

Minnetonka Fire Department

The Minnetonka Way 2022



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Introduction

The Minnetonka Fire Department is an all-hazards, first-response agency that protects the citizens of Minnetonka, Minnesota in Hennepin County. Our staff is made up of a diverse group of professionals who strive to serve the public in the best way possible. The following pages outline our beliefs, values, and culture. It is our expectation that this document is a living and evolving work. We understand that as we grow and mature, this document will do the same. We will strive to live up to these principles in everything we do, in every interaction, on every day. This is our way.

Why

Why do public service entities write their Mission, Vision, and Values? We do so that all members and the public we serve understand what service we provide, our goals for improving that service for the future, and the way we will present ourselves while doing both. In this document, we go even further by outlining examples of how we exemplify our principles and values and what it means to do it “The Minnetonka Way”.

You are here because you chose to be here. We believe that every day is an opportunity to make things a little better. Incremental progress is better than no progress at all.

The Minnetonka Way

The Minnetonka Way is our description of our culture and how each member of the Minnetonka Fire Department is expected to perform, act, and treat our customers and each other. We expect our external partners to also adhere to this culture when acting with us and on our behalf.

The following pages illustrate our principles, philosophies, the culture we have, and the one we want to continually enhance.

Minnetonka Fire is a collaborative and cooperative organization. Members and staff work together to ensure we provide the best quality service to our guests and citizens.

The staff works with our City Manager and Council to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the public. All of us look for ways to better collaborate and share our knowledge and resources with our surrounding partners and other emergency services organizations to build robust relationships that serve the public’s needs.

CITY OF MINNETONKA MISSION STATEMENT

Provide quality public services, while striving to preserve and enhance the distinctive character to make Minnetonka a special place for everyone.

MINNETONKA FIRE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The Minnetonka Fire Department's mission is to continuously protect and preserve life and property through quality education, prevention, disaster preparedness and rapid emergency response.

OUR MOTTO

Service Before Self

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Be safe. Be effective. Be nice.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The City of Minnetonka is committed to welcoming all people – regardless of their race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or ability – to foster a sense of belonging and opportunity across our community and among our staff. Together we strive to remove barriers to living, working and thriving in our city because we believe that diverse perspectives make Minnetonka a great place to call home.

What is your personal mission statement?

City-Wide Culture & Shared Values

Adaptable Learning & Innovation

- We support on-going learning, recognizing and growing from our mistakes, and strive to continually improve both as individuals and as an organization.
- We support individual and organizational flexibility which encourages active innovation and reasonable risk-taking.
- Every day we have an opportunity to use our individual talents to do great work.

Authentic Communication

Our communication processes allow for:

- meaningful two-way communication (active listening);
- people to be “in the know”;
- open-minded responses to feedback;
- healthy disagreements; and
- being direct in a respectful way.

Healthy Human Relationships

- We take personal responsibility for our own actions and for doing what we say we are going to do.
- We enjoy a healthy atmosphere of trust and respect by being trustworthy and respectful.
- We are fair and reasonable in our dealings with each other, our customers, and throughout the organization.
- Our work environment supports the need to balance our careers with family and other important facets of our lives.
- We are committed to our own emotional and physical health.
- We will strive to maintain a healthy and safe working environment.

Contagious Enthusiasm

- Our climate supports a workplace that emanates positive energy and that is enjoyable (i.e., fun).
- We don't take ourselves too seriously.

Outcome Focused Teamwork

- We clearly understand what outcomes are expected of us.
- Our work reflects our focus on excellence and on providing exceptional customer service.
- Teamwork and cooperation are the norm in our organization.

Shared Success

- We equally share responsibility for achieving quality results.
- We freely celebrate our successes in our workplace.
- Meaningful recognition and rewards for excellent service occur frequently and often spontaneously.

Customer Service

1. Our essential mission and number one priority is to deliver the best possible service to our customers (Brunacini).
2. Always be nice - treat everyone with respect, kindness and consideration.
3. Always attempt to execute a standard problem-solving outcome: quick / effective / skillful / safe / caring / managed.
4. Regard everyone as a customer.
5. Consider how you and what you are doing looks to others.
6. Don't disqualify the customer with your qualifications.
7. Basic organizational behavior and decision-making must be customer centered.
8. We must continually improve our customer service.

