



To the Colchester Fire Protection District Board of Trustees,

I would like to officially resign as the Fire Chief and as a member of the Colchester Fire Protection District entirely. I have dedicated over eight years of my life to the department, and this is one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made. It has been a true passion of mine to serve as a firefighter and emergency medical technician in my community. I have always been one of the most active and involved members of the department. I have lost a greater amount of time with my friends and family over the years than anyone on the board can imagine due to my involvement in the department. Over time the members of this department became my family and some of my closest friends. Even through the ups and downs that we have faced over the years I truly think each and every member of this department as my family. It is difficult to walk away but I know in my heart that it is the right thing to do for my mental and physical health. I can no longer tolerate the conflict between the board of trustees and the department members.

Steve, I would like to personally thank you for all of your years of service on the Board of Trustees. During my time here you have always treated each and every member with respect and have proudly represented the district. I know firsthand how much time you dedicated to your work on the board due to the level of detail in your financial reports when you held the treasure position. It sickens me to watch board members call the issues of recent months of the department “sloppy bookkeeping” as I know that it was not the case. The previous issues from this department were a direct result of poor leadership, oversight, and trust between everyone. You have my upmost respect, and I wish you the best moving forward.

Debbie, I know you walked into this department at one of the worst times in history. You have always been friendly and respectful to everyone around you. I truly enjoyed

working with you to improve the department. Your level of detail and organization is very beneficial to the district. Keep making positive changes and doing the right thing. Your vote matters and you have your own opinions.

Mike, when you first came to the board, I was relieved because you were a member of the community that I respected greatly and positive change needed to be brought to the department. When the board president position opened up, I told you that you would be good for that position and at the time I meant it. However, you have continued to prove me wrong. You have spoken ill upon members of the department behind their backs in multiple different conversations, you have lied in open board meetings and to the members of the department in personal conversations, and you have pushed your own agenda on the board and the department. These are not the qualities of a board president or a board member. You told me firsthand who turned the check into you to reimburse the memorial account and in an open meeting you stated to the members and the public that you did not remember who brought you the check which is a bold-faced lie. You have in an open board meeting expressed that you did not trust the members of the department and this as well as other events have directly cultivated division between the department members and the board. After my verbal resignation you told members that your intention was to keep everyone on the department previously from leaving due to the recent events and you then you told members the following day that you tried to contact me personally to resolve the issues and that is not true as you only asked for my resignation and you in fact displayed no intentions of keeping me as you stated to the members. Your actions have continually made myself and members of the department question your intentions and your integrity. I would lastly like to address the scheduled budget meeting for October. I understand the meeting date had to be changed so enough members of the board could be present, however I specifically told you what days I would and would not be available and you chose to schedule a meeting on a day that I could not be present and failed to even attempt to notify me or any members of the department of the changes so I could make an effort to be present. It is the Fire Chief's responsibility to be involved with the budget as I am one of the most knowledgeable people of the department's needs. It is hard to make an appropriate

budget when you do not understand the finances and the needs of the department as a new board member. Lastly, as a president of the board it is your job to ensure that the board meetings are ran appropriately. At the October meeting an unapproved potential board member was allowed to participate in the meeting prior to being approved by the McDonough County Board. This individual at one point told Captain Jenny Crabb to lose weight to fit in her turnout gear that was never properly fitted or ordered for her in the first place leading to the request for new gear to meet OSHA and NFPA guidelines. First of all, this was highly inappropriate and disrespectful and that behavior shall not be tolerated in my former firehouse. This statement to Jenny was never addressed until I spoke up. You as a board president should never have allowed this to happen. The continued disrespect to the department during recent events has ended my desire to be a member of this department. After my verbal resignation you have even told members of the department that the department should be dissolved since nobody can get along. I would like to inform you that the members of the department get along as well as a fire family will. Your actions are what cause the conflict inside of the department.

Roger Hodges, over eight years ago you recruited me to this department, and it has truly changed my life for the better. I have learned so much over the years and the department and members have molded me into the man I am today and I am truly grateful for you and everyone else.

To the members of the department, each one of you has special skills and knowledge that have been planted on you by the command staff and members of the department in recent months and over the years. Together you all can work together and thrive. Yes, things will be rough in the beginning but I have the absolute confidence you will move forward and be successful without me here. The family bond here is greater than any force in the world and do not let anyone bring you down. I truly am sorry for leaving but this is something I must do for my family and my mental health. It has long been overwhelming for me to work a full-time job, run a farming operation, and be a leader and a member of this department. I have to take care of myself moving forward and be present for my family.

To the community of the Colchester Fire Protection District, it has been an honor serving you for the last eight years. I have done my best to give the members of the department the skills they need to succeed, and they now need the public's support to make the positive changes needed for the department to function. It is time for the Colchester community to come together. The members of the department should not have to fight with the board of trustees to better the department and become compliant with governmental agency standards. It should be a team effort for improvement not a fight on every front.

Thank you all,

Jared Dixon