

Hamilton Township

Active Fire Chiefs' Association

April 3, 2017

To: Hamilton Township Council

Response to Hamilton Township Special Council Meeting on March 22, 2017

First please let me make this statement: the collective Mission Statement of the Fire Service is to "Save Lives and Property." The Hamilton Township Fire Service as a whole is a Readiness Work Force. We need to be properly staffed, equipped, trained, and supported to provide the immediate emergency response capabilities required to protect Hamilton Township on a 24 hour basis. We also understand that this must be balanced with the costs to do so. We pledge to continue to work hard with the Council, labor, and management to create the most cost effective plan for the new Hamilton Fire Service.

The following is a response to the questions and/or statements by the Township Council members pertaining to the Dissolution and Merger of the Hamilton Fire Districts.

1. The Chiefs' Association is willing to work on information gathering committees; specifically examining the Response Times and Facilities (fire stations). The following are names of personnel that we would like to represent the Chiefs' Association on these committees:

Response Times: Chief Richard Kraemer and Chief Steve Kraemer

Facilities: Chief Mark Antozzeski and Chief Greg Kirkham

Future committees: Chief Chris Tozzi and Chief John Retalis are available for any other committees that the Council feels need to be established or as alternates to the existing committees.

2. Savings: The Chiefs' Association is 100% in agreement with saving tax payer dollars. However we also cannot stress enough that the proposed new organization will be very different than the current separate fire districts. There are many operational and administrative areas which we do not currently have that will need to be implemented, such as a training division (battalion chief), administrative positions, middle management positions (battalion chiefs), etc. So the savings generated through the merger should be used to fund the areas where funding is currently not assigned. For example, the savings

of reducing the 40 fire commissioners down to five should be used toward paying for the administrative staff.

Reductions in apparatus and facilities will also create savings. However selling old fire trucks does not generate a lot of money. (As stated in our DCA Study Response document, an apparatus replacement plan must also be completed for future purchases.) If a station to be closed is owned by the volunteer fire company, then the savings would only be the leasing fees paid by the fire districts to the volunteer companies. The districts do not pay for PSE&G, maintenance/repairs, etc.

3. Surplus funds: as I tried to explain at the Special Meeting, the use of the surplus funds are essential to provide money for the first 2-3 months of the budget year, which equates to 17-25% of our budgets. We have to pay all of our bills: PSE&G, insurance, payroll, fuel, building/equipment/apparatus maintenance, etc. Our largest invoice is for the Pension payment. The 8 Districts' combined Pension payments is over \$2 million, all of which is required by NJ State Law by April 1st. Our 2017 combined budgets are about \$26 million, so 17-25% in surplus to get us thru the first 2-3 months would be about \$4.4 to \$6.5 million. So the \$4 million currently in surplus should not be reduced, otherwise we could run out of money and be in default. (Please contact Joe Marcucci at 609-807-2200 for his insight since he is the accountant for five or six of the Hamilton Fire Districts.)
4. Mr. Kenny:
 - a. Medical calls represented 44% of our total incidents within Hamilton in 2016, see attached [pages 5-8](#). Medical calls include Code 311-*medical assist* and 312-*EMS call excluding motor vehicle accidents*. (All other Category 3-*Rescue Calls* are fire department response type calls, such as elevator rescue, motor vehicle accidents, lock-in/lock-out, etc.) So that equates to providing 2753 people with medical care, in most cases prior to the arrival of an ambulance or paramedic unit. YES we could save some fuel cost and possibly vehicle wear and tear by eliminating the medical responses, however is that savings really worth NOT helping 2753 people each year?
 - b. Mutual aid calls (AKA: Shared Services): Mutual aid has been used for many years to ask for assistance from our neighbors by sharing personnel and equipment during emergencies to save both parties tax dollars. "We help them, they help us." The question raised was specific to Robbinsville Fire Department. The attached *Aid Responses by Department* report indicates that Robbinsville FD responded into Hamilton 164 times in 2016, whereas Hamilton units responded into Robbinsville 98 times. This averages to less than twice per week where Hamilton units are responding into Robbinsville. See [pages 9-14](#) for mutual aid statistics. We do realize that we send 2 or 3 Hamilton apparatus into Robbinsville for an incident, compared to Robbinsville only send us a single apparatus. This relationship will be reviewed, but Hamilton is definitely not responding to 90% of Robbinsville's incidents as was stated at the meeting.
 - c. Closing fire stations: There is a greater potential to formalizing this possibility now than ever before. We have looked at the response areas from each station,

and obviously there are overlaps. Overlaps are required to ensure an adequate and timely response of the backup units for the safety of the residents and fire personnel. We can provide 85-90% coverage of the Twp. with less stations. However, let it be known that we cannot provide 100% coverage. There are areas of the Twp. that are outside of the 5 minute response times. The only way to correct this is to build and staff new stations, which is not in this project. Station(s) closures can save dollars; however the exact amount of savings will depend on which station(s). This is why the Facility Committee will be important. However, closure of any station(s) will obviously raise neighborhood concerns.

