

July 30, 2007

To the Members of the Middlebury Fire Commission,

Kenneth Heidkamp, Chairman  
Raymond Caruso  
Tony Sebastiano  
Richard Brown  
William Flanagan

cc: Members of the Middlebury Fire Department (posted at MVFD)  
[www.middleburyfire.org](http://www.middleburyfire.org)

I have received your letter of June 25. I can characterize my reaction as shock and disbelief. Shock not just at your blatant disregard for the chain of command but also at the implication that you have made an effort to understand and support the needs of the Fire Department and have delivered results for its members and the town. I find that view unsubstantiated and incorrect.

Let's examine the claimed accomplishments:

Resolution of Video Monitoring: An issue manufactured by the Selectman's office and resolved after consultation of the Fire Departments attorney and a publicity nightmare for the town. Was this an accomplishment or a disgrace?

Parking Lot Improvements: This project was developed by and funded through a grant prepared by Police Chief Bona with the support of Chief Perrotti. And the commission's contribution was ...?

Hiring a Consultant: A consultant who confirmed the known needs of the Department and validated the operational excellence of the Department. Thanks for the validation but this was all well understood long before the forming of the fire commission.

And still one year later the needed new apparatus is not ordered.

Meanwhile you jeopardized the Fire Department's most valuable resource by:

- Your letter's blatant disregard for the chain of command.

- Your misunderstanding of basic facts.
- Your arrogance in approach to the volunteers of the town.
- Your willingness to distort circumstances for political points.
- Your poor judgment on critical issues with potential for public safety risk.
- Your inability to deliver real results.

You have fundamentally failed to complete your primary goals. You have enraged the volunteers of this town. Yet you claim great accomplishments and expect our confidence, support and trust. **YOU HAVE NOT EARNED THAT.**

I and the members of the MVFD deliver on our volunteer commitments to the town every day. Your commission is failing, and the responsibility to change that course is yours. I suggest you re-examine your approach... step one is to realize that the ball is in your court, not mine nor the membership of the fire department.

These sentiments are mine but I am confident they are widely shared among the very fire fighters that deliver the service you were charged to oversee. If you wish I am happy to share my rational in an appropriate forum.

Michael von Kannewurff  
17 year Volunteer & Fire Fighter  
Middlebury, Connecticut

PS: Congratulations on accepting the apparatus specs as written. Now you should focus on securing funding for the purchase so that the apparatus can be ordered the week the bids are received and the Department's recommendation delivered. You have all the information you need; there is no excuse why this can't be accomplished.

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Bio Information Added By M\*V\*F\*D

Who is Michael von Kannewurff? Mike has been a fire fighter for over 26 years; 17 of those years in Middlebury. He is certified in Fire Fighter I, Fire Fighter II, Hazmat Operations, Pump Operator, Aerial Operator, and Trench Rescue. He has been consistently active as a fire fighter his entire 17 years with the Department. He is the former Chairman and present member of the Finance Committee and a member of the Executive Committee, and a former Carnival Chairman. He served on the Engine One Replacement Committee as well as the FD-11 Replacement Committee.

Mike is a seasoned and skilled "Interior Attack Fire Fighter." In other words, if your house is on fire, he will be one of the firefighters running into your home while everyone

else is running out. Interior attack firefighters conduct search and rescue operations and fire suppression from the inside. Not all firefighters are “interior attack firefighters.” Going into a structure fire is extremely dangerous. Visibility is often zero, and you are simply crawling in complete darkness. It takes a high degree of courage and calm, level-headed-thinking to survive. Anyone who has ever crawled through the smoke and the blackness with Mike knows that he is with one of the best firefighters anywhere. Mike von Kanneurff holds this Fire Department in the highest regard, and has always exhibited the highest level of integrity.

