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The Rock Island Arsenal: Recommendations for Better Use of the Personnel Force Innovation

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THE ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER USE OF THE
PERSONNEL FORCE INNOVATION

by

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B.A. Southern Illinois University, 2010

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Public
Administration degree.

Department of Political Science

In the Graduate School

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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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April 8th, 2013

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research paper to my grandparents, John and Darlene Etzel. Your constant help and support has helped me become the man I am today. Happy 63rd anniversary to the both of you! In addition, I would also like to thank my beautiful wife Ashlyn and my family who have been there to support me every step of the way.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There are two main concerns of the American Federation of Government Employees Rock Island Arsenal local 2119 (AFGE RIA local 2119) civilian union that will be analyzed in this paper. The first is the concern that the Personnel Force Innovation (PFI) is too costly and is taking away jobs from civilians. The second concern is that the Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) is not disclosing all information to the AFGE RIA Local 2119 civilian union regarding their use of the PFI.

This research paper evaluates the PFI program and the potential improvements that the public administrators of the Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) can make in its use of the Personnel Force Innovation (PFI), particularly by becoming more transparent with the civilian union. The purpose of this research paper is to evaluate the RIA's use of the PFI program from the perspective of a program evaluator.

As a public administrator, it is vital to understand the decision making process of a government organization. In the book titled *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations* (2003), Hal G. Rainey explains that managing a public organization involves a multitude of different decision making processes. Managers must not only pay attention to organizational culture, but they must also keep in mind the view of the public which provides additional stressors to their decisions (Rainey, 2012). RIA administrators must make difficult decisions that may affect their employees. The organizational culture of the RIA has limited the interaction between civilian and military employees, which has made implementation of the PFI program difficult. It is

recommended that RIA hire a program evaluator to conduct an analysis of the use of the PFI.

Establishing the Context: The Research Structure

This paper is outlined into multiple sections. The first two sections of the paper describe the history and structure of the Rock Island Arsenal. It is important to understand what kind of organization the Rock Island Arsenal is in order to understand the need for a program evaluator. The next two sections discuss the Personnel Force Innovation program, what the program is, and how the Rock Island Arsenal is utilizing the program.

The next section discusses interviews that were conducted with two workers that were hired by the Arsenal through the PFI, the Garrison Manager of the RIA, and the Previous President of the RIA's civilian union. These interviews provide different insight of the program from the employees and the administrator's perspective. This section also outlines the concerns that the RIA Local 2119 civilian union has with the use of the PFI at the RIA. The concluding section provides recommendations to the RIA regarding their use of the PFI. This research paper highlights a clear literature gap on the PFI and its use. There is limited specific research-pertaining to the use of the PFI in government run facilities which make the research of this topic fairly difficult.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL

A Brief History

The Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) is currently the only active United States military foundry (U.S. Army RIA, 2011). The RIA is located in Rock Island, Illinois and is one of the largest government manufacturers of artillery and support material for the United States Department of Defense (Fullerlove, 2011). The Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) was officially established in 1862. Before 1862 the RIA was called Fort Armstrong, which was the most important military building during the Black Hawk War of 1832 (U.S. Army RIA, 2011). The RIA was not used from 1836 to 1845, but remained an arms depot (U.S. Army RIA, 2011).

Currently the RIA is located on the Mississippi River between Iowa and Illinois and is located in the middle of the Quad cities. The Quad Cities is a term referring to the area and is made up of four cities; Rock Island and Moline, Illinois, and Bettendorf and Davenport, Iowa (Himsl, 2012). While the RIA has spent a number of its years as a manufacturing facility, it currently serves as a logistics and sustainment center with regional and global mission responsibilities (Himsl, 2012). The RIA is world renowned for its production and manufacturing of the Gun Mount for the M1A1, the M119 Howitzer, and the M198 (U.S. Army RIA, 2011). The RIA is also noted for its incredible craftsmanship of recoil mechanisms, artillery gun mounts, and gun components (Global Security, 2012).

The Rock Island Arsenal sits on 950 acres of land and is considered an actual island, surrounded by water on all sides. There are 336 acres of land that contain

structures and 24 miles of road. There are 6.79 million square feet of floor space in their shops (Himsl, 2012). Currently, the RIA contains 141,000 square feet of administrative and shop space (Himsl, 2012). There is also 310,000 square feet of expansion office and warehouse space available for use (Himsl, 2012). The RIA has 1.3 miles of railroad spur along with a world class building infrastructure (Himsl, 2012). The RIA is accessible by air, road, rail or water.

An Analysis of Structure

The mission of the RIA guarantees exemplary service of it's, "law enforcement, crime prevention, security management, fire safety, facility upkeep, facility and road maintenance, and transportation services" (U.S. Army RIA, 2012). Its vision is to "Provide superior service and support to our current and future tenant organizations" (U.S. Army RIA, 2012). The Rock Island Arsenal is a full service Army installation that supports more than 54,000 active, reserve components, retired military, civilian employees, and Family members within a 150 mile radius (Himsl, 2012). There are currently over 70 Department of Defense organizations and private companies that have an establishment on Arsenal Island (Himsl, 2012). The Corps of Engineers can be found on the North-Western end of the Arsenal and are responsible for the operation of the Arsenal Bridge and its lock and dam systems. The Department of Veterans Affairs can be found at the Eastern end of the RIA and is responsible for the RIA National Cemetery which covers more than 70 acres of land (Himsl, 2012).

The RIA has many special aspects that make it unique compared to other Army installations in the country. The RIA is a National Historic Landmark. The installation was placed on the National Historic Register in 1966 and was designated a National

Historic Landmark in 1989 (Himsl, 2012). The RIA is one of three Arsenal Support Program Initiative (ASPI) sites. The RIA maintains a swing span bridge complete with a lock and dam. The RIA also contains the Army's second oldest museum. Their Center for Industrial and Technical Excellence has won numerous productivity and excellence awards. The Hydroelectric plant on the island generates a third of the electrical power for the Island (Himsl, 2012). The RIA is also home to an active national cemetery and a country club that manages a golf course. The RIA also has its own self-contained water production plant.

