

Fire Protection Report
Prepared by the Union Township Planning Commission
At the Request of Township Supervisors
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**Fire Protection Study
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INTRODUCTION

Background

Union Township Supervisors, during their December 1, 2015 meeting, requested the Township's Planning Commission (PC) to investigate and study all fire protection options that may be available to the Township. The backdrop of this request was against the Supervisors decision to raise real estate taxes from 5 mills to 7 mills, an action that was reluctantly taken, but deemed necessary to pay for badly needed road improvements. Ostensibly, Supervisors were looking for ways to reduce Township expenditures so that any tax increase could be held to the minimum. Fire protection service savings, if possible, would be in lockstep with the Supervisors' budgetary objective. Fire protection is the second highest budgetary expenditure the Township faces each year, second only to road maintenance and improvement.

The impetus for the study arose from a recommendation set forth in the drafted updated Comprehensive Plan which was prepared by the PC and first presented to Supervisors in December 2015. That recommendation suggested it would be prudent for the Township to reevaluate the current fire protection Intergovernmental Agreement before renewing it. The PC's interest was in ensuring the Township's taxpayers are getting the most cost effective protection available and the Commission believed any evaluation should at a minimum weigh the number of fire calls answered in the Township against the cost of service, the level of service provided, whether another fire company is available to provide equal service at lesser cost, and what effect would changing contractual fire service have on insurance rates and the public's safety.

Ideally, such a study would have been handy to have prior to renewal of the agreement which occurred on January 1, 2016. However, unbeknownst to the sitting Supervisors and PC at the time, the agreement was subject to automatic renewal for subsequent 10-year terms unless the Township had elected to withdraw upon not less than six-months written notice prior to expiration of the agreement's term. Hence, written notice was required no later than the end of June 2015, which made it impossible to have a timely study available before the notification deadline. By the time the Supervisors and PC became aware of the fact in December 2015, it was too late to prevent automatic renewal.

Nevertheless, the Board of Supervisors asked the PC to study the topic and ascertain whether other fire protection options are available. In response to the referral, the PC gathered information on the six fire companies that are located nearest to Union Township. Those companies are respectively located in the boroughs of Milesburg, Snow Shoe, Port Matilda, Howard, and Bellefonte. Bellefonte has two fire companies,

Logan and Undine, but those two companies essentially act as one through a shared budget and common oversight by the Borough of Bellefonte. The PC's objective was to use this information to understand and fairly evaluate the issues, and then write a comprehensive report of findings with recommendations for future use by the Township's Supervisors and citizenry. Ultimately, the questions we are trying to answer through this report are as follows:

1. Are there other service providers available that could provide service at less cost?
2. If there are, would their service be adequate to meet the township's needs?
3. How do we judge adequacy?
4. What tradeoffs would be acceptable? i.e. less cost vs. longer response time and distance to travel.
5. Would a response time tradeoff be so significant that it would overshadow public safety?
6. If we changed service providers, would there be any effect on fire insurance availability or cost?
7. Are there any legal limits on how much money can be contributed by the township for fire service?
8. Are there any taxation limits on how much money can be collected for fire protection?
9. How does the current intergovernmental agreement work?
10. Does it have any limits on how much contribution the service provider can require?
11. If so, how does that work?
12. Is it equitable to all the members or should adjustments be sought?
13. What are the functions of the Oversight Committee?
14. Can the Oversight Committee unilaterally increase the rate of contribution required?
15. Are there any safeguards built into the agreement's structure to insure municipal oversight members are not conflicted between the municipal interests they represent and fire company interests?

Tribute to Volunteer Fire Companies

Volunteer fire fighters provide invaluable public service to their communities through volunteerism which provides a much less costly alternative than paying for professional fire service. These volunteers spend many hours of their own time training and delivering service without pay or monetary compensation. Their only reward is the knowledge of knowing they have made a difference in their communities by protecting it through fire suppression thereby saving life and property. It is often a thankless job. In

particular, Union Township thanks those members of the Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company in Milesburg for all their dedication as volunteer fire fighters and the great service they have provided to the Township.

Recognizing and appreciating this service, however, is no reason to not study fire service in an open and constructive way. Hence, this study should not be construed to be disparaging toward these incredible service providers or any fire company. It is merely an attempt to create a repository of information for future decision makers to use in making intelligent judgments about how to evaluate and choose fire protection in the future and in weighing whether the terms of the current contractual arrangement are a fair deal for the Township or is there a better way to construct the arrangement. Given increases on all fronts in taxes, especially here in Union Township, this seems to us to be an obligation that elected officials owe to their constituents.

Current Fire Protection

Since at least 1996, Union Township's fire protection has been provided by the volunteer fire company in Milesburg known as the Citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company No 1. Fire protection through this arrangement was deemed adequate in the 1998 Comprehensive Plan, and since that time no decrement in the fire company's service has been noted. In addition to fire protection, the Milesburg fire company provides fire police service and Quick Response Service (QRS) for medical emergencies within the Township. Milesburg is one of only a few volunteer fire companies that provides QRS. Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is provided by a separate entity out of Bellefonte that is not affiliated with the Milesburg fire company.

Citizen's Hook and Ladder - Intergovernmental Agreement

The Citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company No 1 experienced cash flow shortfalls during 2003 and 2004 and was unable to meet its financial obligations. As a result, the fire company and its associated fireman's relief association entered into an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement with the municipal governments within the fire company's service area, which includes Union Township. The agreement went into effect on January 1, 2005 at which time the initial financial support provided by the municipalities was set at 1 mill of their respective annual real estate tax revenues. The parties to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement are Milesburg Borough, Unionville Borough, Boggs Township, Union Township, the Citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and the Milesburg Fireman's Relief

Association.¹

After operating under the Intergovernmental Agreement for a year, the fire company still experienced an operating shortfall and the initial contribution rate of 1 mill was increased to 1 and 2/3 mills, which was still the rate when this report was written in 2016. To get a feel for how much money that is, Union Township's 1 and 2/3 mill contribution amounted to about \$45,000 in 2015, and in 2014, the four municipalities collectively paid \$178,048 (Intergovernmental Revenue) to the fire company.²

