



# Q&A with new Redmond Fire Chief Adrian Sheppard

January 11, 2020

## **1. Can you share the highlights of your fire service career with the Redmond community?**

Throughout my career, I have had several opportunities to turn my passion for the community into actions that positively affect public service delivery. My focus is to improve the environment in which we live and work. During my tenure as Fire Chief of the Richmond Fire Department, I secured chest compression devices for every frontline apparatus to improve cardiac patient outcomes. I implemented electronic patient care reporting, focusing on analyzing trends and quality assurance, so we could continue to ensure we were providing high caliber medical aid. I oversaw the replacement of 75% of our frontline emergency apparatus, including selecting two tiller trucks that will significantly increase access to areas of the City that the previous vehicles could not navigate. Additionally, I redesigned the recruiting and hiring process in both the Richmond and Oakland Fire Departments to increase workforce diversity. It is my sincere belief that our diversity is our strength.

One last highlight would be the expansion of the City's emergency preparedness. I improved the City's Emergency Operations Center through increased planning and training exercises and established external disaster agreements with partner agencies. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program expanded to include bilingual options, which was critical for our community. Focusing on emergency planning early in my tenure set the stage for us to have a comprehensive and robust response to the challenges brought on by COVID-19.

## **2. What challenges have you faced in your years as Fire Chief?**

As Fire Chief in Richmond, I faced several challenging budget cycles where we had to make tough choices. Not unlike many areas throughout the country, municipal budget challenges and constraints can significantly affect the resources required to operate a fire department.

Balancing the department's needs and those of the City and community with limited resources requires leaders to be nimble and make decisions that can be unpopular, even if appropriate. While labor leadership and I did not always agree on how to solve problems we were confronted with, I valued their input. Considering their feedback, I made decisions with the members and the community in mind.

A quick internet search of my name will result in many positive articles about me. However, the most prominent result will show that the membership took a vote of no confidence in me. Frustration over budget issues, aging facilities, and response vehicles had reached a tipping point. Though I shared many of the members' concerns, I feel the vote was premature or misplaced. Despite the vote of no confidence, I remained intent on working cooperatively with labor to resolve fire department issues in furtherance of our mission to provide high-quality emergency services.

### **3. What are you most looking forward to as you begin your service here in Redmond?**

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as the next Redmond Fire Chief to continue my career as a dedicated public servant. I look forward to immersing myself in the fire department, learning its history, and meeting the team members who provide emergency services to the community. I seek to build strong relationships internally and externally and maintain the community's trust in the Redmond Fire Department.

Likewise, I am excited to get to know Redmond and the unique aspects that form its character and community. I look forward to working collaboratively with other City leaders to ensure Redmond will be the best version of itself.

## **Bio**

Adrian Sheppard was appointed Fire Chief for the City of Richmond, California, on December 31, 2014. Throughout his time in Richmond, Chief Sheppard has implemented technologies and strategies that capture data to improve the community's emergency response. He believes that using data leads to informed decision-making for the procurement and deployment of resources to meet the community's demands.

Chief Sheppard feels that civic engagement is the essential metric one uses to determine the fire service's quality and values to the community. Therefore, he encourages community members to be a part of the fire department's strategic planning process.

Chief Sheppard strives to improve the surrounding communities, and he takes part in various committees to assist those in need. As a Richmond Homeless Task Force member, Chief Sheppard works with public safety and public health agencies to research and address the unhoused population's needs. He is president of the Richmond Fire and Police Holiday Toy Program, which provides food and gifts to underserved families. Chief Sheppard is also a member of the Disaster Council, Richmond Housing Interdepartmental Team, and the Contra Costa County Fire Chief's Association.

Before joining the City of Richmond, Chief Sheppard began his career with the City of Oakland Fire Department in 1997. There, he promoted through the ranks of fire engineer, lieutenant, captain, and battalion chief. As a battalion chief, he was in charge of the department's training program, communications center, and support services. Chief

Sheppard's experience includes commanding mass casualty incidents, high-rise fires, and active shooter events.

Chief Sheppard is a retired Air Force Officer who embodies "service before self." He believes that leading America's finest service members is a career highlight and is honored to have been a part of such a dynamic team for 23 years.

Chief Sheppard holds a Bachelor of Science in Professional Aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, a Master of Science in Leadership and Disaster preparedness from Grand Canyon University, and a Master of Arts in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School. He is also a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School's Executive Leadership Program and is a certified Chief Fire Officer through the state of California.

