Rank the following experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important)

Attributes:

TOP:

**Experience leading Volunteers**

**Experience with Board of Directors/Committee based Governance.**

**Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.**

Bottom:

**CEO**

**Fund Raising**

**Response 10**

1. Should we perform candidate searches?

BOTH

2. a. Should the candidate live
3. in district?
4. b. max time to station?
5. c. preference points for under 20min?
6. d. preference points for living in district?

This decision should be based on candidates. Sadly, the real estate costs make it hard to find housing for a chief. Some people can make a commute work better than others.

3. What Specific character traits that you would like to see in a chief?

Small town perspective without a loss of our core values. Community oriented.

4. a. Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description? i.e: grant writing; mechanic; leadership mentor; recruiting; retention; political; ALS; nozzle forward fire attack; etc; public meetings; etc.

No. Certain duties could certainly be filled by others.

b. would administrative strengths eliminate need for them to play a response roll? i.e. would an amazing grant writer who has published books on fire service leadership or is an emergency vehicle repair technician?

These are both skills I do not expect the Chief to have but are two things the department could benefit from.

- c. do we need a full-time fire chief?

Hard to say. It seems that a part time or flexible work schedule for a chief would open the position up to more candidates.

Please rank your top three qualifications and your bottom three from the list below

**#1 Applicable Operational Leadership experience (Urban/Wild-land Interface management Experience & Mountain All-hazards leadership experience)**

**#2 Fire Service Mentoring experience.**

**#3 Fire Service Leadership Training**

Please Rank the following experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important)

Attributes:

**Top Three:**

**Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.**

**Experience with combination departments**

**Experience with Board of Directors/Committee based Governance.**

**Bottom Three:**

**CEO**

**Politician**

**Fund Raising**

Please list other Qualifications or attributes not included in the above list:

Team builder, Commitment to safety, equipment and training. Managing an effective department appropriate for town and greater district.

## Response 11

Should we perform candidate searches?

- Both, open to all not sure what this is called.

Should the candidate live in district?

- Does not matter, but max time to station should be under 1 hour. I think this question can't be fully answered unless we know the expected services/duties we expect from the new Chief. If the new Chief is expected to cover while Paramedic on duty transports then they need to be in district and close, or they will need to set up a method to delegate coverage. Overhead support for large events can be managed with current officers or pull from Boulder County partners.

What Specific character traits that you would like to see in a chief?

- Primarily a good leader who can continue the significantly improved moral of late. Someone who will work well with the career staff is critical. Someone who comes in with an agenda will not work. The new person needs to be good at motivating volunteers for we need to reduce load on the shift captains.

Do all the job duties of chief all need to be met by one person/job description? i.e: grant writing; mechanic; leadership mentor; recruiting; retention; political; ALS; nozzle forward fire attack; etc; public meetings; etc.

- 100% absolutely not. The Chief should not be responsible for mechanic duties. Depending on what model we see going forward the new Chief may need to be ALS and Fire certified. But if the department grows to the point where that is not necessary we should not choose the Chief on that short term goal. Obviously we need the Chief to have grant writing experience and interface well with public meetings. Since the Chief is responsible to set the outward view of the department the new Chief needs to have good rapport with the community or the ability to develop it. The new Chief will need to excel with leadership, mentoring, recruiting and retention of volunteers.

Would administrative strengths eliminate need for them to play a response roll?

- There are very few fire unicorns out there to fill the shift captain positions. I think there are even fewer chief fire unicorns. I think we need to understand we will get someone who excels at one and is good at the other. If the person is excellent at administrative aspects they will most likely be able to delegate the response roll. If we only pull in someone who has a response roll then we will not adequately grow as a department.

Do we need a full-time fire chief?

- If the position is only for administrative reasons maybe not? I don't know how much time/effort it will take to recruit, retain, mentor, grant write, and admin. My concern is that a non-full time position drastically changes the group of interested applicants and will most likely move from a senior level person to a more middle career type of person.

Please rank your top three qualifications and your bottom three from the list below:

1) Mountain All-hazards leadership experience

2) Chief Experience

3) Applicable Operational Leadership experience

Please Rank the following experience/attributes (top three most important, bottom three least important):

Most

1) Experience leading Volunteers

2) Fund Raising

3) Experience establishing cooperation with local municipal/county/federal and other local jurisdictions.

Least:

3) Experience with Pub Ed

2) CEO

1) Politician

Please list other Qualifications or attributes not included in the above list:

- We need a Chief who will inspire people to stay, people to join, and people to put in effort. They need to handle all types of personalities well and not get distracted with trivial issues. The point of a single mind at the top is to have the large vision and see that it is implemented. The next 5 years will be transitional with respect to apparatus and the new Chief will need to understand creative solutions without excessively complicated or expensive actions. The new Chief will need to solve the actual issues at hand while dealing with the single loud minority from the public that can cause distractions from the over arching goal. Nederland has 1700 different opinions, with different levels of energy and we need to find someone who will not disenfranchise the public in the face of large event but be able to accurately show how Nederland Fire did the correct and responsible actions based on our abilities. But most of all we need a Chief who is invested to stay. We can't go through this a third time in 12 months.

## Response 12

1. Both
2. 1 hour max
3. Culture of trust and collaboration
4. Operations not necessary, facilitate ability for department to complete opps effectively
5. 4a. no 4b yes 4c n
- 6.

Experience

TOP:

Fire Service leadership Mentoring experience.

Mountain All-hazards leadership experience

Applicable Operational Leadership experience

BOTTOM

MBA

Degree in emergency management.

Engine Boss