The RIA is also the first site of its kind to modernize its Installation Information Infrastructure by replacing all of the older fiber and copper networking wires with fiber-optic wire (Himsl, 2012). This has been crucial in attracting outside agencies to house themselves on Arsenal Island. Agencies with regional and global responsibilities find this improvement extremely appealing. The RIA is also one of only 3 congressionally approved ASPI sites, which helps the Arsenal maximize all of the available working space on the island (Arsenal Support Program Initiative, 2007). The organizations that fill the vacant office space make up the structure of the RIA Island.

The installation workforce located on Arsenal Island is extremely dedicated to efficiency and consists of both blue and white collar employees. The average employee has worked at the RIA for 13 years, which indicates that jobs at the RIA are in high demand (Himsl, 2012). The average age and employee is 43 years of age. There are currently 5,508 civilians working on the island, 1,187 contractors, and 1,128 military personnel (U.S. Army RIA, 2011). The total population of the island is 7,823, 26% of that total being veterans. Ninety-eight percent of the total population on the island has

graduated high school and 47% have attained a college degree (U.S. Army RIA, 2011). The RIA seeks out highly trained experts to work on Arsenal Island, which is reflected through the level of education of each worker.

The RIA has a very large impact on the surrounding area. The RIA serves as the largest employer in the area and has impacted over 14,000 community jobs. It also impacts the local community by contributing 1 Billion dollars in salaries and local contracts to the area (Himsl, 2012). The Quad City Development Group has been a big part of the expansion efforts of the RIA. They have lobbied continuously to retain jobs at the RIA. Since there is such a large workforce on Arsenal Island, job layoffs affect the community in a big way. This is also due to the fact that Arsenal island sits between two different states and employs citizens of both states.

The Rock Island Arsenal installation rents out space in their facilities for contractors and Department of Defense facilities. Some of the major tenant organizations that occupy space on Arsenal Island are the First Army, who mobilize, train, and deploy reserve component units for the Department of the Army. Another important tenant is the US Army Sustainment Command which provides logistics support to combat units worldwide while managing the Army's globally pre-positioned stocks and war reserve supplies. In addition, the US Army Joint Munitions Command manages ammunitions and supplies for the Department of Defense and any international military sales (Himsl, 2012).

Additional tenants include the US Army Rock Island Arsenal Joint Manufacturing & Technology Center, which is the Department of Defense's only vertically integrated metal manufacturing facility and the Army's only foundry. This facility has been

recognized by the United States Department of Defense for productivity. This facility also maintains production lines that make artillery, armor kits for vehicles, mobile maintenance kits, and small arms parts (Himsl, 2012). The Army Contracting Command also resides at the RIA and provides global contracting support to America's warfighters. They also work to complete global installation contracting.

CHAPTER 3

CHAIN OF COMMAND

Introduction

The RIA is part of the United States Army Installation Management Command (IMCOM), the Structure of IMCOM can be found in figure A-1 in the appendix. The structure of the RIA management can also be found in the Appendix under Figure A-2. An explanation of the operating structure is as follows. The Garrison Manager and the Deputy Garrison Manager oversee all operations of the installation. They directly oversee the Installation Support Directorates of the following departments; Public Works, Emergency Services, Plans & Technology, Human Resources, Logistics, and Network Enterprise. The Garrison Manager is Joel Himsl, and the Deputy Garrison Manager position is not currently filled. The Garrison Manager works in conjunction with the Garrison Management and Control Office which houses the Resource Management Office, Plans and Analysis Office, and the Administrative Office. Under the directors of each department are 8 installation support offices which are; Public Affairs, Internal Review, Safety, Equal Employee Opportunity, Religious Support, Legal, Civilian Personnel Services, and Army Contracting (Himsl, 2012).

The BRAC (base realignment and closure program), has caused the Rock Island Arsenal to absorb additional responsibilities in order to streamline processes. The BRAC also assists in the restructuring of other Department of Defense organizations. (Department of Defense, 2012). In 2005 the BRAC closed Fort Gillem and relocated the 1st US Army to the RIA, which increased the responsibilities of the RIA (Himsl, 2012). The BRAC also relocated the Army Installation Management Agency Northwest Region

headquarters to Fort Sam which is located in Houston, Texas (Himsl, 2012). The RIA also absorbed responsibilities from ammunition plants from California and Mississippi, and army depots from Pennsylvania. The BRAC has increased the importance of the Rock Island Arsenal through reorganization and has made it an invaluable resource to the Department of Defense.

Purpose of the Personnel Force Innovation

The Rock Island Arsenal (RIA) has been using the Personnel Force Innovation (PFI) to hire reserve and active duty military persons for open positions since 2010. The PFI is relatively new to the Rock Island Arsenal and has been used to fill only three positions to date. The use of the PFI has been a very hot topic for the RIA AFGE Local 2119 union.

The Personnel Force Innovation (PFI) is a program that is headed by the Secretary of Defense and assists National Guard and Reserve Service Members of the military in finding job placement (Personnel Force Innovation, 2007). The military personnel are placed into an agency headed by the Department of Defense for a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years (Personnel Force Innovation, 2007). The PFI helps reserve members of the military find job placement and continue their active duty tour. Once they have signed up for the PFI, they are placed into a job where their skills can be used to their highest potential. The PFI website explains that the PFI is less costly than hiring civilian employees (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012).

