



DALLAS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Dallas Township Residents:

Dallas Township will be implementing a Fire Protection Tax beginning in 2019. After considerable discussions between the Dallas Township Supervisors, Back Mountain Regional Fire Department and the Kunkle Fire Department, the Township Supervisors passed a .75 mill tax at the January reorganization meeting.

A number of concerns expressed by our Fire Chiefs brought the parties together to tackle the issues that are presently facing the fire departments and future conditions that are on the horizon. Be assured that all of the issues that are facing our fire departments were evaluated closely to arrive at the decision to implement the new tax. They included:

- Both department Fire Chiefs expressed their major concern is the dwindling number of volunteers that are available to respond to a fire, highway/vehicle incidents, hazardous materials issues, rescues and weather and natural disaster occurrences. There have been numerous reports and articles detailing this fact and that trend is expected to continue in the Commonwealth.
- Being able to respond in a timely manner and with the required manpower is a critical issue for both departments.
- Fund raising to support the fire companies has not kept up with the rising costs of operating the departments. Maintenance, supplies and training costs continue to increase and the cost of bringing on new equipment is becoming out of reach.

After hearing the issues of concerns presented by the Fire Chiefs the Township Supervisors agreed that we needed to act sooner than later to avert issues in delivering the required fire protection for the residents of Dallas Township. The initial plans to address the concerns of the departments and the expected results include:

- Implementing the Fire Service Tax effective January 1, 2019 at a rate of .75 mills. This tax is expected to raise approximately \$500,000. These funds will be segregated in a separate bank account from the Township's operating funds and will be used **exclusively** to support the two fire companies. Financial reports will be required from each department as to the use of the funds.
- The majority of the funds raised will be used to staff each department with trained firefighters at the estimated peak hours of the day during the week. The scheduling of the manpower may change based on future call volumes and will be the responsibility of each Fire Chief. The preliminary estimate for the cost of employing each firefighter is approximately \$65,000 per year. This amount includes wages, taxes, benefits, and personal protection equipment. The individuals employed will be employees of each department and not Dallas Township employees.

- The balance of the funds raised will be used to maintain fire hydrants, training costs and equipment maintenance, and we hope to build a contingency fund to be used for any unexpected occurrence and the purchase of new equipment.
- A Fire Protection Advisory Committee will be established to oversee the disbursement and accounting of the funds to each department. In addition, this Board will work collectively on assessing manpower needs, instituting a volunteer recruitment program and developing long term staffing and capital pro forma budgets for planning purposes. It is expected that the Board will be comprised of the Fire Chief from each fire department, the Dallas Township Manager, and two Dallas Township residents that have no affiliation with either department.

If there are any questions about the Fire Protection Tax. Call or email the Township Manager.