

**From:** [Richard Hall](#)  
**To:** [daisy@columbusnc.com](mailto:daisy@columbusnc.com)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Leadership Transition  
**Date:** Friday, January 12, 2024 12:01:57 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Pat McCool <[cool1760@gmail.com](mailto:cool1760@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Fri, Sep 29, 2023 at 2:25 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Leadership Transition  
**To:** Richard Hall <[hallclan1@gmail.com](mailto:hallclan1@gmail.com)>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Catherine Rogerson <[crogerson2@gmail.com](mailto:crogerson2@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** September 29, 2023 at 10:34:08 AM EDT  
**To:** [scott.hamby@columbusncpd.com](mailto:scott.hamby@columbusncpd.com), [rdellinger@saludafire.org](mailto:rdellinger@saludafire.org),  
[rodneycragg@gmail.com](mailto:rodneycragg@gmail.com), [cool1760@gmail.com](mailto:cool1760@gmail.com), [mcrater@polknc.org](mailto:mcrater@polknc.org),  
[firemedic2507@yahoo.com](mailto:firemedic2507@yahoo.com), [firechief@tryonnc.gov](mailto:firechief@tryonnc.gov), [brentseay@gmail.com](mailto:brentseay@gmail.com),  
jimmy smith <[jbsmith10@hotmail.com](mailto:jbsmith10@hotmail.com)>, [jsmith71879@yahoo.com](mailto:jsmith71879@yahoo.com),  
[ptoverholt87@yahoo.com](mailto:ptoverholt87@yahoo.com), Katrina Shambaugh <[kshambaugh@rcsnc.org](mailto:kshambaugh@rcsnc.org)>,  
[warren.ashmore@landrumfire.com](mailto:warren.ashmore@landrumfire.com), [millspringfired24@gmail.com](mailto:millspringfired24@gmail.com),  
[twright@polknc.org](mailto:twright@polknc.org), [mpittman@polknc.org](mailto:mpittman@polknc.org)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Leadership Transition

Dear Partners,

We would like to make you aware of a leadership transition at the Town of Columbus Fire Department. We do not expect any disruptions in our operations as we have a strong team who will continue to respond to calls with the utmost urgency, care, and professionalism. If you have any questions, please reach out to us. The emails of our board members are included in the address bar of this email.

As a board, we met with Chief Tony Priester yesterday. He emphasized his hope that the department continues to move forward with new leadership as he tenured his retirement at this time. As he shared his thoughts with us, he told us, "There can be change without progress, but there can't be progress without change." It is with that sentiment that we bid farewell to Chief Priester.

He has made many significant improvements to the department such as an improved ISO rating and managing a difficult budget as he grew the number of paid staff from 1 to 9. We honor his long-term dedication and welcome your input as we transition into

a new era.

*At this time, Tom Avoles will serve as the interim chief while we begin the process of seeking a full-term replacement. Please respect him in all ways as chief until further notice.*

Thank you for your ongoing support through this transition.

Pat Overholt

Brent Seay

Kat Shambaugh

Jimmy Smith

James Smith

Cathy Rogerson

Board of Directors, Town of Columbus Fire Department