Military service members who are placed through the PFI are paid through the Working Capital Fund (WCF). The WCF is a fund set up by the customer, who in this case is the Rock Island Arsenal, and is funded by both the RIA and the Department of

Defense (U.S. Department of State, 2005). The RIA covers the active duty costs of the Guard or Reserve member through the use of the WCF fund or the customer can request funds through what is called a military interdepartmental purchase request (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012). The service member that is hired for the position is under the direction of the PFI director, which oversees and mentors PFI hires, as well as the immediate supervisors in the department they work in (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012).

When a reserve member is hired through the PFI system, they become full time active duty members and receive the same benefits as full time military members. In addition to making the same wages, DOD agencies that hire through the PFI must cover all costs associated in the new hire including moving costs (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012). For example, if the Rock Island Arsenal chose to hire a database programmer through the PFI, they would have to pay the wages of that member as well as the cost to move them to the RIA from wherever they are located. PFI hires can be placed in a position for as little as 90 days and for a maximum of 3 years (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012). The Rock Island Arsenal has hired 3 reserve members for positions through the use of the PFI. In 2009 the RIA was responsible for not only paying the PFI new hire, but also for the monthly allowance for the hire, which differs by the classification of the hire (Personnel Force Innovation, 2012).

Men and Women hired through the PFI are said to possess skills such as logistics management, public accounting, computer auditing, banking, fraud investigation, legal services, software development, project management, and sales or marketing experience (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). The PFI website states that reservists are

certified in many areas such as CPA, CPCM, CMA, and CISA (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). The Department of Defense states that the use of the PFI for hiring employees has the ability to cost less than what some contractors would charge. It is reported that the hourly billing rate of a contractor can be substantially more than what it would cost to hire an army major to do that same computer auditing job (PFI.dod.mil, 2012).

There are no overhead costs affiliated with using the program such as paying the employees retirement, medical insurance, or moving costs (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). This is due to the fact that they become active duty military members when they accept a position and they already receive those benefits through their faction whether it is the Army or National Guard. Hiring through the PFI also reduces the amount of training needed for individuals because each member has specialized training (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). Workers who are hired also already contain the knowledge, training, and security clearance needed for most jobs. The work term can vary depending on the amount of work and the need for it. This means that if the tour is scheduled to last for three years and the work gets done early or cut, the tour for the individual can end in 90 days (PFI.dod.mil, 2012).

It is reported that the working capital funds are used to pay for tour costs at lower rates (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). Temporary reserve assignments, “do not count against organizational end strength or grade ceilings” (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). This means that since some organizations have a set amount of money they are allowed to spend on certain things due to their budgetary constraints, hiring through the PFI is paid from a different account so they can bypass those restraints (PFI.dod.mil, 2012). This is something that is beneficial to the RIA because of their recent budget cuts where they

saw nearly half of their budget disappear and their building repairs and workloads increase.

According Diane Scott, President of AFGE Local 2119 civilian union, the RIA paid officers hired by the PFI a monthly allowance of \$223.04 and regular enlisted military hires \$323.87 (Scott, AFGE 2119, 2012). The monthly allowance paid to active military personnel is called a BAS, which stands for Basic Allowance for Subsistence (Scott, AFGE 2119, 2012). The monthly allowance is paid to military members for meals. The BAS was originally put into place to cover the cost of meals for enlisted military staff when they would eat their meals in dining facilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, 2012). Since the RIA has a commissary and not a dining facility, they are expected to pay the BAS of those hired through the PFI on a monthly basis. The amount of pay and allowances are one of the main concerns of the AFGE Local 2119 civilian union at the Rock Island Arsenal.

CHAPTER 4

USE OF PFI IN THE RIA

Introduction

As of March 10th, 2010, three Reserve and National Guard service members have been hired to fill open positions on the RIA. These positions were an electrician, an air conditioning mechanic, and a production machinery mechanic. RIA claims that they are able to select highly professional candidates from a pool of 1.5 million reservists from the six different military components which are the Army, Air Force, Marine, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserve members (PFI.dod.mil, 2012).

Methodology:

Interviews were conducted with professionals from the RIA as well as the AFGE RIA Local 2119 Civilian Union on April 14, 2012. Individuals were chosen based on the amount of involvement they had with the RIA and the PFI. The president of the Local 2119 Dianne Scott was selected based upon her role in the article titled *Rock Island Arsenal Command Blurs Line Between Civilian and Military Labor (2010)*. Diane Scott served as the president of the Local 2119 and was made aware of the RIA's use of the PFI during her Presidency.

Garrison Manager Joel Himsl oversaw the operations of the RIA and was also selected for an interview. Interviews were also conducted with two former participants in the PFI program, Rob Habeck and Sgt. Major Jenson. Individuals were asked if they were interested in being interviewed. Participants were given consent forms to sign and the opportunity to abstain from any question they wished. A complete list of questions asked to participants can be found in the Appendix under Figure B-1.

CHAPTER 5

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Experience of PFI Workers Hired by the RIA

Rob Habeck was hired through the PFI in the area of machine repair. He was hired by the RIA on May 26th, 2010 and completed his tour on April 4th of 2012. Further, he transitioned into a civilian position that was open at the RIA after his tour with the PFI was finished. Mr. Habeck explained that he was the first person to be hired through the PFI. Since he has family in Wisconsin, a move closer to home made sense (Habeck, 2012). Mr. Habeck explained the process of applying for the position where he was required to submit both his military and his civilian resume. His resume was reviewed by the maintenance personnel for the open position (Habeck, 2012).

Positive Experiences

In the interview Mr. Habeck spoke very positively of the PFI program. When asked about the program, Mr. Habeck states that, "the PFI is great, the Rock Island Arsenal is a great place to work and I have a great boss" (Habeck, 2012). When asked if Mr. Habeck believed if the PFI is effective in filling vacant civilian positions he responds, "I believe that it has been effective. I was the first person to come on board, and there were multiple others that were processed" (Habeck, 2012). Mr. Habeck was then asked to define what the word processed means in terms of PHI new hires. He stated that, "processing means finding out if their housing is taken care of, is their pay taken care of, making sure that all of their paperwork is taken care of before they come on board since they are active duty" (Habeck, 2012). All housing costs are paid by the DOD organization that hired the PFI employee. In this case the RIA must pay for the

housing of the PFI hires. This is one of the main concerns of the civilian employee union, because if a regular civilian was hired for the position the RIA would not be responsible for their housing costs.

