

Date: 27th February 2008

ALL MEMBERS

TRV/SFU Resolutions and Chronology

Dear Brother/Sister,

As requested by the Merseyside FBU Brigade Committee could all Merseyside FBU members take time to read and understand the Brigade Committee resolutions and the consequences of staffing the imposed TRV/SFU and the sequence of events in MF&RS.

A unanimous resolution was passed on 17th February 2006 stating-

“This Brigade Committee condemns the intention of MF&RS management to replace front line fire appliances with SFU-type vehicles. These vehicles are incident specific and incapable of attending all emergencies unlike the appliances they are intended to replace.

This Brigade Committee demands that the implementation of this proposal be met with an immediate call for industrial action up to and including strike action”

This resolution is still live within Merseyside Brigade Committee

On Friday 5th May 2006 an Emergency Brigade Committee passed a further three resolutions:

“This Brigade Committee is deeply concerned that in order to achieve savings, management propose to downgrade full time fire appliances to wholetime retained and utilise SFU’s to compensate for the shortfall in fire cover.

As the SFU’s are staffed on an overtime basis, FBU members volunteering to staff them are contributing towards the resultant cuts to jobs and fire cover.

Therefore we call on all members to refuse any overtime working on the SFU’s until these dangerous proposals are withdrawn”

This unanimous resolution is still live within Merseyside Brigade Committee

“This Brigade Committee asks all FBU members who currently crew the TRV/SFU to stop immediately.

It is obvious that the CFO's attempts to remove 24 hour wholetime fire cover and cut jobs will not stop at City Centre, Bootle and Netherton, St. Helens or Birkenhead fire stations.

We ask all FBU members who crew the TRV/SFU's to realise that they are helping the CFO to reduce fire cover and cut jobs"

This unanimous resolution is still live within Merseyside Brigade Committee

"This Brigade Committee calls on all FBU members to immediately withdraw from riding the TRV/SFU.

The proposal by MF&RS of "Appliance numbers and locations" with a recommendation of an additional four SFU's has originated as a direct result of members riding the SFU/TRV's.

This has created the non-movement of front line appliances at peak times and as such is a fundamental part of this proposal by MF&RS.

We call on all members currently riding the SFU/TRV to question the real agenda in staffing such an appliance"

This resolution remains live within the Merseyside Brigade Committee

Chronology

October 6th 2004 - FBU All Members stating;

"It is important for members to be aware that there is NO agreement for the use of TRV's with the FBU..... as such we CANNOT advise members to volunteer for this method of firefighting"

2nd November 2004 a further All Members circular informed our members there was now a dispute on the TRV over pay issues but that MF&RS had recognised Grey Book rates but **would only pay LFF rate** for OIC position on TRV.

7th January 2005 another All Members circular stated that due to the amount of FBU members who were then currently volunteering for the TRV and because the JCP of the Fire Authority thought riding with three firefighters on a TRV was safe, the FBU thanked those members who continued not to work but lifted its dispute on TRV working but not on the LFF only rates of pay.

16th March 2005 a letter to the employer's joint secretary stated that the sixth month trial period was over and that the **FBU still had major concerns of firefighting with three and the future use of TRV's.**

7th July 2005 an All Members circular was promulgated with the **unlawful letter** from MF&RS asking all officers from Sub Officer and above to send a tear off slip back to Bridle Road stating that they do not wish to be represented by the FBU on this contractual pay issue. **(Appendix A)**

17th February 2006- MF&RS IRMP Year 3 is released **proposing that up to six rescue pumps could be replaced by TRV's** (MF&RS now rebrand these TRV's to SFU's). This is reported immediately to our members and the Brigade Committee^{11TH} July 2006 a further All Members circular reminded FBU members of MF&RS's intention to **continually ride with 3 firefighters as the norm, utilising SFU's instead of fire appliances and breaching Tech Bulletin 1/97.**

17th February 2006 - an All Members circular **questioned why any FBU members would assist the CFO in implementing his plans for downgrading fire appliances by staffing the voluntary SFU.**

There is still no negotiated agreement signed or otherwise between the FBU and MF&RS with the regards to the staffing or mobilising of SFU's in Merseyside, the Health and Safety Executive have also been informed about our concerns with regard to the SFU/TRV concept.

At nearly every one of Emergency and Full Business Brigade Committees in Merseyside since May 5th 2006, the topic of SFU's and their continued use, pay issues, health and safety issues and amount of fire calls has been raised at Merseyside Brigade Committee. The strong belief that MF&RS would replace fire appliances with SFU's has been aired since October 2004 after the FBU found out that MF&RS were imposing this form of firefighting in Merseyside.

There is no question that the SFU is a political tool used by MF&RS to cut firefighter jobs and fire appliances, this belief has only been strengthened by this **2008's budget resolution** stating that, once again, MF&RS wish to make financial savings and will look at **replacing second pumps with SFU's.**

The Merseyside FBU Brigade Committee and Brigade Officials have been clear and up front with their concerns about TRV/SFU's since their imposition in 2004. It is now time for our members to decide whether they want transit vans with three firefighters mobilising to emergency fire calls instead of safely staffed, properly equipped fire appliances or will that little bit of easily spent overtime keep your family and friends safe whilst they are waiting for the SFU to arrive.

Could all watch, branch and divisional FBU reps ensure that every FBU member they represent has this detailed circular brought to their attention; more copies are available through contacting the Merseyside FBU office and are available on the Merseyside FBU Website at www.merseysidefbu.co.uk.

Yours in Unity

Mark Dunne
Brigade Chair