



**PENNSYLVANIA  
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES  
INSTITUTE**

**Beyond The Volunteer Crisis: Solutions to  
Ensure Fire Services in Your Community**

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**Question 1 & 2**

- What is the greatest concern for your Fire or EMS organization?
- What are you going to do to solve that concern?



## Change and Transition in Pennsylvania

### Some are doing this:

- Let's keep doing the same thing and expecting different results!
- Blaming and finger pointing

### Others this:

- Modernizing
- Increased local government involvement
- Adding paid FF / other staff
- Regionalization
- Mergers
- Doing something with studies



## How do you know you should change?

### • Indicators for Change

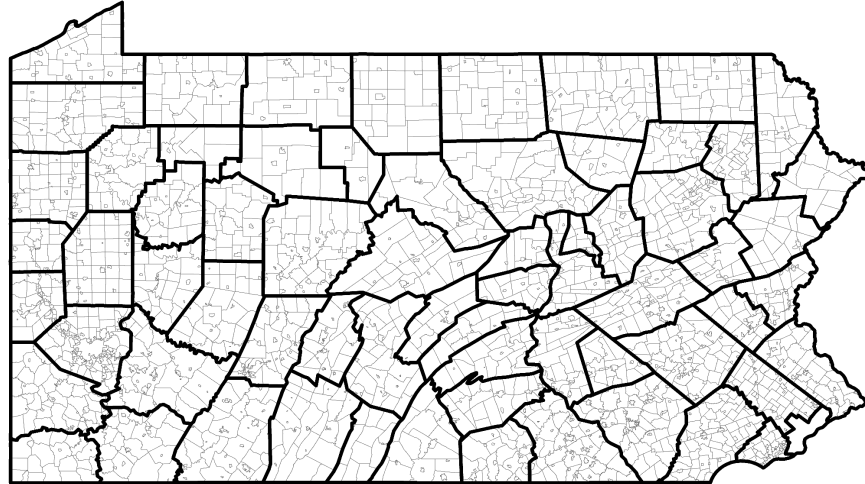
- Community Growth
- Community Aging
- Missed Calls
- Extended Response Times
- Reduced Staffing



IAFC VCOS – Red Ribbon Report – 11/05



## So What is Going on In Pennsylvania?



## Western PA Community 1 hour north of Pittsburgh



- Population 3,795
- 1 square mile
- 3 Fire Companies
- Old Traditional Borough
- \$25,000 each w 10k from Govt
- 100% Volunteer
- \_\_\_\_\_ ?



# Central PA Suburban Township

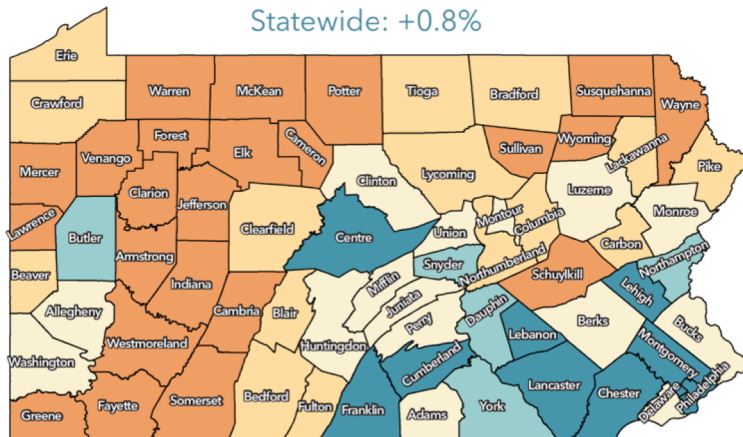


- 30,000 population
- 17.2 square miles
- 1 Fire company 2 stations
- Growing with commercial, healthcare, residential, other
- Budget 800k
- 100% Volunteer w 1 Adm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ ?