Sergeant Major Jenson was hired through the PFI and has been a process planner for the RIA for two years. In his 37 year army career he had two tours with the Personnel Force Innovation. Sergeant Jenson stated that he would like to clear up any misconceptions of the PFI by explaining exactly what it is. He states that the Department of Defense splits its budget into three portions. MILCON (Military Construction Fund) gets one portion, Military Acquisition (Purchasing) gets a portion, and Operation Funding (Salaries and Benefits) gets a portion. The Joint Sustainment Commands, such as the RIA get money out of the Operation Fund. The PFI also gets money out of this fund and is based in Indianapolis, IN (Jenson, 2012).

He further explained that someone thought of the PFI because the military contracts out so much labor. They believed that there were many specialists that could perform contracting jobs in the reserves (Jenson, 2012). Jenson explained that, "The PFI is self sustaining, we get one order to go somewhere and do a job and that's it" (Jenson, 2012). The RIA took the money that it would have paid to a contractor and paid the PFI to send a qualified active-duty member to complete the work. Instead of employing a civilian to do work for three years and firing him/her, the PFI can be used (Jenson, 2012). He also explained that there isn't a huge difference between civilians and PFI hires, only that they get paid differently.

An Explanation of the PFI Hiring Process

Mr. Habeck explained that the orders that PFI new hires are on are called ADOS orders, which stand for Active Duty Operational Support. When asked to clarify the purpose of ADOS orders, Mr. Habeck confirmed that employees hired through the PFI are there to support the Rock Island Arsenal until the position can be filled by a civilian (Habeck, 2012). The RIA Local 2119 Civilian Union argues that the RIA is taking advantage of the PFI instead of hiring qualified civilians for the position. Mr. Habeck stated that they are hired to support the RIA until they find someone qualified. Mr. Habeck is simply doing his job, however the civilian union believes that the PFI is costly compared to continuing to search for a qualified civilian. However according to the DOD the PFI can be less costly because the person hired must be completely qualified for the job, whereas if a new civilian was hired he/she would have to go through training. Mr. Habeck explained that his experience with the PFI has been extremely positive and has given him the chance to prove himself as a worker at the RIA, which has led to him getting hired as a full time civilian employee.

CHAPTER 6

LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES

Leadership Struggles Surrounding Organizational Culture

Sergeant Jenson discussed a subject closer to the realm of public administration, specifically the area of organizational culture. He explained that the RIA is unique because it is comprised of 98% civilians, and the civilians are not really sure how to communicate with PFI hires or what they should expect of them. Sergeant Major is ranked an E9, which is the highest ranking pay grade that can be enlisted. He emphasized the fact that the administrators and the civilians of the RIA are not sure how to treat PFI hires. The administrators of the Rock Island Arsenal have not had any issues with PFI hires, but it is surprising that Sergeant Jenson was met with such question as he entered his new job. He described everyone that he worked with as extremely respectful. Mr. Habeck explained that they were viewed as authority figures because they dress in full gear, no matter what position they are in. That seems to create a difficult dynamic for the supervisors that are just civilians.

Sergeant Major Jenson was put into a situation that is best described by William V. Rago in his article *Struggles in Transformation: A Study in TQM, Leadership, and Organizational Culture in a Government Agency (1996)*. When a new manager comes into the picture, there are many struggles that must be overcome before the manager can become a true manager and not just a new face (Rago, 1996). Rago explains that it is important for senior leaders to focus on the mechanics and culture of an organization and not unnecessary issues (Rago, 1996). Sergeant Major Jenson stepped into a

leadership role as an outsider, and although he a very respectable figure, his management style may not mesh with the organizational culture of the RIA.

Leadership Struggles in the Public Sector

Public service encompasses both civilian and government employees, and as a public administrator it is important to learn how to properly manage both types of employees. According to Rago (1996) one of the major barriers that managers face when taking a new position is the ability to change the way that they approach work. According to Mr. Habeck, Sergeant Major Jenson was able to exhibit exemplary leadership attributes due to the positive attitudes his workers have towards him. Rago (1996) also addresses additional issues that public administrators will encounter. He states the leaders must be able to transform personally and organizationally. The author further explains that managers must emerge as a proponent of the organizational culture in order to make headway towards their own leadership style. According to Mr. Habecks outlook of Mr. Jenson, he must have embraced the culture of the RIA and established himself as a team-member and not a lone individual manager, which is what Rago says not to do. Organizational culture plays a large role in the issues that are plaguing the RIA however; those that have been hired through the PFI were able to adjust themselves to the culture.

In an interview from *The Rock Island Arsenal* (2011), John Etzel describes the relationship between civilian and military workers at the RIA. Mr. Etzel explained that the relationship between civilians and military personnel was strenuous during his time of employment, stating that "military supervisors acted like they knew everything until you proved that you knew more than them" (Etzel, Kiwala, 2011). Although Mr. Etzel

retired long ago, it shows the relationship between military and civilian personnel, and how communication can break down between the two. This is where public administrators need to find a way to communicate effectively to both parties of workers in order to maintain an efficient and effective organization.

Requirements to List PFI Jobs

In an interview with Diane Scott, explained the struggles the civilian union had with the RIA using the PFI. Mrs. Scott states that the Working Capital Fund installation is then, "required to fulfill all the monetary expenses under the PFI" (Scott, 2012). She explained that it was effective in hiring employees for vacant positions but, "it was more expensive with the 8% surcharge for the military and all of the expenses such as meal allowance, clothing allowance, housing and medical expenses" (Scott, 2012). She further explains that from a union standpoint, she believes that when the RIA uses the PFI, "they take away promotion opportunities and bargaining units from the union which weakens it overall" (Scott, 2012).