Who are our customers? Why do their experiences with US matter?

RESPECT

- Introduce yourself to the customer.
- Determine the use of the customer's name that fits the customer's profile.
- Listen carefully to understand the customer's position, perspective, and needs.
- Give the customer your exclusive attention.
- Develop solutions in terms of the customer's context and orientation - don't impose your values on the customer - ask them what is important.
- Operate within the customer's rights and privileges - become their advocate.
- Be careful of what you say and how you say it - practice verbal etiquette.
- Deliver service, not bureaucratic regulations to the customers - be honest.
- Quickly return control to the customers and move to reconnect their lives.
- Say thank you.

KINDNESS

- Use a positive, friendly tone of voice and body language.
- Use supportive and encouraging language that the customer understands.
- Indicate that you care and understand the customer's position and problem.
- Reflect professional concern and guide the customer through the problem-solving process.
- Be courteous and polite.
- Try to make the customer as comfortable as possible.

PATIENCE

- Take whatever time is required to establish positive interpersonal contact / communications with the customer.
- Explain what is going on in plain language.
- Patiently attempt to "slow down", control, and stabilize the concern, fear and uneasiness of the customer - your calmness becomes contagious.
- Don't use excessive technical language - communicate in the customer's terms.

CONSIDERATION

- Quickly connect with the customer's profile.
- Ask the customer what you can do to respond to their needs.
- Return control to the customer to "unvictimize" them.
- Consider the needs of everyone involved - including Good Samaritans.
- Avoid value judgments that reflect your opinion.
- Be careful with the customer's property and possessions.

WHY WE STOP NEGATIVE INTERNAL RELATIONS

- Poor relations always hurts us inside and out.
- At some point, it will affect the customer.
- If you have to ask if it is harassment, simply don't do it.
- It's pretty easy to get out of balance.
- The receiver - not the sender - should decide if the joke is funny.
- Leaders must stop it - stopping it defines leaders.
- Some damage lasts forever.
- Don't ever approve of it.
- If you did it - say you are sorry - don't do it anymore.
- Be nice.

VISIBILITY

- Fire stations are public buildings (*customers own them*).
- Decentralized locations within neighborhoods.
- Like you may judge a neighbor, our customers will judge us on how we care for our "house".
- The way we maintain our equipment is an indicator of how we feel about our mission.

MEMBERS

- Professional appearance.
- Consistent (uniform) identity.
- The way that members carry themselves will lead to building trust.

What happens if we have poor internal relations?

MINNETONKA OFFICERS & FIREFIGHTERS ARE UNIFIED

- Through being unified we will be consistent and thus more effective as a team
- Consideration – discretion, acceptance and unity
- Support each other
- Flexible and open communications
- Crew Resource Management
- Chain of Command vs. Open Door
- Advocate for each other
- High ethical standards and integrity
- No reason for power struggle
- Do things right
- Solve problems at the lowest level possible
- All employees are valued equally, regardless of status, rank, residency or background.

Why did you become a Firefighter?

Professional Standards



We educate and serve to reduce risks and hazards and help people improve their quality of life with our services.

We respond with excellence at the strategic, tactical, and task levels.

Our goal is to operate safely and effectively to achieve the best possible outcomes.

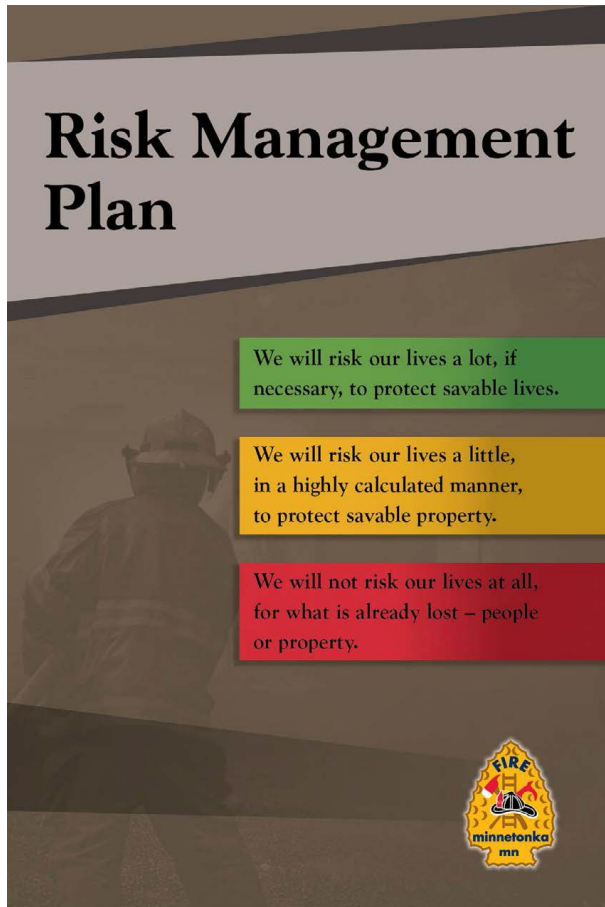
We are a professional fire department, as we view professional and professionalism as interchangeable.