## Percent Change in Population, 2010 to 2017

Statewide: +0.8%



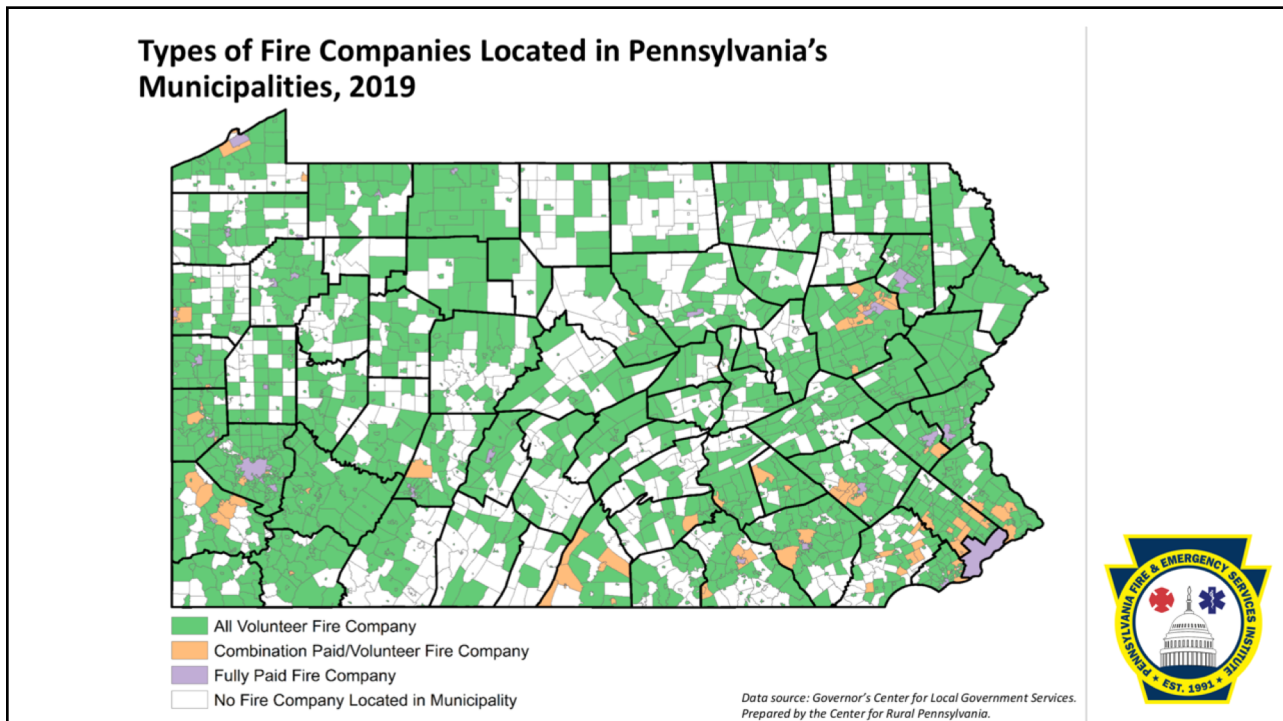
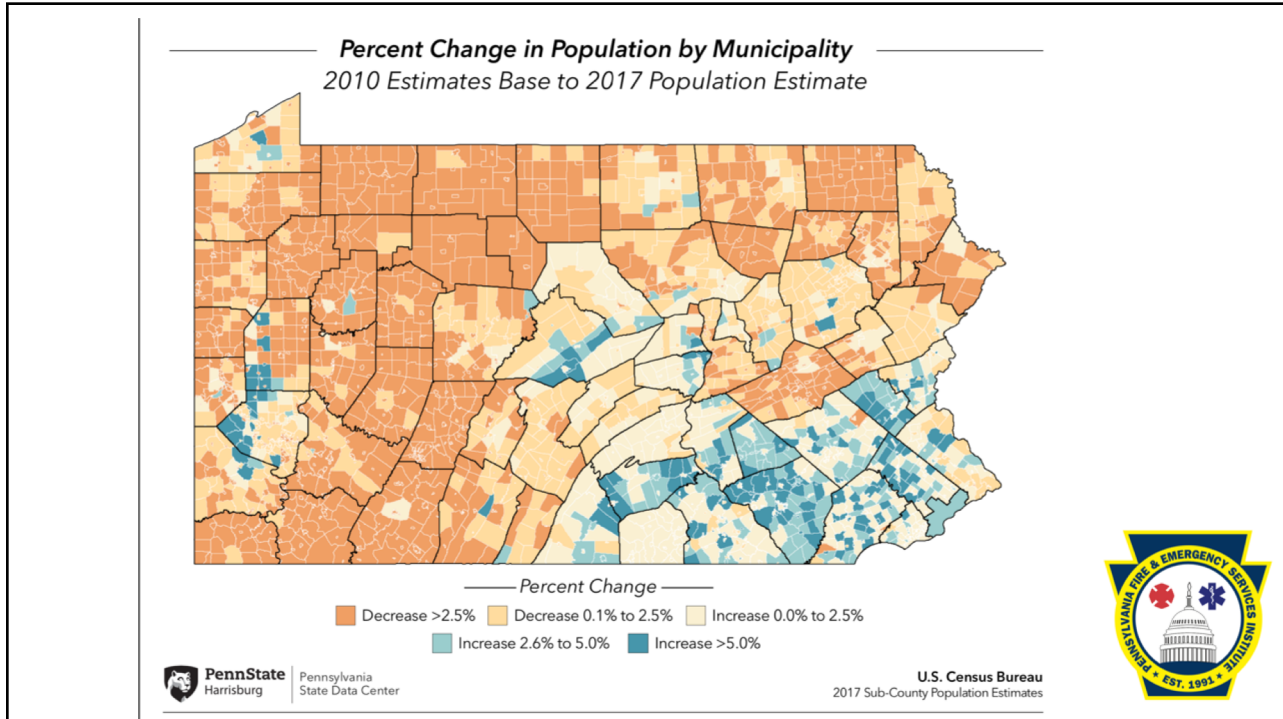
■ Decrease greater than 3.0%  
 ■ Decrease 1.6% to 3.0%  
 ■ Change +/- 1.5%  
 ■ Increase 1.6% to 3.0%  
 ■ Increase greater than 3.0%



