



# LEWES FIRE DEPARTMENT INC.

P.O. Box 225  
Lewes, Delaware 19958

## OFFICE

Station 1 645-6556  
Station 2 645-8220  
Station 3 945-8286  
Fax 645-8421

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March 6, 2025

Sussex County Council  
PO Box 589  
Georgetown, De 19947

Dear Council,

We are reaching out to reiterate the urgent concerns we shared with the Council and Administration six years ago regarding the inadequacy of funding for our Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Unfortunately, the funding levels have not increased sufficiently to meet the escalating demands and costs associated with providing these critical services to our community.

Sussex County has allowed tremendous growth in our district with many new subdivisions which include multifamily dwellings, single-family dwellings, commercial buildings, and healthcare facilities. All of which have created a significant increase in calls for both fire and EMS. This will only increase with the dwellings waiting to be built or going through the approval process to be built.

Unfortunately, the cost of living in our fire district has gone up tremendously over the last couple of years which has caused volunteers to be living farther away from our stations. To serve our community in the best way possible we have had to rely more on our career staff for all calls. Over the past six years, our call volume has risen, from 2018 we were at 763 fire & 4277 EMS which equals 5,040 total calls (approximately 14 per day) to now in 2024 we had 1147 fire & 6442 EMS which equals 7,589 total calls (approximately 21 per day). In response to this increased demand, we have had no choice but to expand our career staff from 17 to 25 personnel. Consequently, our employee operating costs have surged from \$1,043,263 to \$2,378,124.

Moreover, in the last two years alone, the financial burdens of maintaining our EMS service have resulted in annual deficits near \$500,000 per year.

We urgently need your assistance! Please consider this letter as formal notice that without a substantial increase in funding—specifically to address our deficit in the upcoming fiscal year budget beginning January 1, 2025, we will be forced to initiate the process of dissolving our EMS service. We have not come to this decision lightly, as our mission is to deliver these critical services, however, the department has been left with no other choice and has unanimously voted to initiate the process.

We remain committed to working collaboratively with the Sussex County Council to prevent this unfortunate outcome for your constituents and ours in the Lewes area. Your support is crucial to the Lewes Fire Department's mission of delivering essential 911 services to our community.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter.



A. Wallace Evans  
President



William H. Buckaloo  
Fire Chief



Beau Fibelkorn  
EMS Chief

CC: City of Lewes Mayor & Council  
Sussex County Volunteer Firefighter Assoc.  
DVFA  
Sussex County EMS Officer  
Rehoboth Beach Volunteer Fire Company  
Milton Fire Department  
Mid-Sussex Rescue Squad