We will treat each other and our customers with respect and courtesy.

To be professional, we must train like professionals. That is why “every day is a training” day at the Minnetonka Fire Department.

Why should high professional standard matter to you?

Risk Management



While the firefighting profession has inherent risks, we must educate ourselves and put systems in place in order to manage and mitigate risk as best as possible.

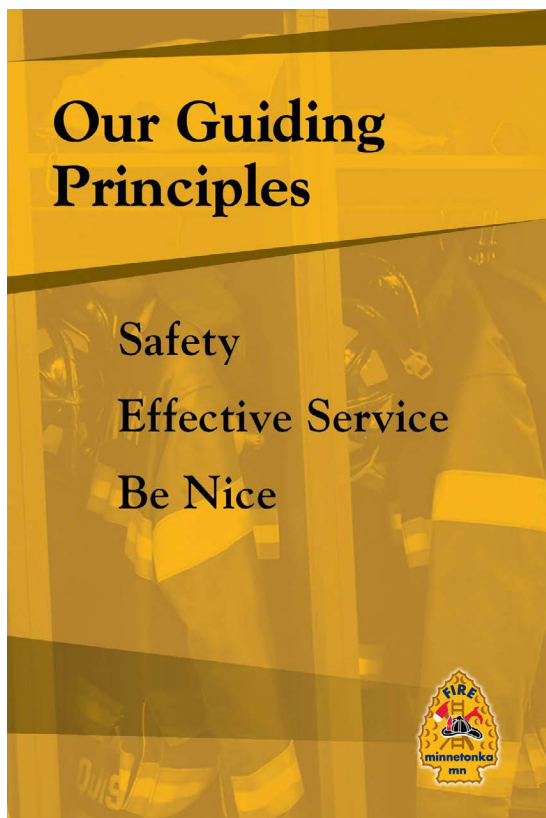
The Risk Management Plan along with Blue Card is in place to uniformly address critical factors we face in our jobs.

We understand that we cannot become part of the problem and by effectively sizing up risks that we face we will be able to carry out our responsibilities.

"We must be doing everything right, when something goes wrong." – Alan Brunacini

Who is responsible for implementing and following the Risk Management Plan?

Guiding Principles



Safety

- Good environment
- Look out for each other
- Follow the rules and policy
- Round trip ticket
- We are all risk managers

Effective

- Well Trained
- Prepared
- "Battle Ready"
- Customer service focused
- Always improving
- Outcome driven

Be Nice

- No camps/cliques
- "We are them"
- We all have a role= respect it
- Look out for each other
- Be honest
- Communicate

What do you think the public expects from us on the scene of an emergency?

Firefighter Empowerment

When to Take Action

- Is it right for the customer?
- Is it right for our department?
- Is it legal, ethical and nice?
- Is it safe?
- Do you have the authority to decide?
- Are you willing to be accountable?
- Is it consistent with our values and policies?



Good Stewards

We are entrusted by the public to always to Do The Right Thing. We are stewards of their trust in our organization and stewards of the trust that is universally given to the fire service. That trust is built on a long and proud history. We will be proactive and diligent stewards of our financial and physical resources. Our spending and use of funds will always reflect our strategic goals and mission statement.

Minnetonka Fire members will act with integrity, always courageously telling the truth, and transparently owning our actions. When corrective action is necessary, it will always be with the intent of helping our members meet the organization's needs.

How does the public view Firefighters and trustworthiness?