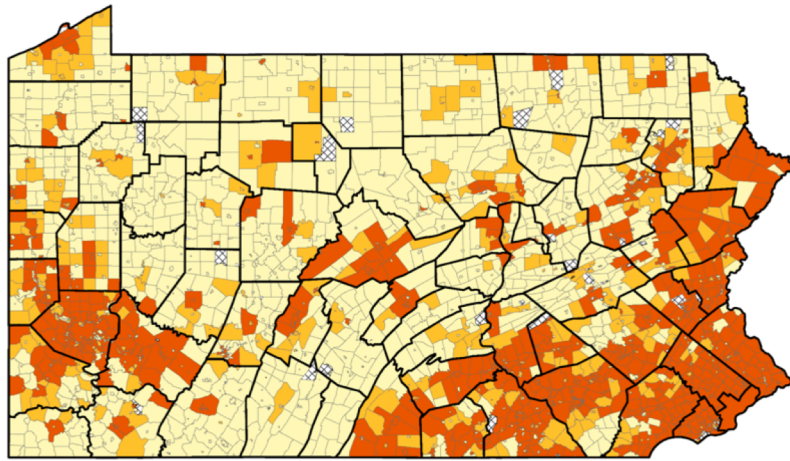
Pennsylvania  
State Data Center

U.S. Census Bureau  
Population Estimates Division





### Municipal Expenditures for Fire Services, 2017



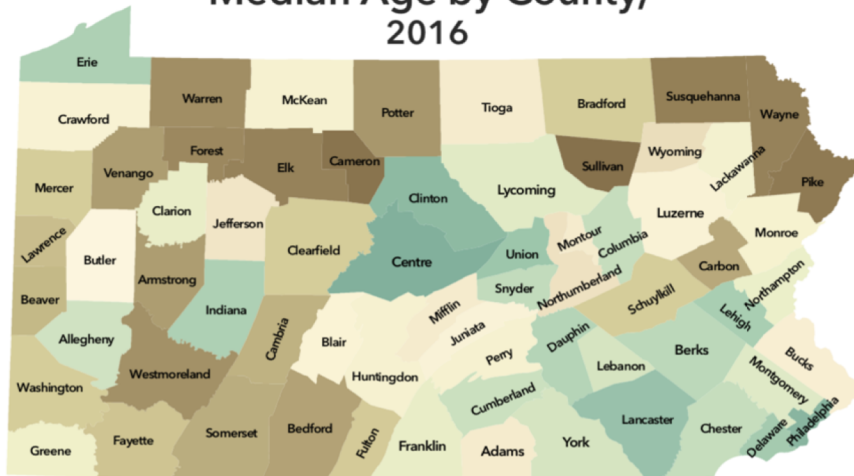
Statewide Average = \$346,599

- < \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000+
- No Data

Data source: Governor's Center for Local Government Services.  
Prepared by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania.