Under the agreement, control of the financial affairs of the fire company and its associated relief association is administered by a six-person oversight committee comprised of one member respectively appointed by each municipality, the fire company, and the Fireman's Relief Association. Municipal appointees must be an elected official within the appointing municipality. The Oversight Committee appoints a Trustee to manage day-to-day financial matters, and the Committee has the authority to change certain terms of the agreement including the amount of financial contribution to be paid by the participating municipalities. Any amendment to the agreement requires a unanimous vote by the Oversight Committee. The term of the current agreement is from January 1, 2016 through January 1, 2026, and the agreement is subject to automatic renewal for subsequent 10-year terms unless a municipality elects to withdraw upon not less than six months written notice prior to expiration of the current agreement's term.³

SERVICE DEMAND & RESPONSE TIMES

Fire Company Responses in Union Township (Exhibit 1)

The first thing the PC wanted to get a feel for was how many of the total emergency and fire calls responded to by the fire company and its fire police were in Union Township and the type of call. This information would be useful in determining what the demand for emergency and fire protection services is in the Township and how much is that service costing Township tax payers per event. Additionally, knowing the workload would be useful should a replacement fire company's service be sought so that fire company could evaluate whether it had the capacity to meet Union Township's service demands. The raw data source is from radio logs compiled by the

¹Citizens Hook & Ladder Company No. 1 of Milesburg, Pa., Financial Statements – Cash Basis year ending December 31, 2014, page 6.

²Ibid, page, 3.

³Ordinance of Union Township, Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, ordained December 6, 2004 & Union Township Ordinance No. 39, First Amendment to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, ordained December 4, 2006.

Centre County 911 emergency dispatch center during the 6-year period between 2010 and 2015, inclusively. That data was compiled into table format by the PC and appears at the end of this report as Exhibit 1.

The main observations revealed by the data are as follows:

- Out of the 500 or so calls responded to in 2015, which is the only year the PC has total call information on, only 31 or 6.2% were events that occurred in Union Township. The remainder occurred in other parts of the service area.
- On average, the total number of events responded to in the Township during the 6-year period was 30.2 per year.
- Vehicle crashes, which averaged 12.8 events per year, were the most frequent event constituting 42.54% of the total.
- The total number of structure fires during the 6-year period were few in number at 16 which was an average of 2.7 per year with a range of 1 to 7 occurring per year.

It would be instructive to know the extent of damage that occurred at those 16 structure fires responded to over the 6-year period so the effect of the fire company's intervention could be judged, but the PC was unable to collect that data. The reason we believe that data is relevant to future policy makers is covered later in this report under our discussion about response time. We do have some anecdotal information from personal observations of three fire events.

The first event was a vehicle fire that occurred on February 28, 2016 in the 300 block of Hall Road. The car was traveling on the roadway when it inexplicably caught fire. Fortunately, the driver and passenger were able to get out and were unhurt. The local farmer's efforts to extinguish the fire using a fire extinguisher failed. The first engine arrived on the scene in 31 minutes, but by that time the car had completely burned up and a secondary fire began to spread to the adjacent woods and field. It was a very windy day, but the fire company quickly suppressed the secondary fire preventing it from spreading farther and starting a significant brush fire.

The second event observed occurred on October 20, 2013 at 3127 Eagle Valley Road which is in the western tier of the Township and along the Bald Eagle Nittany Railroad. There, a large agriculture building caught fire. The building was located fairly close to the house and to nearby vehicles. By the time the first fire truck arrived the building was completely engulfed and the fire company was unable to save it or any of its contents. The fire was contained, and there was a real danger it could have spread to the house without fire company intervention.

The last event observed occurred on July 15, 2011 at 174 Spotts Road where a large

barn used to store vehicles, including recreational vehicles and farm implements, caught fire. There was a fairly large distance separating the residence from the barn. It is unknown how long it took the fire company to arrive on the scene, but by the time the first truck arrived the building was already completely engulfed and the structure and all its contents were a total loss. Because of the separation between buildings, there was little danger of the fire spreading to the house.

Response Time Comparisons (Exhibit 2)

A major factor in weighing any potential service provider is how quickly can the fire company respond to a call for emergency service. Obviously, if all other factors are even, the shortest distance to travel equates to the quickest response time, and quick response time is probably the most important factor in effective fire company intervention. Accordingly, the PC wanted to be able to compare distances and response times between the six fire companies. Exhibit 2 provides distance and anticipated response times from the respective fire houses to 5 different points within the Township that were selected as a fair representation of the area to be covered. Distance information and anticipated response times were plotted and calculated using Map Quest and Google Earth.

Milesburg has the shortest distances to travel and quickest response times to all areas in Union Township, except for points 4 & 5 in the western tier which are closer to Port Matilda than Milesburg. But even there, the time differences are small with Milesburg arriving only 1 minute and 3 minutes later respectively at points 4 & 5. Snow Shoe is only one minute behind Milesburg at point 1, but drops off quickly at all other points in the Township. Bellefonte's fire companies, which are about 4 ½ mile farther away than Milesburg, arrive about 5 minutes later than Milesburg at all points. Howard's fire company, which is about 8 miles farther away than Milesburg, arrives about 10 minutes later than Milesburg at all points.

To come up with a single number for comparison purpose, we averaged the response times to the five points for each fire company. Those averages in descending order are: Milesburg 12.8 minutes, Bellefonte Logan 17.6 minutes, Bellefonte Undine 18.6 minutes, Port Matilda 19.4 minutes, Snow Shoe 23 minutes, and Howard 22.8 minutes.

Another useful way to look at this data is to compare the response times to the point in the Township farthest away from the respective fire houses. Again, Milesburg has the shortest response time at 17 minutes to point 5, whereas Bellefonte's Logan is second at 22 minutes (5 minutes behind), Bellefonte's Undine is third at 23 minutes

(6 minutes behind) and Howard is fourth at 27 minutes (10 minutes behind). Port Matilda needs 26 minutes to reach point 2, its farthest point, which is 9 minutes behind Milesburg's time to reach its farthest point. Snow Shoe needs 30 minutes to reach point 5, its farthest distance to travel.

(Editor's note: We realize that actual response times would also include the time needed for volunteers to get to the fire house and man vehicles, but we have no data on those times and the best we can do is assume that they are fairly similar between companies. Therefore, as a constant, that component is dropped from the calculation and just the anticipated time from the firehouse to the emergency is used in the comparison. Likely, 10 to 15 more minutes would need to be added to come up with actual response times.)