- d. DCA report indicates \$2.7 million savings: The Chiefs' Association provided the Council with a detailed response to the DCA report with items that we agreed with and disagreed with. (The *Chiefs' Assoc. Response to the DCA Study* is on Hamilton Twp.'s webpage at <http://hamiltonnj.com/fire>)

The projected savings in the DCA report used unfounded ideas, such as adding 7 admin staff with only a \$70,000 increase in salaries and benefits (not likely); an increase of 14 hours per work week (56 hour work week vs. current 42 hrs.) for all fire personnel with no increase of pay (Would anyone like to work an extra 14 hours each week for free?); and using volunteers to cover overtime. These items are unlikely to occur (7 staff for only \$70,000) or against current employee contracts and will have to be negotiated with the new employer (District or municipality).

5. Ms. Schirmer:

- a. Facilities and response time: as stated previously, we agree that these committees will be helpful. Response time research should actually be completed first to determine which facilities should be reviewed by professionals. This would save time (and money) and only review the critical facilities instead of all of the facilities.
- b. Savings: as stated in #2 above, we agree there will be savings and we suggest using that savings to fund the "unfunded" needs of the new fire district.
- c. "Can't change": We are sorry that you feel that the Hamilton Fire Service seems reluctant to change. We feel that we have been the driving force for this change. The union came to the Council several years ago to explain the deficiencies. The Chiefs provided our proposal to improve services which is a total change from the current separate organizations. Perhaps you feel that we "can't change" comes from our persistence to make sure that the new fire district or municipal fire department is adequately staffed and supported, otherwise the change will be a decrease in services to the public. We are not suggesting that we cannot change.

6. Ms. Thornton:

- a. Ms. Thornton did not have specific questions or comments at this meeting. We welcome her to the Township Council.
- b. We believe that Ms. Thornton's addition to the Facilities committee will be very helpful since she was previously on the School Board's facility committee.

7. Mr. Mastrangelo:
 - a. Mr. Mastrangelo also did not have specific questions at this meeting, however he did state that he continues to support the movement of staff to stations as a way to keep the required personnel on duty; we agree with that thought process.
8. Mr. Pone:
 - a. Surplus funds: we have provided examples why the surplus funds must be kept at certain levels to insure that a new fire district can operate for the first several months until the Twp. provides the Board with taxpayer funds.
 - b. Council to control the committees: Mr. Pone made it clear that the Council will establish and control investigative committees to look into certain areas. The Chiefs' Association has provided Mr. Pone with suggested committee member names from within our organization. We look forward to working with any committee to move this process forward.

In conclusion, the Chiefs' Association continues to be available to meet with and work with any member of Council to move this process forward.

We also hope that the opinion of 5000+ registered voters whose signatures are on the *Petition to Dissolve* petitions that requested "... to create a single fire district within the boundaries of the Township of Hamilton, County of Mercer" will help the Council make their final decision.

The sooner a decision is made, the sooner this Association can sit down with the new Board and finalize all of the operational and administrative plans to establish a new cost effective Fire District.

Time is of the essence if a January 1, 2018 change-over date is to be realized.