### Median Age by County, 2016



Low (31.6) Statewide: 40.7 High (53.1)



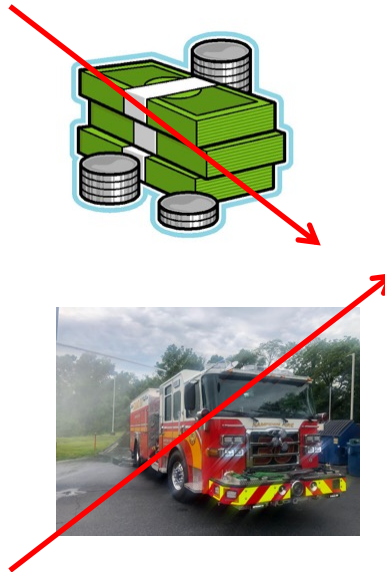
Pennsylvania State Data Center

Source: U.S. Census Bureau  
Population Estimates Division  
2016 Detailed Population Estimates

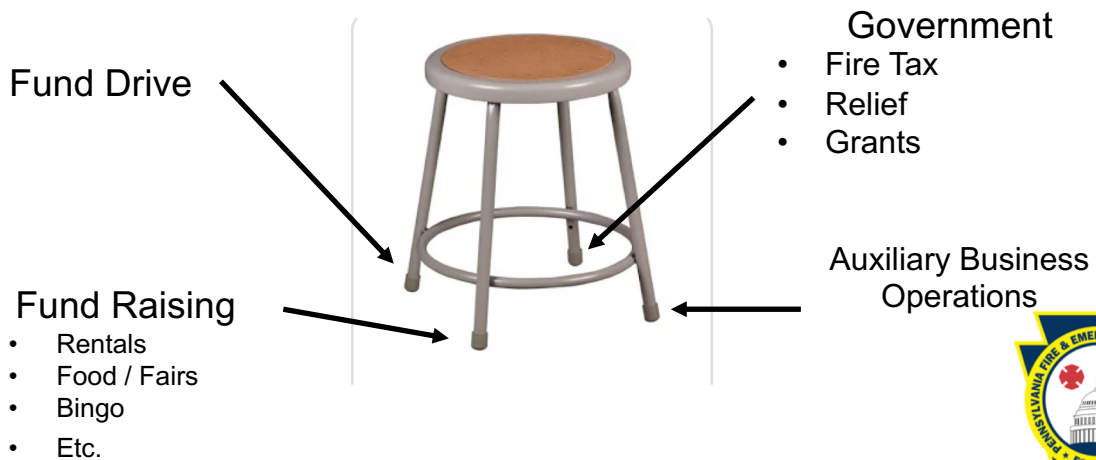


## Problems (1)

- Funding
  - Capital (Apparatus/Building)
  - Operating



## FD Funding Model



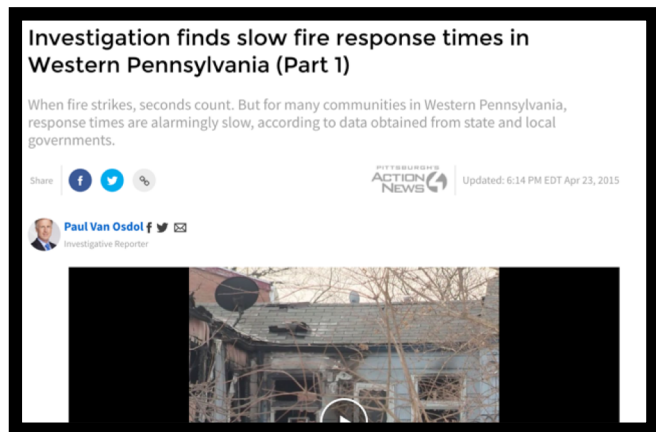
## Problems (2)

- Disgruntled member
- Internal conflict
- Mismanagement
  - Financial
  - HR



## Problems (3)

- Response Times
  - Lack of members
  - Consistent Response
    - Volunteer System not bad, just not consistent





# Investigation finds Port Vue Fire Department did not call neighbor for help responding to fatal fires

Share



Updated: 9:40 PM EST Nov 8, 2018



**Paul Van Osdol** f t e

Investigative Reporter



## The Tension

Local Government  
Townships/Boroughs

The way we've  
always done it!

It's going to cost more  
money!

We're not sure if we  
have an issue?