911 Center Function

The 911 Emergency Center is located in Bellefonte and is funded and run by Centre County. It dispatches all emergency service providers – fire, police, and ambulance – that serve the County. Under the 911 system, each fire company has a predetermined service area for which it is the primary responder. These respective service areas are established by the fire companies themselves, and not by the County, through arrangements with local municipalities that fund the fire companies serving their respective service areas. Some municipalities, like Spring Township for example, may be served by more than one fire company, and all arrangements are self determined locally. The dispatch center is notified of the alignments and dispatches accordingly. Back-up fire companies are dispatched based on prearranged mutual aid agreements made between fire companies. Should any change occur in service area alignment, the dispatch center is simply notified of the change and dispatches accordingly.

FIRE COMPANY DEMOGRAPHICS & COMPARISONS 2015-2016

In addition to knowing demand for service and response times, the PC wanted basic demographic information about each of the six fire companies so that general comparisons could be made between companies. Data was gathered from several sources. Exhibit 3, “Local Fire Company Comparisons” provides a snapshot of service area sizes and populations, the age of vehicle fleets, and some budget information. Active membership, budget, main fundraisers, vehicles, number of calls yearly, and service area were gathered from the *Centre Daily Times* publication, “Living Here, Users' Guide to Life in Centre County 2015-2016,” pages 64 & 66. That information is presented in Exhibit 4. Information about municipal funding

contribution, fire company oversight, and whether a fire company would be willing to expand its service area to include Union Township was gathered through telephone interviews with fire officials and municipal officials conducted by individual PC members in January and May of 2016.

Size of Service Areas & Population Served (Exhibit 3)

The two fire companies respectively located in Port Matilda and Milesburg have service areas that are almost equal in population and area. Milesburg covers 101 square miles and serves an estimated 5532 people while Port Matilda also covers 101 square miles and serves an estimated 5871 people. Both Bellefonte fire companies serve the same service area which has an estimated population of 10,851 people within the 35 square miles covered. Snow Shoe provides service to an estimated population of 3586 people located within a service area containing 81 square miles while Howard is similar in size and population serving approximately 3570 people across a service area of 86 square miles. (All population and service area sizes were estimates provided by Centre County GIS staff.)

Cost to Taxpayers

Through the Intergovernmental Agreement, Union Township and the other three participating municipalities each contribute 1 and 2/3 mills of real estate tax to the Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company. For Union Township, 1 and 2/3 mills in 2015 represented about \$45,000. The fire company's total municipal contribution received in 2014 was about \$178,000. Thus, Union Township's contribution runs about 1/4 of the total. The fire company's total revenue in 2014 was around \$211,000, which means \$33,000 were received from other revenue sources of which \$6825 were accounted for from fund raising, donations, and dues.⁴

For an individual tax payer, 1 and 2/3 mills equals \$167 on a property with an assessed tax valuation of \$100,000. The average assessed value in the Bald Eagle School District (2015), which includes Union Township, is \$30,124. A tax payer with an average property valuation paid \$50.30 of his or her total property tax toward fire company support. By comparison, 1 mill on a property assessed at \$100,000 would equal \$100 and .7 mill would equal \$70. One mill on a property with an averaged assessed value (\$30,124) equals \$30 and .7 mill equals \$21. These millage values are useful in comparing what other fire companies charge, information that follows shortly.

⁴Financial Statements 2014, page 3

If we try to get a handle on how much fire coverage cost Union Township per event, we find that in 2015, where 31 events were responded to, the average cost per event was about \$1441 (\$45,000/31). Looking at all calls responded to in the service area, which according to the *Centre Daily Times* numbered between 475 and 500, the average cost per call using total municipal contributions was around \$356 (\$178,000/500).

Other than for Union Township, we don't have information on dollar amounts paid by individual municipalities for fire service or the number of calls responded to within individual municipalities. Thus, we are unable to compare how much others pay out of municipal funds per fire event. Nevertheless, because the *Centre Daily Times* data does include estimated budgets and total number of annual fire calls for all the fire companies, we can compare the total cost per call for delivering service among the six fire companies. In the case of Milesburg, where the fire company's annual budget was estimated at \$190,000 for 2015, the average cost per call was \$380 (\$190,000/500).

In 2015, the municipal contribution for Snow Shoe was .7 mills paid by each of the three municipalities within the service area.⁵ The fire company had an annual budget that ran between \$75,000 and \$100,000, and it responded to between 70 to 100 calls. That means the average cost per call was about \$1000 (\$100,000/100), significantly higher than Milesburg and the other companies.

At Port Matilda, the municipal contribution in 2015 was .8 mills paid by each of the five municipalities in the service area.⁶ The annual budget was around \$105,000 and the fire company responded to about 240 calls. Thus, the average cost per call was about \$438 (\$105,000/240).

Howard's fire company annual budget in 2015 was around \$125,000. Each of the four municipalities served contributed 1 mill in real estate tax towards support of the fire company⁷ which responded to about 245 calls. Thus, the average cost per call was around \$510 (\$125,000/245).

Bellefonte's two fire companies are funded using a complex formula that partially relies on assessed value of property within the contributing municipalities. Under that formula in 2015, Bellefonte Borough contributed the equivalent of 1.11 mills of property tax (\$103,150) for fire protection. Each of the two fire companies received half (\$51,575). Total municipal contributions paid to the two fire companies in 2015 was \$260,240. Thus, at \$103,150, Bellefonte's share was about 2/5 of the total. Collectively, the other

⁵Telephone interviews with Norma Soster, Secretary & Beau Martin, Fire Chief, February 2016

⁶Telephone interviews with Jadine Reese, Treasurer & Steve Kibe, Fire Chief, February 2016

⁷Telephone interview with Howard Fire Company, May 2016

three municipalities in the service area paid \$157,090 or about 3/5 of the total. Of that amount, Benner Township at \$102,030 and Spring Township at \$53,560 paid the lions share. Marion Township made a donation of about \$1500 for coverage that was limited to fire calls on Interstate 80. The differences in contribution between the municipalities is attributable to differences in assessed property values. The size of the areas covered by Bellefonte within the townships varies because Spring and Benner Townships also receive coverage from other fire companies to which they make a separate contribution.⁸

In 2015, Bellefonte's two fire companies together had a total budget of \$266,725. By mutual agreement raises in contribution are capped not to exceed 3% in a given year. Bellefonte Borough administered the two fire companies finances which included collecting and distributing municipal contributions and paying all bills.⁹ Collectively, the two Bellefonte companies answered 742 calls in 2015 for an average cost of about \$359 per call (\$266,725/742).