Sincerely,

Chief Mark Antozzeski
President
Hamilton Township Active Fire Chiefs' Association

Hamilton Township

Fire Districts 2-9

2016 Statistics

Incident Type	Count
1 Fire	
100 Fire, Other	2
111 Building fire	56
112 Fires in structure other than in a building	3
113 Cooking fire, confined to container	86
114 Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney	5
116 Fuel burner/boiler malfunction, fire	7
117 Commercial Compactor fire, confined to	1
118 Trash or rubbish fire, contained	2
131 Passenger vehicle fire	46
132 Road freight or transport vehicle fire	7
138 Off-road vehicle or heavy equipment fire	2
140 Natural vegetation fire, Other	2
141 Forest, woods or wildland fire	1
142 Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	21
142M Mulch fire	30
150 Outside rubbish fire, Other	1
151 Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	22
154 Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle	10
160 Special outside fire, Other	1
161 Outside storage fire	1
162 Outside equipment fire	6
	312
2 Overpressure Rupture, Explosion, Overheat(no fire)	
200 Overpressure rupture, explosion, overheat	3
210 Overpressure rupture from steam, Other	1
212 Overpressure rupture of steam boiler	1
221 Overpressure rupture of air or gas	1
243 Fireworks explosion (no fire)	1
251 Excessive heat, scorch burns with no	7
	14
3 Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	
300 Rescue, EMS incident, other	7
311 Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1,171
321 EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with	1,582
322 Motor vehicle accident with injuries	361
323 Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	29
324 Motor Vehicle Accident with no injuries	70
331 Lock-in (if lock out , use 511)	12
350 Extrication, rescue, Other	7
352 Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	30
353 Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	10
381 Rescue or EMS standby	2

2753

Hamilton Township

Fire Districts 2-9

2016 Statistics

Incident Type	Count
3 Rescue & Emergency Medical Service Incident	3,281
4 Hazardous Condition (No Fire)	
400 Hazardous condition, Other	13
410 Combustible/flammable gas/liquid condition,	5
411 Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	31
412 Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	170
413 Oil or other combustible liquid spill	12
421 Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	3
422 Chemical spill or leak	1
424 Carbon monoxide incident	46
441 Heat from short circuit (wiring),	15
442 Overheated motor	11
443 Breakdown of light ballast	3
444 Power line down	33
445 Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	51
451 Biological hazard, confirmed or suspected	2
461 Building or structure weakened or collapsed	1
463 Vehicle accident, general cleanup	12
481 Attempt to burn	1
	410
5 Service Call	
500 Service Call, other	9
510 Person in distress, Other	3
511 Lock-out	15
512 Ring or jewelry removal	1
520 Water problem, Other	8
521 Water evacuation	4
522 Water or steam leak	55
531 Smoke or odor removal	18
541 Animal problem	1
542 Animal rescue	3
550 Public service assistance, Other	26
551 Assist police or other governmental agency	34
552 Police matter	8
553 Public service	105
554 Assist invalid	21
555 Defective elevator, no occupants	4
561 Unauthorized burning	16
571 Cover assignment, standby, moveup	43
	374
6 Good Intent Call	

Hamilton Township

Fire Districts 2-9

2016 Statistics

Incident Type	Count
6 Good Intent Call	
600 Good intent call, Other	26
611 Dispatched & cancelled en route	720
621 Wrong location	5
622 No Incident found on arrival at dispatch	88
631 Authorized controlled burning	6
632 Prescribed fire	1
641 Vicinity alarm (incident in other location)	1
650 Steam, Other gas mistaken for smoke, Other	3
651 Smoke scare, odor of smoke	78
652 Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be	25
653 Smoke from barbecue, tar kettle	2
661 EMS call, party transported by non-fire	1
671 HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat	49
	1,005
7 False Alarm & False Call	
700 False alarm or false call, Other	20
710 Malicious, mischievous false call, Other	5
711 Municipal alarm system, malicious false	1
713 Telephone, malicious false alarm	1
714 Central station, malicious false alarm	8
715 Local alarm system, malicious false alarm	3
721 Bomb scare - no bomb	1
730 System malfunction, Other	20
731 Sprinkler activation due to malfunction	17
733 Smoke detector activation due to	102
734 Heat detector activation due to malfunction	11
735 Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	195
736 CO detector activation due to malfunction	51
740 Unintentional transmission of alarm, Other	1
741 Sprinkler activation, no fire -	10
742 Extinguishing system activation	1
743 Smoke detector activation, no fire -	96
744 Detector activation, no fire -	24
745 Alarm system activation, no fire -	236
746 Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	39
	842
8 Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	
814 Lightning strike (no fire)	2
8151 Snow Condition	1
	3
9 Special Incident Type	

Hamilton Township
Fire Districts 2-9
2016 Statistics

Incident Type	Count
<hr/>	
9 Special Incident Type	
900 Special type of incident, Other	4
9001 Fire Prevention Activity	1
911 Citizen complaint	2
	<hr/>
	7

