

Upper Milford Township  
Board of Supervisors  
Township Building, Old Zionsville, PA 18068  
July 20, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.  
**WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

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**ATTENDANCE:** Supervisors, Joyce K. Moore, John D. Zgura, Daniel J. Mohr; Manager Edward Carter, Solicitor Marc Fisher; Planning Coordinator Brian Miller; Secretary/Treasurer Jessi O'Donald

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

This meeting is being recorded principally to aid in the preparation of Minutes and for such other purposes as the Board sees fit. For that reason, will each person wanting to give any comments during this meeting, please state your name for the record and address the Board of Supervisors.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** No Input

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1.) Past present and future needs of Upper Milford Western District Fire Co

Station #19 Chief Michael Kline addressed the Board of Supervisors and read the letter below:

I would like to start by Thanking the supervisors for their continued support generosity and the great working relationship we have. As well as all the township staff and public works. It's nice to know that we have the support and help of all of you when it is needed. We could not do what we do without it.

Before we begin, I would like to go on the record and state We are not here to compare to other fire departments, brag, or talk down to them. I am only going to discuss facts that pertain to station 19. We have and will always be supportive of all mutual aid departments, especially our sister company Station 28. There is no doubt that we need each other to survive and neither one of us can protect the entire township alone so if there is anything that we can do to help please ask, we are here for you.

The volunteer fire service is a unique ever-changing entity, one that saves communities like our millions of dollars a year. With growing demands, changing times, and an overall decrease in volunteers throughout the country it puts more stress on the volunteers we have. The fire service is the only emergency service that we expect our firefighters to donate their time to train, attend schools, respond to emergencies, and require them to fundraise in order to keep the doors open so they can do all the above said things. We have been financially stable over the past 80 years and are here tonight to seek assistance to ensure we stay that way for the next 80 years.

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Before I introduce members of the community who were willing to come and speak on our behalf, I would like to take 5 minutes and highlight some achievements over the years.

- We have provided a roster of all personnel along with percentages of responses for each. As you can see in today's world of decreasing volunteers, we are very fortunate
- Our roster includes but not limited 8 drivers with CDL's
- 19 Interior trained FF with 14 of them being state certified Fire Fighter 1 or higher
- Drivers with EVOC and Pump OPERATIONS 1 or higher.
- One of the largest accomplishments was our company becoming State Rescue Certified to the operations Level
- There are nine people on the rescue, operations level, roster. There are an additional 3 that are EMS providers but not fully on the roster.
- All 9 of the rescue personnel have EVOC, HazMat Ops, ICS 100 & 700, helicopter awareness, highway incident scene safety, water rescue for first responders, Basic Ropes & Rigging, Basic Vehicle Rescue Technician.
- 6 have ICS 200, 3 have ICS 300 & 400.
- 4 have operations level water rescue
- 4 have special vehicle rescue
- We have a physician, a nurse, and 3 EMTs for EMS providers.
- Michael Wentz from the Eastern Pa EMS council was unable to attend tonight due to prior commitments but prepared this letter which I will read off on his behalf.

Our Major Equipment list all made possible by township funding, community donations and fire company fundraising of which have no loans against is as follows.

1989 Jeep Brush Truck  
1991 International Tanker  
1993 Ford Walk in Rescue truck with air storage for refilling SCBA cylinders.  
1998 Ford Fire Police Van  
2003 Isuzu Ascender utility/command/squad  
2005 E-One Pumper  
2008 F350 Brush Pickup Truck/ Plow utility  
2014 KME Rescue Pumper

This Past Monday we went under contract on a 2500-gallon water, 50-gallon class a foam New Pumper Tanker with CAFS this advanced firefighting technology will Replace our 32-year-old tanker and almost 20-year-old engine. By Combining 2 trucks into 1 we will save money in the long run while enabling us to do more with less in these ever-changing times.

This brings us to the reason for tonight's workshop. We would like to begin discussions about the need for major building improvements/addition and needing a secured funding source in order to obtain the loans needed for such improvements. We have been

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working with the help of donations by Valley Builders on building concepts, plans, ideas, and realistic budgets. We have brought some layouts and plans with us this evening which we feel will work for our current and future needs and would like to share them with you tonight. Also, tonight we have Paul Ulicny, who will be our project manager and fire company treasurer here to go over the numbers. Where the money will come from and what will be the balances before, during and after. Finally, we have John Hayes from New Tripoli Bank here to explain. What they would need from a funding/ guarantee standpoint so that hopefully we can all work together to make this happen. Again, we are not looking for any decisions at this time but just felt the need to begin discussions and have full disclosure of what is going on. Thank you for your time and your continued support and I will Turn the floor over to Paul Ulicny.

**Presentation** - Chief Kline then handed over the floor to Paul Ulicny to explain the financials. (Attached to the minutes) Paul explained the need for the 2% loan for \$270,000.00 for the truck they just contracted on and how they were going to use the grant money obtained from the State, Fire Relief funds they have been holding and their truck fund, along with municipal Capital Reserve funds in the account held for Station #19 to pay for the truck. That will leave them with a loan on the \$270,000.00 for 20 years, which they are hoping is the life span of the truck. Paul then proceeded to explain the need and funding requirements for the Fire House construction. The new truck doesn't fit in the old fire house building but will be housed temporarily in the pole building until the addition to the current fire house can be constructed in two years. To construct an addition to the firehouse the estimate done by Valley Builders is \$1,750,000.00. The fire company plans to use the remaining Capital Reserve funds, their building fund, a 2% interest state loan for \$486,000.00 and a bank mortgage for \$749,000.00 with currently a 5% interest rate.

