



Upper Mount Bethel Township
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UPPER MOUNT BETHEL TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
HELD AT THE MT. BETHEL FIRE HOUSE
2341 N. DELAWARE DR. MT. BETHEL, PA 18343
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2024 – 6:30 PM

*This meeting was held in person, at the Mt. Bethel Fire House and live streamed through the Upper Mount Bethel Township Facebook page.

Supervisor Bermingham called the special meeting to order at 6:40 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance were Supervisor Bermingham, Supervisor Friedman, Supervisor Eckman, Township Manager Nick Graziano, and Township Secretary Cindy Beck. Supervisor Erler arrived at 7:25 pm.

Supervisor Bermingham stated that the reason we started to have community meetings was because of the development that is going into our Township, which is going to affect all the surrounding communities. Supervisor Bermingham and Portland Fire Chief, Jim Potter, have been talking about ambulance coverage for about five (5) years now. Chief Potter has been spearheading this project and thought that having a community meeting was a good idea, to get feedback from everyone.

Surrounding Community Attendees:

East Bangor Borough: Jason Huggans, Jennifer Reese, Chris Confalone, Nate Belzner, Pete Zuzulak.

Roseto Borough: Ken Tillman, Joe Angelini

Pen Argyl Borough: Robin Zmoda

Bangor Borough: Mark Sperling

Knowlton Township: Mike Bates. Mike discussed a situation they had about 10 years ago, getting volunteers etc. In 2012-2013, they decided to reach out to a hospital-based company, they started with Atlantic Ambulance, then in 2017 they switched over to St. Lukes. This cost the Township nothing. Generally speaking, they have been very happy with them. They keep a truck parked and staffed 24/7 at the Knowlton FH. Being able to

team up with neighboring townships has been their goal. They have looked into paid services, but you need to have more than 1500 calls a year, they average 80-100 calls a month. Chief Potter stated that he has spoken with St. Luke's numerous times, they don't want any conflicts with Suburban.

Community Discussion on Emergency Services

Supervisor Bermingham turned the discussion over to Chief Potter. Chief Potter stated that they have met with numerous ambulance corps, unfortunately we never went with any of them. Suburban stated that they needed more money, but only for the service they are currently providing. There is no problem with the quality of care of Suburban EMS, the problem is the response time. Chief Potter stated that what needs to be done is all the municipalities that are willing to participate, whether we go Regional or another service provider, we need to get the total number of calls, which can be obtained from the 911 center or if a municipality would like to give him authorization to get them, he will do that. Centronia just moved into Bushkill Township, and they have been receptive. The major concern of the surrounding municipalities is the response time. Manager Nick Graziano shared two of his experiences with Suburban and their response time. There is no problem with their service, just their response time. It took them 40 minutes to arrive.

Chief Potter provided a questionnaire for all the local municipalities to complete for him to compile all the data together. This will determine whether we need ALS units or BLS units. Before we can move forward, we need to get the numbers. There was a discussion on using a Regional Service and using our local resources.

AJ Olszewski, Director of Wind Gap Ambulance, talked about ALS and BLS calls and having the call volume for ALS. Everyone is experiencing a staffing crisis.

Annamarie Robertone, previous President of Liberty Ambulance, one of the founding fathers of Medic 9, and worked 10 years at the EMS Council. Annamarie made a couple of recommendations, you want all numbers to come from the 911 center, if you want to know if a call has been downgraded from an ALS to BLS, you go to the EMS Council. Once the municipalities get all those numbers, you get your report ready because your report goes to the EMS Council. You want to ask Suburban, why the staging, what's the arrangement, what's their dispatch SOP's, get your numbers from 911 center, and get a good report to the EMS Council, if they can't resolve, then it goes to Harrisburg, get response times, and hours of operation.

Supervisor Bermingham asked the attending members of the local municipalities if they are willing to complete the questionnaire, most responded yes, but some stated that they will bring it before their boards/councils.

Courtney Gilmour commented on a call she made, the service was good, response time was 45 minutes. Having someone local to assist would be extremely helpful.

George Russo, Lower Mt Bethel Fire, spoke on the recent discontinuance of their QRS service because you have to have an EMT on the truck and also a certified EMSVO driver, which they have a staffing issue with that.

Chris Finan, Chief Mt. Bethel Fire, stated they are certified QRS service and personally feels as though the Township should invest more into the QRS service and to utilize your local resources.

Mark Sperling asked if there was a way to bring Blue Valley Rescue in to see if they can assist.

This meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

The next Community meeting is scheduled for June 27th at 6:30 pm

Supervisor Bermingham announced that on June 18th 6pm-8pm at the Township Building, there will be a presentation on local truck traffic.

This meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Cindy Beck-Recording Secretary