Total Incident Count: 6248



Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

04 Hamilton Electrical Inspector

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

06 Hamilton Health Inspector

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

07 Hamilton Housing Inspector

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

10 Hamilton Haz Mat

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

110-2 Rwj @ Hamilton

Automatic aid received	2
	<hr/>
	2

12 Hamilton Fire District 2

Mutual aid received	10
Automatic aid received	287
Automatic aid given	28
	<hr/>
	325

13 Hamilton Fire District 3

Mutual aid received	15
Automatic aid received	370
Mutual aid given	3
Automatic aid given	24
	<hr/>
	412

14 Hamilton Fire District 4

Mutual aid received	11
Automatic aid received	208
Automatic aid given	34
	<hr/>
	253

Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

15 Hamilton Fire District 5

Mutual aid received	10
Automatic aid received	192
Mutual aid given	3
Automatic aid given	19
	<hr/>
	224

16 Hamilton Fire District 6

Mutual aid received	9
Automatic aid received	289
Automatic aid given	27
	<hr/>
	325

17 Hamilton Fire District 7

Mutual aid received	8
Automatic aid received	215
Mutual aid given	2
Automatic aid given	21
	<hr/>
	246

18 Hamilton Fire District 8

Mutual aid received	2
Automatic aid received	128
Mutual aid given	2
Automatic aid given	26
	<hr/>
	158

19 Hamilton Fire District 9

Mutual aid received	4
Automatic aid received	117
Mutual aid given	2
Automatic aid given	9
	<hr/>
	132

20 Lawrence Township Fire

Automatic aid received	1
Mutual aid given	14
Automatic aid given	2
	<hr/>
	17

Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

21 Slackwood Fire Company

Mutual aid received	3
Automatic aid received	2
Mutual aid given	4
Automatic aid given	2
	<hr/>
	11

23 Lawrenceville Fire Company

Mutual aid received	3
Automatic aid received	1
Mutual aid given	9
Automatic aid given	3
	<hr/>
	16

261 Union Fire Co. Crosswicks

Mutual aid received	3
Automatic aid received	2
Mutual aid given	1
	<hr/>
	6

262 Chesterfield Fire Department

Mutual aid received	1
Automatic aid received	2
Mutual aid given	1
	<hr/>
	4

30 Ewing Township

Mutual aid given	2
	<hr/>
	2

31 Prospect Heights Fire Company

Mutual aid given	3
	<hr/>
	3

32 Pennington Road Fire Company

Mutual aid given	2
	<hr/>
	2

321 Bordentown Fire District 1

Mutual aid received	5
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Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

321 Bordentown Fire District 1

Automatic aid received	6
Mutual aid given	9
Automatic aid given	2
	<hr/>
	22

322 Bordentown Fire District 2

Mutual aid received	1
Automatic aid received	2
Mutual aid given	1
	<hr/>
	4

33 West Trenton Fire Company

Mutual aid given	7
	<hr/>
	7

40 Robbinsville Fire Department

Mutual aid received	131
Automatic aid received	33
Mutual aid given	80
Automatic aid given	18
	<hr/>
	262

<u>Robbinsville FD</u>	
Aid Received:	164
Aid Given:	98

41 Hightstown Fire Company

Mutual aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

42 East Windsor Fire Company #1

Mutual aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

43 West Windsor Fire Company

Automatic aid received	1
Mutual aid given	3
	<hr/>
	4

461 Jacobstown

Mutual aid given	1
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Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

461 Jacobstown

1

53 Hopewell Fire Company

Mutual aid given

2

2

60 Princeton Fire Company

Mutual aid given

1

1

601 Bordentown Station 601

Mutual aid received

2

Mutual aid given

1

3

70 Trenton Fire Department

Mutual aid received

3

Automatic aid received

2

Mutual aid given

23

Automatic aid given

7

35

821 Station 82- Allentown Fire Dept.

Mutual aid received

4

Automatic aid received

2

Mutual aid given

11

Automatic aid given

5

22

A40 Robbinsville Ambulance

Mutual aid received

1

1

FM19 Fire Marshal 19

Automatic aid received

1

1

LIFE CHS Life Unit

Aid Responses by Department (Summary)

Alarm Date Between {01/01/2016} And {12/31/2016}

LIFE CHS Life Unit

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

S22 Signal 22 Canteen

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

SQ 11 Nottingham Ambulance

Automatic aid received	1
	<hr/>
	1

TF 801 Task Force 801

Mutual aid given	1
	<hr/>
	1

14