Service Before Self

Service Before Self is the foundation of our business model. We aspire to find ways to serve the public in their times of need. We want to predict the public's emergency needs and prevent harm from ever occurring. Where it can't be prevented, we strive to mitigate the impact through proactive public education. When emergencies do happen, we will respond quickly, competently, and professionally.

We serve the public during their worst days and times. We will do so in a caring and kind manner. Being nice is as important as being outstanding in the performance of our duties. We believe that our response effectiveness is paramount and will seek ways to be better trained and equipped for today's incidents while proactively preparing for tomorrow's incidents. Preparedness includes preplanning our target hazards and working with external stakeholders to ensure cooperation when emergencies occur.

We will work to stay physically and mentally prepared to serve.

We recognize that fire and EMS are ever evolving, and we will seek out research and implement new, safer, and more effective means of service delivery. We will honor the traditions of the past while embracing change whenever it improves our ability.

Traditions in the fire service will serve as a guide but will never be an anchor at Minnetonka Fire.

Improvement and changes in procedures and equipment will be vetted in unbiased evaluation. We seek to create an "*Idea Meritocracy*" where the best ideas rise to the top and are selected, regardless of their source or who brings them forward. All members have a voice and a duty in making improvements.

The department recognizes and supports the members' need to be healthy, both physically and mentally, and works to provide programs that help each individual remain so. We support each other's need for balance in life and work and value the support that our families provide.

What does Service Before Self mean to you?

Servant Leadership and Partners

We value our position as public servants and the fabric of our organization is to partner with others and foster a culture aligned with our values.

We embrace servant leadership and acknowledge that all of our members play the role of leader at different times. We balance the need to be great leaders with the need to be great followers.

We represent the department with pride in our appearance, our behavior, and, most of all, our attitudes.

Our behavior will always be aligned with the department's values, policies, and procedures.

We trust each other and each member is concerned with the success of every other member of the department. We will all actively help each other be successful. If a member can no longer be successful as a part of the organization, we will treat them with dignity and respect and honor their time in the organization appropriately.

All members are encouraged to seek out coaches and mentors inside and outside the organization to help them improve and grow. The department will establish plans for succession and growth. The members will seek ways to grow as individuals and become the best servants and leaders that they can become.

We understand that this is a profession and we must make a personal commitment to training and self-improvement.

Supervisors are responsible leaders who are expected to identify and correct unproductive behaviors before they escalate into a bad habit.

We understand that our actions on and off duty affect the level of trust we receive. We act lawfully and never abuse the privilege of wearing our badge. The use of our position to gain favor is never acceptable.

Minnetonka Fire members should understand that their social media footprint can negatively reflect on the department. All members will consider how their online dialogue could affect the reputation of the department. It is not the Minnetonka Fire way to engage in negative political discussion or to brag about unbecoming activities. All members have a duty to post responsibly.

Stakeholders

We will cultivate authentic relationships with all stakeholders, as they are integral to our organizational success.

We will treat all people with dignity and respect. We are accepting and non-judgmental.

We're cooperative and collaborative with our partners in EMS, Law Enforcement, and neighboring fire agencies. Our cooperation has no ego, and we will humbly help whenever possible.

Minnetonka members look for ways to build relationships and mend fences when necessary.

We know that the quality of our relationships is reflective of the quality of our ability to serve. When we make mistakes, we own them, we apologize and we move on.