**Discussion** - There was a discussion in the room with the Board of Supervisors, Staff, John Hayes, Paul Ulicny, Michael Kline, Joseph Sherman, Colt Hershinger, Jim Krippe, Angela Ashbrooke, Phil Casey, Members of Station #19, and residents from Powder Valley:

It was asked if the Fire Company was asking the Township to guarantee the same donation each year and if it was going to be used for loan payments, is there a plan to save for future needs. The Fire Company answered no, there is no savings built into their plan. They do have a budget excess but that hasn't been put into a saving plan yet. It was asked with the aging fleet of vehicles when they would need to purchase another vehicle. Chief Kline stated in 10 years they would need to replace another truck, which is halfway through their loan payments on the currant contracted truck and 1/3 through the payments on the Fire House building. It was clarified that the bank would be looking for the Township through an agreed upon contract to guarantee the loan for the Fire Company.

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Residents from powder valley asked about the cell tower and the income from the Tower. If the cell tower isn't built, then the Fire Company needs to come up with additional revenue for each year. Phil Casey asked if everyone was aware that Upper Milford has two fire companies and how does the other fire company feel about this discussion. Assistant Chief Sherman stated their Fire House building length and doors are large enough for the new fire trucks to fit. Station #28 is looking to start the Truck specs. for a new truck in three years and have the truck ordered within 5 years. Phil then asked about the Turnpike impact on the current Vera Cruz Fire Company Building. Joe Sherman stated that the meeting with the Turnpike noted that the road would be built out on the other side of the road and the building would be left alone.

John Hayes explained that the bank performs financial tests for these loans to see if the organization can handle the payments. They look at the past and projected revenue. They have worked with the New Tripoli Fire Company to develop a fundraiser. The fundraiser was run for a few years and the projected revenue from that was used to determine the ability to pay. The bank needs the fire Company to show a sustainable source of revenue to not have the Township back the loan. It was asked what the Fire Company was looking at for a timeline to start construction. Chief Kline stated approximately 24 months. Paul answered that they have estimates and a solid plan. The Fire Company doesn't want to proceed any further without input from the Township and the guarantee of funding. Solicitor Fisher asked about the State Loans and if those funds are guaranteed. Manager Carter stated that without the final design there isn't a final price. Paul answered that the increase might be 10-25% if the building isn't built shortly, and this project might increase significantly. It was stated that they need a number projected out two years for when they are ready to put a shovel into the ground. Angela Ashbrook asked if the \$600,000.00 was the total in the Fire Company's account or just the total for this project? Treasurer O'Donald responded that the \$600,000.00 is the total that will be in that account by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, just for Station #19. She asked if the Township backs the loan, and if the Fire Company doesn't pay what happens to the property. Solicitor Fisher and John Hayes answered, if the Fire Company doesn't pay, the bank would come to the Township, if the Township couldn't pay then it would go to foreclosure. If the building is built by the time the truck is delivered, where will the truck be housed? Chief Kline answered it will be housed in the pole barn. Phil Casey questioned the New Tripoli Fire Company Fund Raiser and stated it might not do well in Upper Milford. John Hayes responded that he used that as an example but there are other types of fundraisers. Jim Krippe wanted to note that the money that goes to the Fire Companies from the Township has always been split equally between the two. Joe Terrible asked if the interest is quoted for the township rate. John Hayes stated that was the Municipal market rate and that two years out that might be higher or lower. Paul clarified that the Board would like to see better numbers projected out two years on the building. Supervisor Zgura asked how other municipalities handle all the capital purchases for Fire Companies. He knows some

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municipalities own the facilities or the trucks and the fire company own certain items. Supervisor Zgura questioned the length of the truck. Collin Sentner answered that the truck is 37 feet long. Supervisor Zgura would like to see more workshop meetings and more discussions. Chief Kline stated the whole concern isn't just a Western Station concern. The cost of trucks has gone up tremendously. The last trucks were purchased with ½ Township funds and ½ Fire Company funds. John Zgura asked if the Fire Companies would be willing to work together on the equipment that is purchased with the cost so high. Vera Cruz stated they have slightly different needs on their side of the Township. Colt Hershinger asked if this all goes through how much would it raise the taxes. It was asked if the capital reserve fund would need to be built back up again. Manager Carter responded that at this time they are asking for the current township donation. If the Township chose to replenish that fund it would be at twice the amount and how that is done right now, we don't know. It was asked when the last time the \$88,000.00 was adjusted. Treasurer O'Donald stated that the \$88,000.00 was due to the 5-year plan request. That request was never asked to be adjusted. Jim Krippe made sure to note that the accounts accumulated over the course of time. Dean Marks suggested the Fire Company look for a business to rent space for guaranteed revenue each month like Hereford did with the Post Office. Chief Kline clarified that the addition that is being looked at, makes the currant building an "L" shape and will be built along the driveway. The residents of Powder Valley are concerned about the cell tower, and they feel as if they are hearing that they will be hit with a property value reduction and a property tax increase.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Not Needed

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

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Chairperson Joyce K. Moore

August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023  
Date

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Secretary/Treasurer Jessi O'Donald