

*adopted by
selectboard on
11-11-2024.*

Bethel Fire Department

Qualifications for Officer Positions - SOG

B-003

Purpose and Policy

In order to avoid the officer corps being elected based solely on personality, to make sure the department is led and represented by qualified individuals, and to better protect the safety of all members and the public, there needs to be a set of qualifications that are, at a minimum, the expected experience and knowledge levels for each position of leadership and management. The below listed positional requirements to be considered a candidate to hold a position in the Bethel FD organization, should be considered minimal values. The Bethel Town Manager, per 24 VSA § 1236 (9) (b), will, in reality, appoint these positions for the terms indicated below. The Fire Department will conduct a vote on available positions on the first meeting in February every two years, which must coincide with the departmental annual meeting. The candidate elected by the department must submit their package of certifications and qualifications to the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will review documentation and take 1 of 5 actions as listed below, then submit a list of candidates to the Town Manager for review and selection. Responsibilities for each position are listed in **SOG B-002, Position Descriptions and Responsibilities**.

The Process

The process begins with floor nominations including a seconding. Once this occurs, the nominees will be required to make a brief statement listing their qualifications to hold the position for which they are nominated. The member body will then select their candidate. Once a nominee for the open position is obtained, the now candidate will assemble their package including all certifications, education as it relates to the Fire Service, a statement characterizing their time in the Fire Service, including time at Bethel, and any statements they wish to make. This will then be submitted to the Advisory Board.

The Advisory Board will then ensure the package is complete, and will take one of five actions: 1. Submit to the Town Manager with their recommendation, 2. Return the package for additional information, 3. Submit an additional candidate for consideration, 4. Grant or deny any exemptions needed for meeting the requirements for the position, or 5. Place time limited requirements, based only on current policy and guidelines, that the candidate will have to achieve or face removal from the position sought for cause.

The Fire Chief and Assistant Chief, Command Officers, will be appointed to 2-year terms. The remaining officer corps, Company Officers, will be appointed to a permanent position with a review every 2 years once they have cleared any additional conditions placed on them by the Advisory Board. At any time, an officer may be removed from the appointed position per the

Town of Bethel's Personnel Policy. Any violation by an officer of any of the governing policies, procedures, and SOG's will be subject to immediate removal from their position, once the violation has been investigated by the full Advisory Board including the Fire Chief. The officer may be placed on a probationary status depending on the nature and severity of the offense, while the investigation is underway. The Advisory Board will report to the Town Manager their findings and recommendations.

Requirements

The base responsibilities for each position are the minimal requirements for membership in the department as laid out in the Bethel Fire Department Policy Manual and SOG A-007 General Conduct Guidelines. All officers will enforce the policies of this Department and the Town of Bethel at all times. Additionally, this department supports the goals of The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and subscribe to all aspects of it including the need for every member to have an understanding of what it is as given under NIMS-100, 200, 700, and 800. Each position must be able to and will actively employ NIMS for any and all events including emergency and non-emergency activities. All members must achieve these study/ courses as available online and provide certification in these as issued by FEMA.

These Basic Requirements include subject to conditions in SOG B-002:

1. Maintaining a CPR and AED card
2. NIMS
3. A complete set of all policies and an understanding of all Standard Operating Guidelines.
4. Successful completion of a Firefighter 1 course.

DEPARTMENT FIRE CHIEF – Also known as Chief of Department or just Chief, is a command officer and is responsible for the overall operations of the fire department in all events and situations. Must comply with Bethel Town Policy 105 – Volunteer Firefighter – Active employee. Must have a cumulative total of five (5) years of previous firefighting experience, at least three (3) of which were as an Administrative or Operational Chain-of-Command officer including, but not limited to, Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant in a fire/ rescue company. The individual will possess a high school diploma or equivalent, with four (4) years of supervisory experience. Additionally, this position requires NIMS 100, 200, 700, 800, 300, and 400.

Assistant Fire Chief – Also known as the Assistant Chief (AC), is a command officer and is responsible for assisting the Fire Chief in any of their responsibilities and to maintain an understanding of the function of the Chief Officer. Must comply with Bethel Town Policy 105 – Volunteer Firefighter – Active employee. Must have a cumulative total of five (5) years of previous firefighting experience, at least three (3) of which were as an Administrative or Operational Chain-of-Command officer including, but not limited to, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant in a fire/ rescue company. The individual will possess a high school diploma or equivalent, with three (3) years of supervisory experience. Additionally, this position requires Firefighter 1 and 2 and NIMS 100, 200, 700, 800, 300 and 400, Public Information Officer (PIO), and Communications.

Captain – The Captain is a company officer position and is responsible for operations of the entire Station answering to the Assistant Chief. The Captain will also serve as the company Training Officer. Must comply with Bethel Town Policy 105 – Volunteer Firefighter – Active employee. Must have a cumulative total of four (4) years of previous firefighting experience, at least two (2) of which were as an Administrative or Operational Chain-of-Command officer including, but not limited to, Captain or Lieutenant in a fire/ rescue company. The individual will possess a high school diploma or equivalent, with two (2) years of supervisory experience. Additionally, this position requires Firefighter 1, and NIMS 100, 200, 700, 800, PIO, Staging.

Lieutenant – This position is a company officer position and is responsible for crew management and task direction. Must comply with Bethel Town Policy 105 – Volunteer Firefighter – Active employee. Must have a cumulative total of three (3) years of previous firefighting experience. The individual will possess a high school diploma or equivalent. Additionally, this position requires Firefighter 1, and NIMS 100, 200, 700, and 800.

Final Statement

The Officer Corp is the backbone of the Fire Department, and as such must be the best they can be. The work they do is critical in the development, implementation, function and work of the department. Due to the critical nature of a qualified officer corps, there are certain requirements that must be achieved prior to, and during the individual's tenure. While, in some cases, an exemption may be granted, based on time served, qualities of the individual, and the willingness to achieve those requirements, it is best to satisfy the need before seeking office. These requirements cover the areas that each officer might find themselves needing on any call. It is the responsibility of all members to read, understand and follow this Standard Operating Guideline.

Chief

Date

I have read and understood the SOG-B003 for Qualifications for Officer Positions.

Sign Below

Signature

Date