In overview, we see that the cost of fire service per event ranges from a low of \$240 at Port Matilda to a high of \$1000 at Snow Shoe. Excluding Snow Shoe, the range is \$240 to \$510, which we interpret as meaning most of the fire companies provided fire service per event within reason of one another. Alternatively, comparing millage rates, we find that Snow Shoe and Port Matilda provide service at about half the rate that Milesburg charges, and Howard, at 1 mill, also comes in substantially lower. We are unable to determine where Bellefonte's cost for fire protection fits into the mix because it relies on assessed property values, and we have no information on those values for Bellefonte Borough or the rest of the service area. That information is available from Centre County's tax office, but it was not pursued by the PC because we do have information on fire company budgets, which is the more telling statistic to examine in determining which companies operate most efficiently.

Equipment, Manpower, & Training (Exhibit 4)

In addition to quick response time, a fire company has to have enough vehicles, other fire fighting equipment, and manpower available to fight a fire. It goes without saying that all equipment has to be in good working order and the fire fighters have to have proper training so they know what they are doing. While we have no information on training or actual conditions of equipment, we do know the number of vehicles and respective ages of the motor fleets for each of the five fire companies as they existed in 2015. In terms of numbers, Milesburg was first with 7 vehicles. Port Matilda was second with 6 vehicles while Snow Shoe, Howard, and Bellefonte's Undine each had 5 and

⁸Telephone Interview with Lori Walker, Bellefonte's Finance Director, March 2016.

⁹Ibid.

Bellefonte's Logan had 4. Milesburg had the newest fleet; most of its vehicles were 2000 vintage or later, and the average vehicle age was 13.5 years in 2015. Port Matilda and Snow Shoe's fleets were 1990's vintages. The average age of Snow Shoe's fleet was 22.4 years while Port Matilda's average age was 21.25 years. Howard's fleet had an average age of 25 years and Bellefonte's two fleets came in at 22.5 years for Logan and 27.2 years for Undine.

For fire fighting in a rural township like Union where water resources are scarce, tanker trucks are an important item to have in the fleet. Milesburg, Howard, Snow Shoe, and Bellefonte's Undine each had a tanker truck in their 2015 inventories.

All the fire companies have mutual aid agreements which ensure backup from other companies, as needed, based on the severity of the fire or event. The county's 911 emergency center dispatches additional fire companies as requested by the first responders according to predetermined arrangements spelled out in the mutual aid agreements between companies. These mutual aid agreements, in effect, pool equipment and manpower resources of a number of fire companies thereby making the amount of in-house equipment for a given fire company less of a consideration when judging an individual fire company's ability to fight a fire.

The same can be said for manpower, which is also pooled by these agreements, although a minimum threshold of volunteers is needed by each fire company to simply function as an organization. All the fire companies are faced with the problem of declining membership. The amount of manpower available also plays a role in whether a particular fire company could expand its coverage area. In 2015, the number of active fire fighters at Milesburg was 30 to 35, Port Matilda had 50, Snow Shoe 25 to 30, Howard had 57, and Bellefonte's Logan and Undine companies together had 83. These numbers can and do change quickly.

In spite of the function of mutual aid agreements, the PC observation made while gathering data was that volunteer fire companies are territorial and protect their own turfs. But, at the same time, they also look out for each other and are reluctant to do anything that would adversely affect another fire company. To a certain extent, this camaraderie led to defensiveness when the PC began to ask questions about changing fire protection service area boundaries. Some fire company members wondered why we wanted to upset the apple cart, so to speak.

Budgets

If quality of maintenance, equipment and training are reflected in a fire company's

budget, then Milesburg, with an annual budget of about \$190,000, leads the pack. Logan and Undine's combined annual budget was \$266,725 of which \$177,945 was operating costs. Howard at \$125,000 comes in next followed by Port Matilda at \$105,000 and Snow Shoe at around \$100,000 annually in 2015. But, there is never any guarantee that merely spending more equates to better, and many intangibles can come into play. Budgets also include the cost of building maintenance, mortgages, and other debt service. Separating all of these factors out is well beyond the scope of the PC's study. However, we do have a copy of Milesburg's draft 2016 budget which provides a snapshot of the type of overhead that likely all the companies face. It shows that the largest single expenditure is for vehicle upkeep and fuel which is budgeted at \$47,025. Annual testing at \$12,000 and insurance at \$13,000 are other high overhead items.¹⁰

Our best observation is that the major determinant between higher budgets and lower budgets is debt service which usually includes mortgages and vehicle financing costs. Once the mortgage is paid off, debt incurred in buying replacement vehicles dominates budgets. Fire companies that have the ability and commitment to use and maintain older fire fighting and emergency vehicles seem to have lower total budgets. For example, compared to Milesburg which has the newest fleet, Port Matilda, Howard, and Snow Shoe operate with older fleets and rely on purchasing used trucks when replacement is required. All three companies' budgets were significantly less than Milesburg's budget. On the other hand, the number of annual calls answered by each of these companies was significantly fewer than Milesburg's 500 annual calls, which likely afforded the ability to rely on older equipment because it was less frequently used.

COVERAGE EXTENSION QUESTION

This question, which was hypothetical in nature since the current contract with Milesburg remains in effect until 2026, was asked of several of the other fire companies to ascertain if there was any interest in extending their respective service areas to include Union Township should the opportunity arise in the future. And, if they did have interest, what would be the process.

Fire Company Responses

Howard was a flat out no, we assume because the fire company was already maxed out in providing protection within its existing service area which includes water rescue at the lake in Bald Eagle State Park and accident coverage on I-80. Snow Shoe was a maybe indicating it would be interested in talking about service extension, but could not

¹⁰Citizens Hook & Ladder Co. #1, Draft 2016 Budget, pages 1 & 2.

commit that it would be able to do so.