Independent 501c3 Fire /  
EMS Company

Just give us more  
money!

The Volunteers Will  
Walk Away!



## One of the reasons for *Issues*

- Traditional organizational structure (s) are not designed for a modern all-hazard public safety organization.
- Membership driven
- Elected leadership
- Slow decision making



## Organizational Structure Challenges

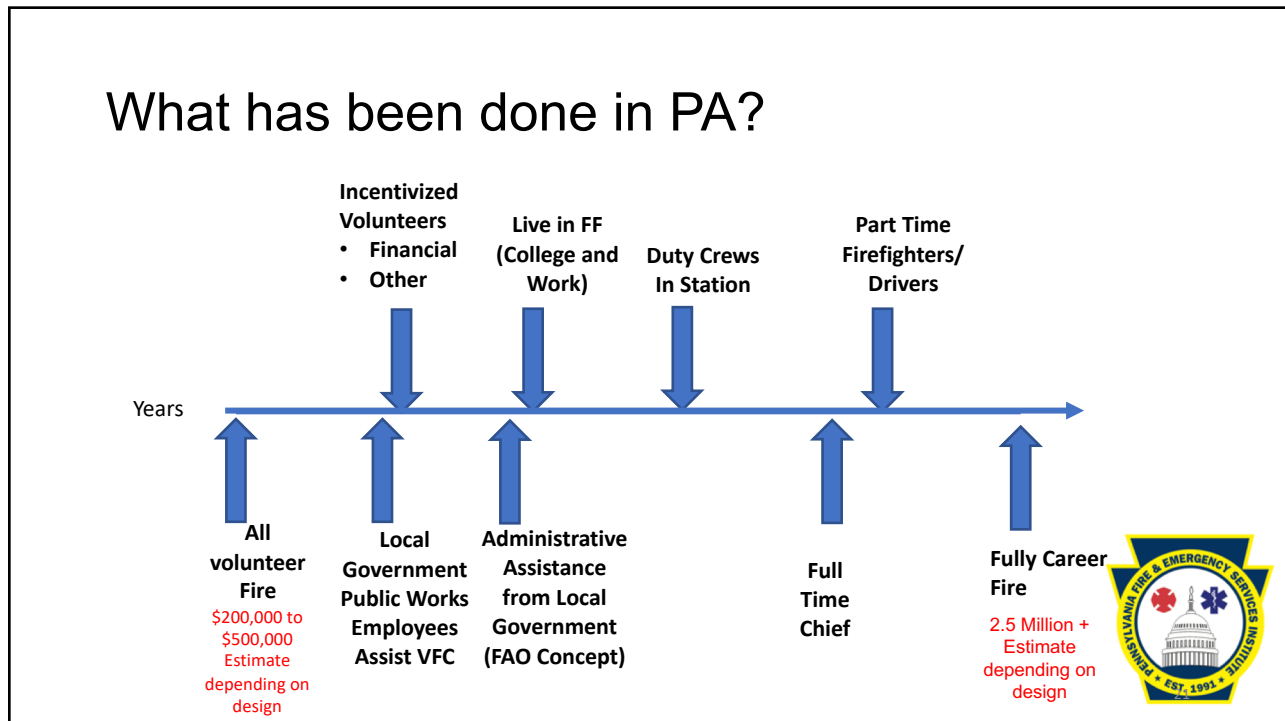
- Nonprofit – Community Board / Board Driven
- Nonprofit – VFC Membership Driven
- Municipal

Who's in Charge?

Who's Accountable?



## What has been done in PA?



## What the Lawyer's Say

- **Caution! Caution! Caution!**
- Incentivizing Volunteers concerns
- VFC employees vs. Municipal Employees
  - Hiring, discipline, discharge
- Who owns what?
- Level of authority over nonprofit
- Just when PA's VFD need assistance.....