When asked if she knew what kinds of jobs were listed through the PFI, she stated that "electricians, machinists, and machine repair positions were listed which are highly skilled jobs". Mrs. Scott explains that she is a veteran herself, and she is not anti-military but thinks, "veterans preference is good, but the PFI is not fair and equitable for everyone else trying to get jobs since Illinois unemployment is 9%" (Scott, 2012). She also believes that it is not fair to the people being hired through the PFI because "once their tour is finished they have to go back home" (Scott, 2012).

CHAPTER 7

STRUGGLES AND CONCERNS

AFGE Local 2119 Presidents Main Concern

The interview with Diane Scott highlighted the main concerns of the Civilian union. They were concerned that the PFI is more costly than hiring civilians from the area, and the PFI is unfair to qualified candidates living in the Quad Cities area. The union is also concerned with losing union members to the PFI, because military members are not considered a part of the civilian union. The interviews with Mr. Habeck and Sergeant Major Jenson highlight the positive experience that their PFI tours have been for them. Their interviews also reveal that the installation that hires through the PFI has to pay the housing and wages for the person. Mrs. Scott and the two PFI hires interviewed are all able to agree that the PFI is effective in hiring vacant civilian positions.

In an interview with Tracy Kurowski in 2010, Diane Scott expressed that the RIA should be able to find qualified civilians locally due to the high unemployment rate (Kurowski, 2010). Mrs. Scott also expressed her distaste for the PFI's non preferential treatment of veterans, since the reserve members must go on active duty (Kurowski, 2010). In the interview conducted by Mrs. Kurowski, Mrs. Scott said that the union filed a complaint against the Rock Island Arsenal to the Federal Government, stating that the RIA was not listing civilian jobs properly (Kurowski, 2010). This further highlights the lack of communication between the civilian union and RIA administrators.

Civilian Personnel Struggles Surrounding PFI Implementation

The issue of using the PFI at the RIA falls in line with the issues that Rago (1996) outlines in his article about organizational culture. Rago (1996) explains that administrators are unable to learn the strengths and weaknesses of their staff without implementing new strategies. The connection with this article and the RIA is that the current RIA administration has implemented a new strategy that has altered the organizations culture. Although the authors article focuses on the implementation of Total Quality Management, his article speaks generally of organizational culture struggles. The RIA civilian union is pushing back against the use of the PFI, and organizational culture is not used to military workers joining the ranks of the RIA.

According to Rago (1996), when management gets involved in the changing of organizational culture, they want to limit the power others have. The tension between the civilian union and RIA administrators represents the attempt to limit power. The union would like to control how and when the PFI will be used, and the RIA is stating that this is not a civilian matter.

Communication as a Barrier

This section of the paper details conversations between the AFGE Local 2119's current President Mary DeSmet and a Human Resources representative from the Rock Island Arsenal which are outlined in documentation provided by Diane Scott. The following discussion presents not only the main concern of the union, but also the communication issues between the union and the administration. The concerns of the union were expressed at a sit down meeting with RIA administrators after an email was sent from Mary DeSmet. The Union had many questions and concerns regarding the use of the PFI, and these questions were expressed through email to Dave Lee, who is

a Human Resource Specialist focusing on labor relations at the Rock Island Arsenal (Scott, 2012).

On March 10th of 2010 the RIA AFGE Local 2119 union met for an initial meeting in order to learn more about the PFI program and what how the RIA plans utilize the program. The union wanted to formally bargain the PFI's terms of use. The first concern that the union has is the number of positions that the RIA was requesting to fill through the PFI. The union also requested a copy of the pay charts that would be given to the potential PFI hires. The union itself was concerned that the cost of hiring through the PFI was much more costly than using local employees or promoting existing employees. A response from Dave Lee stated that the information did not say that hiring through the PFI would save money, but it stated that it might save them money (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012).

The second concern that the union has is that the union was led to believe that the PFI is to be used only for hard to fill positions (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). Dave Lee's response stated that the PFI does not specify that the position must be hard to fill. The RIA did post the job openings on their website and provided the union with the list of candidates that applied for the job (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). The union requested paperwork that showed that the jobs were listed properly and the candidates did not meet the qualifications of the job.

The particular conversation regarding the hard to fill positions falls in line with the communication concerns between the administration of the RIA and the Union. It seems that the union is still quite uninformed on the PFI and is trying to gain leverage and bargaining terms in a situation that they have no control over. Since the Rock Island

Arsenal is a DOD installation, they are able to utilize the PFI if they find themselves in need of highly skilled workers. In the interview with Diane Scott (2012), she states that the positions that the RIA listed through the PFI were highly skilled, and it is possible that the RIA was unable to find suitable candidates to fill the position. However the RIA seems to provide vague responses to the questions posed by the union. Since a majority of employees at the RIA are civilians, the vague responses could hurt the employees' confidence in the administration.

Unionized Workers Concerned with PFI Use

According to Diane Scott, the Quad City area was suffering from high unemployment rates. In an article written by Pam Kruger titled *Why Employers Can't Fill Jobs When Millions are Unemployed* (2012), she explains that employers are flooded with a large amount of applications. She states that 38% of employers have open positions in which they are unable to find qualified candidates (Kruger, 2012). It is possible that the RIA receives a large amount of applications, but only a few a truly qualified for the highly skilled position.