Port Matilda was a possibility. The fire chief was not in favor of extending service unless some sort of substation arrangement could be made, and that, of course, would be very expensive for Union Township costing far more than its arrangement with Milesburg. However, it appeared that the fire chief doesn't have final say on the issue because the fire company is managed through the Upper Bald Eagle and Halfmoon Council of Governments (COG). The COG has complete oversight over the fire company and would be the entity that would ultimately make any decision about expanding Port Matilda's service area to include Union Township. But, the fire chief's professional opinion about whether there is sufficient manpower and equipment to extend service would carry great weight with the decision making body.

Bellefonte is also a possibility and any request for fire service would be made through the Borough Manager and would require approval by Bellefonte Borough Council. Like Port Matilda, the fire chief's judgment about what is needed to extend service would carry great weight in the elected officials decision making process. And, one thing the fire chief relayed was that to provide adequate service another tanker truck would need to be added to the fleet, which is an expensive piece of equipment. Since a second tanker truck is not presently needed, its cost likely would have to be borne exclusively by Union Township should the township be added to the service area.¹¹

911 Center Implications

There are no implications for the 911 Center should a fire company's service area change other than to notify the Center of the change. Consequently, the Center itself need not be a consideration when evaluating whether a change in service can occur; no impediment arises from the Center.

TOWNSHIP CODE PROVISIONS

Township Taxation Authority & Limits

Section 3205(4) of the Second Class Township Code is the state enabling legislation that allows second class townships, like Union Township, to pay for fire protection by fire companies located outside the township through real estate tax assessment. The section provides a cap on the tax rate at 3 mills annually unless a higher rate is approved by the voters of the township. Consequently, absent a voter resolution that would approve a

¹¹Telephone interview with Walt Schneider, Bellefonte Fire Chief, May 2016

higher rate, we believe the current 1 and 2/3 mills assessment could not be increased beyond another 1 and 1/3 mills by the fire company or township. However, because the Intergovernmental Agreement is silent about any cap and gives unilateral authority to the Oversight Committee to raise rates through a unanimous vote, we are unsure of this conclusion, and if a dispute ever arose over the issue, it would likely have to be litigated to determine whether the provisions of Section 3205(4) would prevail. Accordingly, the issue ought to be addressed by the parties in order to prevent any future dispute. Hopefully, the Oversight Committee would never vote to raise the millage above the 3 mill cap. One thing is clear; lesser increases of up to 1 and 1/3 mill can occur by unanimous vote of the Oversight Committee, which emphasizes the importance of appointing members to the Oversight Committee who can fairly balance the financial interest of their respective municipalities against the fire company's financial need.

Township's Authority & Duty to Provide Fire Protection

Section 1801 of the Second Class Township Code provides that, "The Board of Supervisors may provide for fire protection within the township." While at first glance Section 1801 suggests providing fire protection is optional, meaning not required, Section 1553 seems to take that discretion away by mandating that fire and emergency medical services are provided within the township. Since Section 1553 was added to the Code in 2008 and postdates Section 1801, it likely prevails, which seems to be the legislative intent. Section 1553 further provides that the township shall consult with fire providers to discuss the service needed in the township and the township shall require any fire company providing service and receiving township funds to provide the township with an annual financial accounting of those funds. Failure to do so is a basis to discontinue funding the provider.

Further authority to engage services from volunteer fire companies located outside the township is found in Section 1803 which provides that townships may appropriate monies to such fire companies for the purposes of purchasing and maintaining fire equipment and fire houses, for personnel training, and for support of fire training schools. This Section also provides authority to contract with a volunteer fire company for fire protection service in return for financial support to that fire company. Contracts are subject to the provisions of Intergovernmental Agreements found in 53 Pa. C.S. Ch 23 Subchapter A. The current Intergovernmental Agreement between Union Township and the other parties for fire service was drafted pursuant to those provisions.

FIRE INSURANCE – How it Works

Describing how fire insurance works is complicated by the fact that insurance

companies are not uniform in the way they determine fire insurance rates. Some underwriters rely on a Public Protection Classification (PPC), which is a scale developed by the Insurance Services Office, Incorporated (ISO) to determine residential and commercial fire insurance rates. Essentially the ISO scale rates fire protection within a given municipality on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is the best protection available and 10 is little or no protection available. The better the municipality's rating, the lower the fire insurance rates. Considerations in a municipality's rating are factors such as water availability, the fire company's efficiency, and response times or distances to travel within the service area. Under this system, Union Township has a rating of 9 or 10 depending on a given property's location within the Township. Distance the fire company must travel, which affects response time, is the determining factor for the poor ISO rating in the Township.

Some companies, like State Farm for example, do not use PPC and rely on their own rating systems. Typically, these systems are based on the company's historic experience of fire losses within a given zip code area. Structures located in those areas where high fire losses have occurred historically typically have a higher fire insurance rate. Regardless of what system an underwriter uses, the PC expectation is that fire insurance rates would not increase, at least not significantly, should the Township change its fire service provider because the Township already has the poorest ISO rating on the scale as a function of its remoteness from its fire protection service provider. Likewise, there would be no increase in insurance rates provided by underwriters that rely on a rating system based on historic record unless or until such time that more fire damage claims arose over time.

Since forgoing fire protection is not an option for the Township from a legal standpoint nor from a public safety expectation, we need not consider any discussion about what effect that would have on fire insurance. We note that although fire events may be few in number annually in the Township, a single event can be catastrophic without fire company intervention.

DISCUSSION

How to Narrow the Field

Deciding how to select fire service for a municipality can be a complicated proposition that requires weighing a number of key factors, and not all factors have equal weight. Cost, response time, training level, manpower, equipment, and contract terms are all important considerations. And, before any evaluation occurs, there has to be one or more fire companies available that are able and willing to provide service. Without that, all

other issues are moot.

For the moment let's assume the slate is clean and in addition to the Citizens Hook and Ladder Company all five of the other fire companies are available to provide service to the Township. So, how do we narrow down the field? In choosing a service provider, which factors can be thrown out and which ones need to be assigned more weight than others. On a pure cost basis analysis, the data show that Howard, Snow Shoe, and Port Matilda provided fire protection in 2015 within their respective service areas at between 1/2 and 3/5 the millage rate of Milesburg. Thus, on the face of it, those three fire companies look like attractive options to pursue as alternatives if their services can be deemed adequate. And, Bellefonte's two fire companies could be added to the mix, if further inquiry revealed its cost of service would be lower than Milesburg's.

