



Press Release

OCVFC Proposal for Fire & Rescue Services

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The Ocean City Volunteer Fire Company (OCVFC) has presented the Mayor and City Council with a plan that it believes resolves all the issues in the continuing discussion of how to best manage fire and rescue services.

After examining all proposals made during this year-long process, and consulting with some of the top experts in the field, OCVFC has proposed a simple division of responsibilities that would save taxpayers revenues, and avoid possible conflicts between volunteer and current career personnel.

Under the plan, the OCVFC would assume all responsibility for firefighting in the City, while the paid EMS division would provide emergency medical services. As always, the fire company would remain answerable to the town government on budgetary matters, and would add sufficient staffing to maintain round-the-clock firefighting coverage for the City.

This plan would also allow the City's paid EMS Division to save money by focusing on the delivery of emergency medical services. In addition, by giving all firefighting responsibility to the volunteer organization, the potential arises to save the taxpayers greatly in the years ahead.

The OCVFC acknowledges the plan put forth by the City Council two weeks ago to name Fire Chief Chris Larmore as interim chief of a joint program combining the volunteers and the paid EMS division. However, after careful review, this plan has several troubling aspects, the least of these is the requirement that he be required to resign as Chief of the OCVFC in order to assume the post. Instead, the OCVFC proposes that money budgeted for a paid fire chief be used to enhance the firefighting capabilities of the volunteer company. This would be a more efficient use of taxpayer funds at a time when government is struggling to make ends meet in a troubled economic climate.

The OCVFC senses discomfort on all sides with the proposed hybrid operation, especially with the Council only voting 4-3 in favor. Simultaneously, the paid EMS Division union members have made it clear they would be uncomfortable answering to a volunteer fire chief, even in the interim. The volunteers are also leery of becoming involved in a situation containing so many variables that organizational success is questionable.

The OCVFC delivered its plan to the Mayor and City Council in midweek, and has asked to meet at their regularly scheduled March 17 meeting.