The Third concern that the union has was whether the Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC) was the only organization that was going to use the PFI hiring system or if the Army Sustainment Command (ASC) would use it as well (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). Mr. Lee did not directly answer the union's question but instead provided a response that listed the amount of people that were hired through the use of the PFI and where they were located (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). The Union also requested legal documentation that states the statutory and legal authority that is being followed. The union wanted to know if the RIA was following all of the rules

and conforming to all of the legalities involved in hiring a person through the use of the PFI (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). Mr. Lee responded that the legal records were not available for viewing at that time.

The union seems to be pushing for more information on the use of the PFI, however most of the information that Mr. Lee has given can be found on the PFI website. The administration is being pressured by the culture of the organization. The current culture of the organization has been able to dictate the terms of hiring new employees. Since the PFI is considered a Department of Defense program, civilian employees are not able to dictate the terms of its use, which is frustrating them. The union needs to take the time to become more informed on the PFI, and research its use at other installations. Rago (1996) explains that researching successful program implementation is key. The union may lose bargaining units from the use of the PFI however, if the positives outweigh the negatives it may be beneficial to use the PFI. A negative would be losing an employee who would be a bargaining chip. A positive would be possibly saving the union from having employees laid off in the future since the PFI hires are able to be let go if work is no longer available.

The fourth concern the union has is whether the PFI employees would be considered military billets (active duty military) or whether they would be considered federal GS employees with full union bargaining rights (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). The unions concern was that if the PFI hired active duty military personnel, the union would lose one person from its bargaining team which in turn, would hurt the union as a whole (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). The union's argument is that the position should only be filled with civilians due to the loss of a bargaining union member. Mr. Lee's

response to this question is that those who are hired through the PFI system would be military billets and active duty military personnel (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012).

Conditions for PFI New-Hires Cause Further Union Concerns

One of the stipulations of a reserve member when they sign up for the PFI is that they must become active duty military if they are chosen for a position. According to Mr. Lee an added reason that the PFI member would not be part of the bargaining unit is because of the PFI stipulations (RIA AFGE Local 15 2119, 2012). Further, he explains that the union would not really be losing a member of the bargaining unit since the RIA is having trouble filling the position in the first place (RIA AFGE Local 15 2119, 2012). Rather than having the position left vacant, the PFI is used to fill the position and help achieve the overall goal of JMTC which is production (RIA AFGE Local 15 2119, 2012). The union was also concerned with whether or not hiring workers through the PFI would violate the contract that they have negotiated with the RIA (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012). Mr. Lee explained that since the employees will not be considered civilian, then hiring them will not affect the bargaining agreement (RIA AFGE Local 2119, 2012).

The fifth concern that the civilian union has is whether or not hiring through the use of the PFI infringes upon veterans preference. Veteran's preference is where qualified veterans are given job preference over qualified non-veterans when applying for the same position. The RIA AFGE Local 2119 union is made up of many veterans, so they keep veterans preferences in mind (Scott, 2012).

In an article written by Tracy Kurowski titled "Rock Island Arsenal Command Blurs Line between Civilian and Military Labor", Tracy conducts a similar interview with Diane Scott (Kurowski, 2010). The article highlights the concerns that the union has with

the PFI. In the interview, Scott claims that the RIA likes using the PFI to hire for open positions because it takes less time to train them and they are not required to do a monthly review of the worker (Kurowski, 2010). Scott further explains that hiring through the PFI reduces the upward mobility of current workers, and that the workers that are hired are unable to be held accountable for their performance because they cannot be fired (Kurowski, 2010). Since there is a lack of accountability, if a person is not doing their job properly or in a timely manner, management cannot fire them whereas if they were civilian employees or contractors they could be fired (Kiwala, 2011).

Mr. Lee explains that the list of candidates for positions is located on the PFI website, and they will only hire the most qualified candidates for jobs. Since the PFI is a nationwide program they are unable to only choose candidates that are local because they may not be the best qualified or there might not be any available (RIA AFGE Local 15 2119, 2012). The union was also concerned with the way the hiring was handled. In the email sent from Mary DeSmet to Dave Lee she asks, "We would like to know why the union is being overlooked in this, and we ask that no other positions are filled until bargaining is completed" (RIA AFGE Local 15 2119, 2012). The union believes that they need to be involved in the bargaining process of whether or not to hire employees through the PFI program.

CHAPTER 8

PROGRAM EVALUATOR

The Need for a Program Evaluator

In a personal interview conducted with Diane Scott (2012), previous RIA AFGE Local 15 2119 President, she recounted her work with the union and trying to research the PFI. In the interview Scott stated that she was not, “against the use of the PFI, but I believe that the RIA needs to increase the transparency of use and disclose all information to the bargaining unit” (Scott, 2012). Scott explained that the union itself was having issues with how the RIA was justifying the use of the PFI, and just went ahead and started using it without really talking about it with the union (Scott, 2012). Instead of meeting with the bargaining team, Scott states that “we were given a notice that the RIA was utilizing the PFI to hire for vacant positions” (Scott, 2012). The union asked for answers to many of their questions about the PFI. Most of their questions were unable to be answered through the PFI website because you have to be a reserve member or active duty military to log into the website. This made it very hard to find out what kinds of positions were available through the program. The union was eventually able to log into the website and take screen-shots of the positions listed by the RIA.

The Five Tiered Approach

It is apparent that the use of the Personnel Force Innovation at the Rock Island Arsenal has caused quite a problem. The information provided in this paper shows only a portion of the conversations and meetings that have been held over the use of the PFI. It is also clear that something needs to be done to address the situation that the use of the PFI has presented. Since each side presents pros and cons of using the PFI,

conducting a program evaluation on the use of the PFI at the RIA would increase communication and transparency between both sides. The following recommendations can be made to address the concerns of both parties.