However, on the question of service expansion, Howard was a flat out no, so Howard can be dropped from further consideration. That leaves Snow Shoe and Port Matilda as candidates for further consideration, and possibly Bellefonte, if its cost for service would be competitive. The question then is, which of these companies is able to provide a service level that is equal to Milesburg or, if not equal, sufficient enough to be adequate for the township's needs?

We think the answer is all of them for the following reasons. First, it seems to us that the mutual aid agreements equalize factors related to maintenance, equipment, and manpower, which are the only things we can weigh since we have no first hand knowledge about training or fire fighting competency among the companies. Second, based on our current knowledge, we have no reason to believe Port Matilda, Snow Shoe, or Bellefonte fire fighters would be any less competent than Milesburg fire fighters or their equipment would be any less effective. Third, although Milesburg has the quickest anticipated response times, the PC believes that because of Union Township's rural character and remoteness, absolute quicker response time is not as crucial to the public's safety as one might think on first impression, and future decisions makers could establish a reasonable range for response times that are quite acceptable from a public safety standpoint. That range is broad enough to include all of these fire companies as viable options for service providers in Union Township. The rationale behind that statement follows.

Relationship of Response Time and Public Safety

As previously noted under "Response Time Comparisons," all the fire companies were ranked by anticipated response times. Milesburg was the quickest followed by Bellefonte (5 to 6 minutes behind Milesburg), Port Matilda (about 6.5 minutes behind

Milesburg) and Snow Shoe (about 10 minutes behind Milesburg). We wondered if Milesburg's time, even though it is the closest fire house to the Township, was quick enough to make a difference in saving structures. If it wasn't, then, there might be a range of acceptable response times that future decision makers could choose from. In other words, a response time of 5 or 10 more minutes later than Milesburg's might not be significant if the record revealed most structures were already totally engulfed by the time Milesburg was able to arrive on scene resulting in total loss. The opposite might be concluded if the structures were saved. It is important to emphasize that when a structure is lost or worse yet, a life, that is not a negative reflection on the fire company. Rather, it is a function of the remoteness of the Township from the nearest fire company. Remoteness is a problem recognized by fire insurance underwriters. Hence, Union Township's poor rating of 9 and 10 on the ISO scale recognizes that by the time the fire company is able to get to the fire, it may be too late to save the structure.

To see what the data would show, the PC had the idea to use the addresses for the 16 structural fires listed on the radio logs obtained from the 911 Center and ascertain owner information from the public record, and then call the owner to find out the results of the fire fighting intervention. However, we ran into trouble here and were advised by the 911 Center that contacting victims would be a misuse of the information the Center gave us and would also be a violation of federal law. Since the PC's intent was never to misuse information or violate the law, we simply acquiesced and did not pursue that information which we thought would be useful in judging whether 5 or 10 minute longer response times would make any difference in saving a structure or preventing secondary fires from developing. This is the number one tradeoff – cost versus response time - that future decision makers would have to weigh if they ever decided to change service.

Our three anecdotal experiences suggest to us that response times of 5 to 10 minutes later than the current service provider's time would not adversely affect the public safety because both structures and the car were lost by the time the fire company was able to arrive. The spread of secondary fires were minimal and we have every reason to believe secondary fire suppression would have been just as effective with these longer response times, which we deem to be reasonable and not excessive.

Although our anecdotal experience is limited and conclusions drawn from it must be viewed cautiously, the PC, nevertheless, believes that because of Union Township's rural character and remoteness, absolute quicker response time is not as crucial to the public's safety as thought on first impression, and future decisions makers can establish a reasonable range for response times that are quite acceptable from a public safety standpoint. In this report we have advocated establishing a threshold of about 10 more minutes longer than Milesburg's time as being acceptable, and that is the basis for

suggesting Bellefonte, Snow Shoe, and Port Matilda would be viable options to pursue as fire service providers. Of those three, Snow Shoe and Port Matilda likely could provide coverage less expensively than Milesburg; Bellefonte's coverage cost is undetermined.

Legal Issues

While Section 1553 of the Second Class Township Code clearly mandates that there has to be fire protection provided for the Township, the “means and extent” of that protection appears to be discretionary, left to the best judgment of the Township's governing body following consultation with fire service providers about the Township's specific needs. Consequently, it appears to the PC that the governing body has discretion under Section 1553 to determine what is adequate fire protection, which would include making a determination about the effect of response time on the public's safety and expectation. However, because this issue involves a legal opinion, Supervisors should seek legal counsel from the Township's Solicitor before embarking on seeking alternative fire service. There likely is case law on the subject which the Solicitor could review to apprise Supervisors of how Pennsylvania appellate courts have interpreted Section 1553.

Decision Making Process – Adequate Coverage

As the PC has studied the issue of what constitutes adequate fire protection, it has become clear that the decision making process occurs at two levels. Union Township is the first level where the governing body would have to decide pursuant to its authority under Section 1553 of the Township Code what “means and extent” of fire protection is adequate to meet the Township's needs. Key to that determination is what threshold on response time to use, as discussed above under the “Relationship of Response Time to Public Safety.” The PC suggested that a range of response times could be viewed as adequate, rather than just the quickest. That range would be one of the prime factors used to choose which fire companies should be viewed for consideration – narrowing down the field.

But, once those fire companies were identified, the Township would need to make a pitch to the appropriate authority to see if there was interest in extending service to Union Township. That process leads to the second level of decision making where the potential service provider must decide if it could extend coverage with its existing resources or would additional resources be needed to provide adequate service.

Judgments by the potential service provider about what is needed to provide adequate

fire protection for Union Township could be quite different from Union Township's perception. Mutual agreement on the issue would have to be negotiated between the Township and potential service provider, which could be dubious when the service provider has a different expectation. And, in talking to fire chiefs, the PC experience is that the service provider almost always has a higher expectation than the Township because the service provider has to be prepared for the worst case scenario, not just the average. The Township is in the weaker negotiating position because any potential service provider can simply say no to the request unless the Township acquiesces to the service provider's judgment. The only time the Township would have an advantage is when the potential service provider needs the additional money that would arise from taking on the extra coverage, and obviously the provider would have to be convinced that the extra revenue would exceed any extra expense incurred in providing coverage.