## Local Government Responsibility

- Local elected officials should understand their obligations
- Act 6, 7, 8 (First Class, Second Class Townships, Boroughs)
  - Responsible for ensuring Fire and EMS
  - By the means and to the extent determined by the local government
  - Appropriate financial assistance
  - Local governments shall consult with Fire and EMS to discuss needs
  - Require itemized listing of expenditures using local government funding
- PSATS, Borough Association, Municipal League



## County Government

- Public Safety Communications Systems
- Emergency Management
- Training
- PA Association of County Commissioners
  - Working Group to Discuss Issues



## State Government – SR 6

- Members of the General Assembly
  - House and Senate VA & Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Governor's Office
  - Office of State Fire Commissioner
  - Department of Health
    - Office of Emergency Medical Services
  - DCNR
  - PEMA
  - Labor and Industry
  - DCED
- Auditor General



## Transforming for the Future – Trends

- Cooperation with local government
  - Defining expectations
- Regionalization – Regional Recruitment
- More Combination Systems
- Increased Accountability with Local Government



## Defining Your Standard

- Standard of Response Cover
- Effective Firefighting Force

### Staffing is critical in fire situations

Critical Task	Function on Fire Ground	Staffing	Unit Order
Command Officer	Incident command	1	Chief Officer
Attack Line	Fire attack with hoseline	3	1st Engine
Pump Operator	Operates pump of attack engine	1	1st Engine
Back up line	Second hoseline for fire attack	3	2nd Engine
Water Supply	Attaches hose to hydrant	1	2nd Engine
RIT	Standby Crew	4	3rd Engine
Search/Rescue/Ventilation	Search for Victims	3	1st Truck
Aerial Operator	Operates aerial device	1	1st Truck
Safety Officer	Supervision at fire scene	1	Assigned
Command Aid	Supervision at fire scene	1	Assigned
Number of Firefighters		19	



## Performance Standard

- First In Engine – On all structure fires include the first due area of:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Township
- The First in Engine is expected to arrive within six (6) minutes or less from dispatch to on scene 90% of the time.
- The complement of the initial response vehicles (working fire box) is expected to arrive in less than 13 minutes from dispatch to on scene 90% of the time.



# Performance Standard Staffing

## Staffing Example

The recommended standard could be the following:

For a moderate risk structural fire in an area with good water supply, a total of twenty (20) firefighters using three engines, one ladder, and one rescue should arrive within 13 minutes of initial dispatch.

For a moderate risk structure fire in an area without hydrants, a total of twenty-four (24) firefighters should arrive using three engines, two tankers, one ladder, and one rescue within 13 minutes of initial dispatch. The standard would be 18 minutes in Fairfield, Upper Fairfield, and Armstrong Townships.



## United Hook and Ladder – Adams County



- All Volunteer
- 2013 with 2 Boroughs
- 2019 cover 14 different municipalities
- Population of 125,000
- Square miles – 150 miles
- 4 Stations
- \$900k budget



## York Area United Fire & Rescue - York



- Combination
  - FC, 4 BC's
  - On duty staff – 12 to 16
- Three Townships
- Population 57,604
- 39 Square miles
- 5 Stations
- Budget \$8.2 Million



## Harmony Fire District - Butler County



- All Volunteer
- 2 Boroughs – 2 Townships
- Population – 12,965
- 52 Square Miles
- Formally, 3 separate VFCs
- Budget





## Garden Spot Fire Rescue - Lancaster



- All Volunteer
  - Admin Assistant
  - Development Director
- 1 Borough, 2 Townships
- Population - 19,136
- 48 Square Miles
- 3 Stations
- Budget - \$900,000



## North Strabane – Washington County



- Combination
  - Career FC/Deputy
  - On Duty Staffing
- 1 Township
- Population – 14,580
- Square Miles – 27.4
- 3 Stations
- Budget \$1.8 Million



## Swatara Fire Rescue – Dauphin County



- All Volunteer
  - Full Time Township Fire Chief
- 1 Township
- Population – 24,651
- Square Miles – 15.5 Square Miles
- 4 VFCs formally 6
- Township appoints Fire Officers / SOGs
- Budget – \$1.2 million



## West Manchester Township – York County



- All Volunteer
  - Career Township FT Fire Chief
- Population – 18,841
- Square miles – 20
- 2 VFCs
- Operational Consolidation
- Twp. FC appoints line officers
- Budget - \$532,000
  - Plus FC



## Promote and Incentivize Solid Nonprofit Administration

- Modern Bylaws with diverse and effective governance
- Administration Policies
- Operational Guidelines
- Strategic Plan
  - Ongoing Recruitment
  - Staffing
- Equipment replacement plan
- Retention incentives
- **The right people in the right positions**



## You have the ability define the FUTURE !

- Not a local, county, state government issue!
- Fire Departments must be willing to **honestly assess** and communicate current abilities.
- Do you have the courage to change current operating practices?



## Questions

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