Recommendation: It would be in the best interest of both parties to hire an outside entity to conduct a program evaluation using the Five Tiered Approach to Evaluation. A similar approach was used by Francine H. Jacobs in her study titled *Child and Family Program Evaluation: Learning to Enjoy Complexity* (2003). The five tiers included the following. Tier one starts with a needs assessment of the program. It is important to find if the use of the PFI is needed and justify its use (Jacobs, 2003). Interviews show that the PFI experience is extremely fulfilling, and due to the promotion of Mr. Habeck into a permanent position it can be said that the men are doing a good job. These reasons alone are not enough to merit the use of the PFI program, so a further in depth analysis would be required. Jacobs (2003) describes that each program is unique and evaluators must customize their recommendations to fit the organization. This relates directly to the PFI program at the RIA. The RIA is unique because it is the only installations with a large civilian employee population. Tier one also analyzes data according to the problem. The problem in this case is deciding whether to use the PFI program or not.

The second tier of the Five Tiered Evaluation Approach deals with monitoring and accountability (Jacobs, 2003). In this tier evaluators must consider all of the characteristics of the program, and how receptive the employees are to being evaluated. This step would directly involve monitoring PFI hires for performance and efficiency. It is important that the administration and union are both cooperative with the

study in order to find if using the PFI program at the RIA is a feasible option. Jacobs (2003) explains that the evaluators must be aware that some employees may have had "previously bad experiences with evaluators" and must evaluate accordingly. Simply stated, evaluators should be aware that one uncooperative employee does not necessarily mean that all employees will be uncooperative. This tier also deals with studying the supervisory staff and how they interact with the PFI hires. Mr. Etzel and Mr. Habeck both point out that the relations between military and civilian employees can be difficult to decipher (Habeck, 2012). Since this can be due to the civilians and supervisors being uninformed about the PFI, a recommendation can be made to familiarize staff with the PFI and the responsibilities of those hired through the PFI. The evaluator would be responsible for the specifics of the recommendation. More importantly this tier serves as a guideline for evaluators to determine whether the program is being used as intended by determining the clients, services, personnel, and costs that are involved (Jacobs, 2003).

In tier three of the five-tiered approach to evaluation, the evaluator will review the quality of the program and clarify the parameters of the program (Jacobs, 2003). Jacobs (2003) explains that this tier is directed more towards the directors of the program. In this instance the RIA administration would be the directors since they decide how to implement the program. Administrators should be actively involved in investigating the cost and services that are in line with using the PFI to hire employees. One of the main concerns of the AFGE RIA Local 2119 civilian union is that the use of the PFI is costly. It would be in the administrations best interest to involve the union in determining the cost of using the PFI vs. the cost of hiring a civilian. Other terms should also be

discussed and agreed upon such as when the PFI should be used and how long a position should be left open until resorting to using the PFI. The main goal of the RIA is to provide efficient services and maintain an efficient facility. It would be in the best interest of RIA administrators to increase transparency and communications with the civilian union since it makes up such a large percentage of its workforce. The terms of this tier would be at the discretion of the evaluator.

In tier four the evaluator must evaluate whether or not the overall program is achieving the goals that the administrators agree upon. Jacobs (2003) explains that evaluators are able to help administrators determine what their goals are. Evaluators must provide feedback to administrators for program improvement. In order to find if the PFI is successful, evaluators must determine measurable indicators of success for outcome objectives (Jacobs, 2003). They must also identify what the program can do for the organization and what it cannot do. In order to find if the program is successful, evaluators must determine what successful means. In this case, they must ask if hiring through the PFI is successfully filling vacant positions, maintaining production, and keeping costs down.

In the final tier of the five-tiered approach to evaluation, the evaluator must decide on the impact objectives by referring back to tier 4 (Jacobs, 2003). The evaluator will investigate the impact the PFI program has on the Rock Island Arsenal. The evaluator must be able to measure the effects of the recommendations if the organization follows them. The evaluator can base their measurements off of their findings in tier 4. In tier 4, the evaluator should be able to determine a certain point that is considered successful. Then the evaluator should be able to make adjustments to the

measurement if need be. This tier seeks to evaluate the longer term effects that the program has on the community, which in this case would be the RIA (Jacobs, 2003).

The use of an outside evaluator and the five tiered evaluation method would help the Rock Island Arsenal become a more efficient organization. The use of a non-bias evaluator would increase transparency by presenting further research on the PFI and working towards a common goal for both parties. In essence, administrators would be studying the effects and outcomes related to the use of the PFI. The previous gap in literature suggests that both parties could use additional information on the PFI. An outside evaluator would be able to devote the time to researching the program. The evaluator would also be able to explain the program in a way that is understandable to both parties. It is advised that the RIA explore these recommendations.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned

It is clear that the Rock Island Arsenal is using the Personnel Force Innovation however, it is also clear that the AFGE RIA local 2119 civilian union is not happy about its use. Interviews with military member's highlights the positive effect the PFI can have on the lives of soldiers, while interviews with the previous President of the civilian union describe an immense concern with its use. Public administrators are in charge of their organizations operation, and most organizations strive to be efficient and effective. RIA administrators are attempting to become more efficient by using the PFI however; they must study the program more carefully while simultaneously trying to maintain relations with the civilian union. Many recommendations could be made to the RIA that might improve the situation that they are currently in. The most beneficial recommendations are ones that affect the organization and everyone in it. The recommendations made to

RIA administrators in this paper will help the RIA take steps forward as an organization instead of remaining at a stand-still. An outside evaluator will be able to set the organization back on track and help it uphold its reputation as an efficient manufacturing and refurbishing munitions installation.