Two examples previously mentioned illustrate the point. Port Matilda might consider providing service, but in order to do so its fire chief believes a satellite fire station would be necessary in the Township to provide adequate coverage, meaning quick enough response time. But, Union Township would disagree and counter during negotiations that the fire house is close enough to meet the Township's determination on what is adequate response time and therefore a satellite facility is not needed. The COG would ultimately make the decision and the coverage cost to the Township would be determined by the direction of that decision. Without a satellite facility the cost might be retained at its current .8 mills, but with a satellite facility the cost would exceed current coverage cost thereby eliminating Port Matilda as a viable alternative.

The same scenario holds true for Bellefonte where a tanker might be required to meet the fire company's expectation regarding adequate service, the expense for which would make fire coverage by Bellefonte prohibitive. The Township would have to counter that the few fire calls that occur in the Township along with mutual aide agreements negate the need. Recognizing that Milesburg has a tanker that would be on the scene through the mutual aide agreement, Bellefonte might decline coverage so it doesn't step on Milesburg's toes, so to speak. There ought not be any free rides, otherwise, the existing fire companies may go under and the overall fire system weakened.

Dialogue with Other Municipalities

Although the current contract with the citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company doesn't come up for renewal until 2026, the PC believes there are interim steps worth pursuing

to make the Intergovernmental agreement more equitable. Our reading of the current agreement is that it favors the fire company. Substantial changes to the agreement require amendment through a unanimous vote by the Oversight Committee. There are also funding and cost saving issues that could be discussed if there is sufficient interest from the other municipal partners to change the agreement.

Given the complexities and uncertainties of trying to change service providers (it would be a difficult process to go through), a better recourse might be to keep the current service provider, but work on strengthening the relationship. Our hope would be that by making the agreement equitable and working together to keep operating and equipment expenses under control, mutual trust and a good working relationship can be maintained that would protect taxpayer interests. In this light, the PC suggests the following areas should be pursued:

1. **Milesburg - Reduce Operating Cost:** The fire company itself along with input from the municipalities ought to examine how it can control costs to better match Port Matilda and Snow Shoe's budgets. If it can lower budget expenditures while still maintaining adequate service, the municipal contributions can be reduced to save taxpayers money. A change in operating philosophy regarding purchase of fire fighting vehicles may be needed. The Oversight Committee would play a key role in initiating cost saving steps to gradually reduce annual expenditures.
2. **Fair Share:** Is Union Township paying a disproportionate share of the cost for fire protection service? In 2015, the Township payed about \$45,000 (26.6%) out of a total municipal contribution of \$169,000 made to support the fire company, which seemed fair given there are four municipal partners supporting the fire company. However, only 31 calls were responded to in the Township, which was 6.2% of the 500 calls responded to in the service area during 2015. Where did most of those 500 calls occur? Would a fairer support system prorate financial contribution on the basis of service received within a given municipality? Union Township's Supervisors could seek this information and discuss desirability with the other municipal partners to see if there is any interest in modifying the funding formula.
3. **Contract Provisions:** In the near future Union Township should begin an inquiry with the other member municipalities to see if there is interest in amending the current Intergovernmental Agreement to address the following provisions:
 - The term of the agreement is 10 years. Although that length provides stability for the fire company, it deprives the municipalities of the ability to renegotiate the contract in a timely way when unfavorable provisions are discovered. A more balanced approach

would be for 2-year or 3-year terms.

- There ought to be a provision added to the contract that prohibits the municipal representative appointed to the Oversight Committee from also being a member of the fire company. Such provision would eliminate any potential conflict of interest problem that could arise for a municipal Oversight Committee member who had to choose between serving the best interest of the municipality versus the fire company's interest when the two are conflicted.
- Presently, the Oversight Committee has unilateral authority to increase the annual municipal millage contribution paid to support the fire company. Protection from unreasonable rate increases relies on good faith, namely that the fire company will self impose limits on its spending and that any increase in rate requires a unanimous vote by the Oversight Committee. However, these protections do not afford direct municipal intervention in determining how tax payer dollars are spent. The PC firmly believes that any proposal made by the Oversight Committee to increase the municipal contribution should be brought before the municipal governing bodies for approval. Shifting approval from the Oversight Committee to the municipalities would afford transparency to the process and allow citizen input during a public meeting.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the following Conclusions and Recommendations are drawn from this report:

1. Union Township's fire service needs are modest. On average over a 6-year period (2010-2015), 30.2 calls for service occurred annually. Of those, on average, only 2.7 per year were structural fires.
2. The major determinant between higher fire company budgets and lower budgets is debt service which includes mortgages and vehicle financing costs. Once the mortgage is paid off, debt incurred in buying replacement vehicles dominates budgets. Fire companies that have the ability and commitment to use and maintain older fire fighting and emergency vehicles seem to have lower total budgets.
3. The fire companies located in Port Matilda, Snow Shoe, and Howard each provide fire service to their respective municipalities at a significantly lower millage rate than does the Citizens Hook and Ladder Company in Milesburg. They also have overall lower budgets than Milesburg.

4. From a cost perspective, that makes them candidates to explore as options for providing fire service when Union Township's current fire contract expires in 2026, and it also makes them models to be studied on how to hold down cost.
5. However, actual cost of fire service for Union Township by these candidates cannot be deduced simply by examining current millage rates. Each fire company would have to evaluate what its cost would be to extend service, and cost above current millage assessments could be necessitated if additional equipment or a satellite facility, for example, were required to provide adequate protection in the judgment of the fire company.
6. While Section 1553 of the Second Class Township Code mandates that the Township provide fire coverage for its citizens, it appears the requirement affords the governing body discretion to determine what is "adequate protection" to meet the township's fire suppression and emergency service needs.
7. However, judgment about what constitutes "adequate protection" is not exclusively in the hands of the Township's governing body. It is also in the hands of the fire company which must make professional judgments about what is required of it to extend coverage under its concept of what is "adequate protection."
8. A fire company's judgment about what constitutes adequate fire protection could be quite different from Union Township's, causing the Township to face the dubious task of convincing the fire company that the township's judgment is the one to follow. Mutual agreement on what constitutes "adequate protection" would have to be negotiated between the parties, which could be a sticky issue that directly affects the final cost of service.
9. The fire company holds the negotiation advantage since it can simply say no to the request for service unless the Township acquiesces to the fire company's judgment. The only exception would be a fire company in financial straights, looking to shore up revenue sources by acquiring more municipal contributors.
10. Since most metrics between the fire companies studied seemed fairly even, the key tradeoff for the Township in selecting an alternative fire service provider is cost verses response time. All alternative fire companies are located farther away than Milesburg and have longer response times. To save money, future decision makers would have to determine whether obtaining service with longer response times is a reasonable tradeoff that doesn't impact public safety.