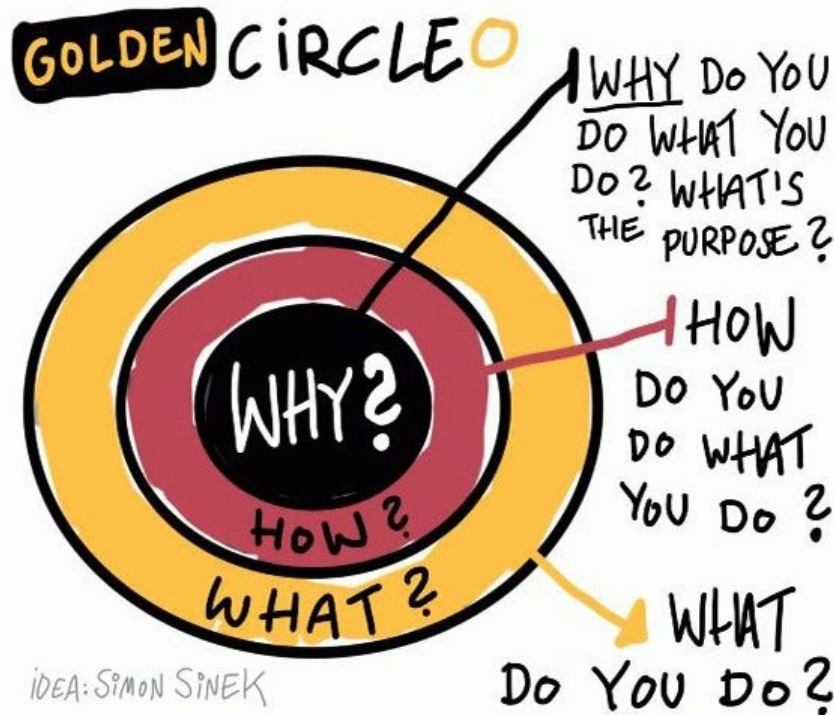
Supervisors are expected to act as communications conduits in sharing the vision of the department to their team and to share the concerns and needs of their people to senior leadership.

Why do positive relations matter with our public safety partners?

Decision Making

Our customers are in the center of the plans and decisions that we make at the Minnetonka Fire Department. When we propose a new program, procedure or policy, we must ask ourselves, “how does this affect Mrs. Smith?” If there is a benefit, then we should proceed. If there is no benefit or the plan or program is simply “just for us”, then we must be very critical of why we would do it in the first place.

As a department, we must constantly ask the “why” (Sinek) we are either proposing a new program, policy or procedure. The “why” is at the center of our decisions. If we are answering a “why problem” with a “what solution” (i.e. equipment vs. training and behavior) then we are missing the mark.



Why does the Minnetonka Fire Department exist (in your words)?

Continuous Improvement

We believe in the philosophy that every day is an opportunity to do things better at the Minnetonka Fire Department. Also that incremental progress is better than no progress at all. We do not change for change's sake, nor do we seek to fix what is already working. Rather our approach is to plan with continuous improvement in mind and when appropriate play a long game that benefits the customer and is advantageous for organizational stability.



Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?

Commitment from Leadership

The leadership of the department is committed to serving our members in such a way that they feel supported and empowered. Our members are the heart of service delivery to the public, and we will maintain open communications and feedback mechanisms to assure that their voice is heard. We must remember that the kitchen table is the place to socialize, learn, and exchange experiences and ideas. We must not allow the firehouse to become marred with complaining with no solutions or properly addressing issues within the chain of command.

The administration should be visible, available, and willing to talk through issues, concerns and ideas without fear of repercussion. Administration will keep an “open door/open mind” policy and welcome ideas and innovation.

Administration will also enforce and promote the use of the chain of command when presented with issues and circumstances when the chain of command is appropriate.

What do you expect from the leadership team of the fire department? What does your family expect of fire department leadership?

Expectations of Officers

1. Follow the Code of Conduct (SOG 109)
2. You will support the administration and each other and as a leadership team we will reflect the following conduct:
 - a. We will provide honest and complete counsel to the Fire Chief and Leadership Team on various matters.
 - b. We will address differences of opinion in a respectful manner and at a time and place that insures the cohesiveness of the Leadership Team and maintains respect for the chain of command.
 - c. We will respect, support, and implement the decisions made by the leadership team.
 - d. Firefighters and fire ground officers will hear the same message, with the same tone, without hesitation or reservation from you that they would from department administration.
 - e. You will act and handle yourself in a manner consistent with that of the department administrative philosophies and the City of Minnetonka's shared values.
3. We will provide leadership that sets the standard for others to follow.
 - a. We will handle all interactions with department staff in a fair and consistent manner without favoritism or undue criticism.
 - b. We will hold everyone accountable, including yourself, to the department's policies and procedures.
 - c. We will not berate nor belittle any member of our staff regardless of the circumstance.
 - d. We will praise in public and criticize in private.
 - e. We are expected to intercede and curtail all activity that a) is counter to the department's expectations; b) is hurtful or degrading to the department or any of its members; c) could bring discredit to the department or the City of Minnetonka or d) violates any of the city's shared values.
 - f. We are expected to develop and maintain a sense of trust with all members of our staff that provides them confidence that you will address their concerns and issues in a discrete and professional manner.
4. We will conduct ourselves at all times in a manner intended to bring credit to the fire department.
 - a. We are to recognize and accept the fact that you are a reflection of this department and city at all times whether on duty or not.
 - b. We may have to make personal sacrifices if necessary to fulfill this expectation.



