

We are here tonight to discuss a matter that is one of both public safety and legal liability to the Borough. The seriousness of this matter is such that it presents itself as an *immanent* public safety concern and legal liability.

First and foremost, the Borough as a whole expresses its thanks and appreciation to the First Aid Squad. Over the course of 75 years the Squad has saved the Borough countless thousands of dollars and, most importantly, lives.

The Squad, while primarily serving the Borough in a public safety capacity, has historically provided civic-minded residents with a way to get involved in their community. For this the governing body and the Borough as a whole is eternally grateful.

However, over the past several years there has been a marked change in both the quantity and quality of response by the Squad; especially in emergent situations. This conclusion has been reached by the Borough through extensive objective research and analysis of the Squads responsiveness.

In August of 2015 the Borough entered into an agreement with the County of Union for weekday daytime coverage when it became apparent that the Squad was generally incapable of handling calls from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. It was understood and explicitly stated that this was due to work conflicts with Squad members, and a drop in volunteerism; it was never and is still not construed to represent an unwillingness to serve the community.

Within the last year concerns reached an all-time high when a high percentage of calls were being answered by the County and other agencies during times when the Squad was assigned as the primary basic life support service for the Borough. It became even more troubling when the Fire Department had to assist with emergency calls because the Squad was unable to do so.

As a case study the months of April, May, and June 2017 were analyzed. This analysis indicated an overall response rate for Squad-assigned weekday hours and weekends of only 43-53%. When reviewing weekends only over the same time period the response rate ranged from a low of 14% to a high of only 38% of calls answered.

When reviewing records for all of 2017 it was found that the Squad was dispatched a total of 607 times as of July 9, 2017. Of the 607 dispatches, the Squad responded to 291 calls, a total of only 47.9%.

To be clear, in no way is this presented to speak ill of the intent, wishes, or passion of Squad members. However, when it comes to public safety even the best intentions, if not executed in a proper and timely manner can and will end in life or death.

Tonight the Borough will pursue an amended agreement with the County of Union for full time emergency medical coverage, the use of the Borough building located at 535 Laurel Avenue, and the transfer of emergency medical apparatus. This is being done first and foremost to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare, and substantially reduce the future liability faced by the Borough.