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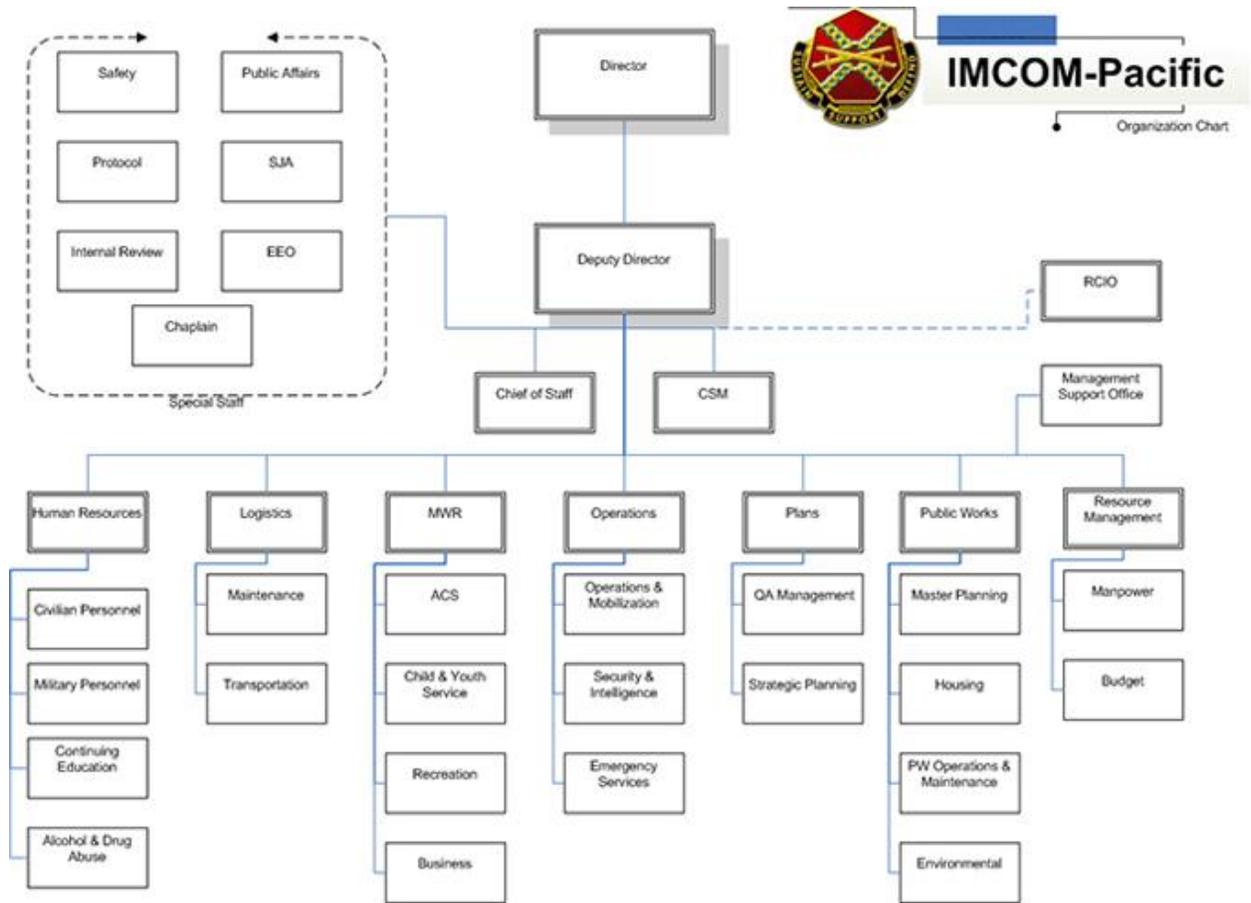
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APPENDICES

Appendix Figure A-1
IMCOM LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



United States Army: Authors: IMCOM.PAC.Army.Mil: 2012

Appendix Figure A-2
ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



United States Army IMCOM: Author: U.S. Army Rock Island Arsenal: 2012

Appendix Figure B-1
Interview Participant Questions

1. What is your current title/position at the Rock Island Arsenal?
2. How long have you been employed by the Rock Island Arsenal?
3. What does the Rock Island Arsenal do?
4. Can you tell me about the history of the Rock Island Arsenal?
3. Are you familiar with the Personnel Force Initiative?
4. What can you tell me about the PFI?
4. Do you have any personal experience working with the PFI?
 - A. If so, what was your experience?
5. The PFI was created in order to fill civilian positions by military personnel. These positions were listed for civilians but were unable to be filled. Do you believe the PFI is effective in filling vacant civilian positions? (Optional if knowledge is present)
6. Do you know what kinds of jobs are listed through the use of the PFI?
7. Are you aware of any men or women currently employed through the use of the PFI?
8. How does the RIA list civilian job openings?

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To: Johnathan Kiwala

From: Jane L. Swanson, Ph.D.
Chair, Human Subjects Committee 

Date: April 5, 2012

Subject: *Increasing Public Efficiency: The Current Use of the Personnel Force Initiative in the Rock Island Arsenal*

Protocol Number: 12160

The revisions to the referenced study have been reviewed and approved by the SIUC Human Subjects Committee.

This approval expires on 3/21/2013, one (1) year from the review date. Regulations make no provision for any grace period extending beyond the above expiration date. Investigators must plan ahead if they anticipate the need to continue their research past this period. The application should be submitted 30 days prior to expiration with sufficient protocol summary and status report details, including number of accrued subjects and whether any withdrew due to complaint or injury. If you should continue your research without an approved extension, you would be in non-compliance of federal regulations. You would risk having your research halted and the loss of any data collected while HSC approval has lapsed. Extensions will not be required to continue work on an approved project when all the data has been collected, there will be no more interaction or intervention with human subjects and **subject identifiers have been removed** (e.g. during the data analysis or report writing stages).

Also note that any future modifications to your protocol must be submitted to the Committee for review and approval prior to their implementation.

Your Form A approval is enclosed. Best wishes for a successful study.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the USDHHS Office of Human Research Protection. The Assurance number is 00005334.

JS:kr

Cc: Stephanie Pink

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Research Paper Title:

THE ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER USE OF THE
PERSONNEL FORCE INNOVATION

Major Professor: Dr. Stephanie Pink