Minnetonka Fire Department

Statement of Quality

The Minnetonka Fire Department is an organization comprised of people of integrity, committed to providing total quality fire, rescue and emergency medical services to its community in an honest, fair, professional, and courteous manner.

We will forge a partnership with the community based on mutual trust, confidence, commitment, and communication to maintain and improve the quality of life and promote the safety and welfare of our citizens.

The members of this agency pledge collectively and individually to constantly grow, develop, and engage in reassessment to meet the current and future problems and challenges of our community.

The Minnetonka Fire Department exists to meet the city's objectives for the safety and well-being of those who live, work, and visit the City of Minnetonka. This mission is accomplished through people and knowledge, our most important resources. In the continuing pursuit of total quality, we are guided by the "Minnetonka Way" and the following values:

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RESPECT | We will recognize the worth, quality, diversity and importance of each other, the people that we serve and the department. |
| COMPASSION | We will care about others and respect their feelings. |
| INTEGRITY | We will strive to be honest and forthright, honor the Minnetonka Fire Department code of conduct, the City of Minnetonka's Shared Values and meet the highest ethical standard. |
| EFFICIENCY | We will meet our community's expectations and our own responsibility to be prudent with our resources. |
| LEADERSHIP | We will work together to be the very best in everything we do. |

AFFIRMATION

My personal honor, integrity and respect will never be knowingly or intentionally betrayed or compromised. I will always strive, in everything that I do and say, to hold myself and others accountable for undertaking the courage to follow this statement of quality by the members of the Minnetonka Fire Department.

Member Signature

Date



Minnetonka Fire Department

Statement of Leadership

Statement of Leadership

You are a member of the department's Leadership Team consisting of Chief Officers, Captains, and Lieutenants. Others look to you to provide leadership, safety, service, counsel, and support. This document hereby affirms your commitment to provide leadership to the members of the Minnetonka Fire Department following the "Minnetonka Way".

As a leader, we will follow and enforce the department Code of Conduct.

We will support the administration and each other and as a Leadership Team we will reflect the following conduct;

HONESTY We will provide honest and complete counsel to the Fire Chief and Leadership Team on various matters.

RESPECT We will address differences of opinion in a respectful manner and at a time and place that insures the cohesiveness of the Leadership Team and maintains respect for the chain of command.

We will respect, support and implement the decisions made by the Leadership Team. Firefighters and fire ground officers will hear the same message, with the same tone, without hesitation or reservation from me that they would from department administration.

VALUES We will act and handle ourselves in a manner consistent with that of the department administrative philosophies and the City of Minnetonka's Shared Values.

STANDARDS We will provide leadership that sets the standard for others to follow.

We will handle all interactions with department staff in a fair and consistent manner without favoritism or undue criticism.

We will hold everyone accountable, including ourselves to the department's policies and procedures.

We will not disparage any member of our staff regardless of the circumstance.

We will praise in public and criticize in private.

We are expected to intercede and curtail all activity that a) is counter to the department's expectations; b) is hurtful or degrading to the department or any of its members; c) could bring discredit to the department or the City of Minnetonka or d) violates any of the city's Shared Values.

We are expected to develop and maintain a sense of trust with all members of our staff that provides them confidence that you will address their concerns and issues in a discrete and professional manner.

We will conduct ourselves at all times in a manner intended to bring credit to the fire department.

We are to recognize and accept the fact that you are a reflection of this department and city at all times whether on duty or not.

We recognize that we may have to make personal sacrifices if necessary to fulfill this expectation.

AFFIRMATION

My personal honor, integrity, and respect will never be knowingly or intentionally betrayed or compromised. I will always strive, in everything that I do and say, to hold myself and others accountable for undertaking the courage to follow this statement of leadership responsibilities and following the “Minnetonka Way” by the members of the Minnetonka Fire Department leadership team.

Officer’s Signature

Date

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Sinek, S. (2011). Start with why. Penguin Books.