11. Because of Union Township's rural character and remoteness, absolute quicker response time is not as crucial to the public's safety as is generally held to be the case in other environments, and future decisions makers could establish a reasonable range for response times that would not diminish the public's safety, albeit the extent of that range would be open to debate since it is a value-laden decision that cannot be made strictly on fact.

12. Bellefonte, Snow Shoe, and Port Matilda all can provide service with response times that are on average 5 to 10 minutes longer than Milesburg. In the PC's judgment, that range is reasonable and would not compromise public safety. Hence, all three are viable options as alternatives to Milesburg for providing Union Township with fire protection. (Howard was not interested in extending service and was dropped from consideration.)

13. Any change in fire service from Milesburg to fire companies located in Port Matilda, Snow Shoe, or Bellefonte would not cause any significant change in cost of fire insurance or change in availability because the service change would not affect Union Township's already poor ISO rating.

14. No impediment to changing the Township's fire service provider arises with the 911 Center. The Center merely needs to be notified of any change and it dispatches accordingly.

15. If an initiative to seek an alternative service provider is ever sought, the process would need to start at least a year ahead of the agreement's January 1, 2026 expiration date. Given the complexities of the decision making and negotiation process, an alternative provider would likely need at least 6 months to make its decision whether it can provide service to Union Township and at what cost, and that determination must precede the 6-month automatic renewal date in order to provide timely notification to the current provider that Union Township intends to terminate.

16. Given the complexity and uncertainty of trying to find a new fire provider when the current agreement expires in 2026, not to mention the adverse financial impact that Union Township dropping out could have on the fire company, a more prudent route might be to keep the current service provider, but work on strengthening the relationship. Our hope would be that by making the current agreement equitable and working together to keep operating and equipment expenses under control, mutual trust and a good working relationship can be developed and maintained that would protect taxpayer interests.

17. The terms of the current Intergovernmental Agreement favor the Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company over the municipalities. Union Township ought to begin a dialogue as soon as possible with the other municipal partners to the agreement to see if they agree and would they be interested in pursuing amendments through the Oversight Committee that would make the agreement more equitable.

18. The areas needing attention that we see are as follows:

- The current 10-year term of the Intergovernmental Agreement is too long and ought to be shortened to 3 to 5 years.
- Municipal representatives on the Oversight Committee ought not be fire company members at the same time in order to avoid any conflict of interest in serving the municipalities' interest versus the the fire company's interest.
- The authority to assess increases in municipal contributions to support fire company operations ought to be vested exclusively with the municipal governing bodies and not with the Oversight Committee.

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1, Milesburg Fire Company, Events Responded to in Union Township

Exhibit 2, Union Township – Fire Department Response Times Analysis

Exhibit 3, Local Fire Company Comparisons

Exhibit 4, Fire Company Demographic Information, pages 64 & 66, *Centre Daily Times* publication, Living Here, 2015-2016

Exhibit 1

Milesburg Fire Company Events Responded to in Union Township 2010 through 2015

Year	Vehicle Fire/crash	Structure	Wild Fire	Medical Assist	Utility pole/trans- former	All Other	Totals
2015	16	1	1	3	0	10	31
2014	8	1	3	1	1	12	26
2013	11	3	3	6	0	8	31
2012	13	7	0	3	6	8	20
2011	14	1	0	2	5	8	30
2010	15	3	0	0	1	7	26
Totals	77	16	7	16	13	53	181
Averages	12.8	2.7	1.2	2.7	2.2	8.3	30.2
% of total events	42.54%	8.84%	3.86%	8.84%	7.18%	29.28%	100.00%

Notes:

- Raw data source is from radio logs compiled by the Centre County 911 dispatch center.
- All call categories reflect the County's 911 classifications.
- Structures include calls to a fire in any type of building, accessory building, and chimney fires.
- All other include calls for fire investigations, hazardous conditions, alarms, landing zone operations, public service, fire police, fire chief, non-traffic accidents, searches, trash fires, and rescues.
- The raw data was compiled into this table format by the Union Township Planning Commission for the purpose of ascertaining how much fire company activity occurs in Union Township.
- The data reflect individual fire events and other events that the fire company responded to at a particular location as opposed to the total number of radio dispatches made for a given event. Some events, depending on severity and size, required two or more dispatches for equipment and personnel.

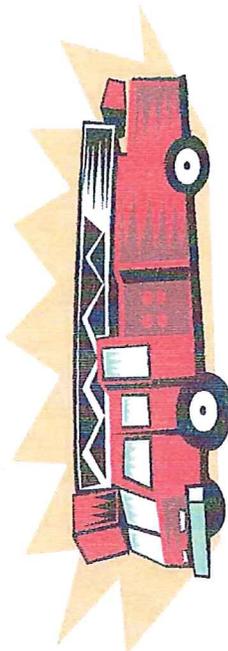
Local Fire Company Comparison

*Apparatus

Fire Company	Annual		Coverage Sq/Miles	Engine		Engine		Rescue		Tanker		Brush		Utility		ATV		Fire Police	
	Budget	Population		Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
✓ CH&L	240K	5532	101	2002	1990	*engine	2006	*engine	2006	2009	2000	2000	2008						
✓ Howard		3570	86	1979	2000	1988	Old	1988				1997							
✓ Port Matilda	110K	5871	101	1999	*rescue	1994		1994		1986									2000
✓ Pleasant Gap	180K	6000	42	1991	1991	1997	1986	1995	1986	1985	2000								
✓ Snow Shoe		3586	81	1980	1997	1995	2011	1985											
✓ Centre Hall		5532	59	1987	1998	2004	2009	1973											
✓ Logan		10851	35	1991	2001			1986											
✓ Undine				1980	1997	1997	1981	1989											

*Some data was retrieved from Fire Company Websites while others (population, coverage) were estimated in part by the County GIS dept.

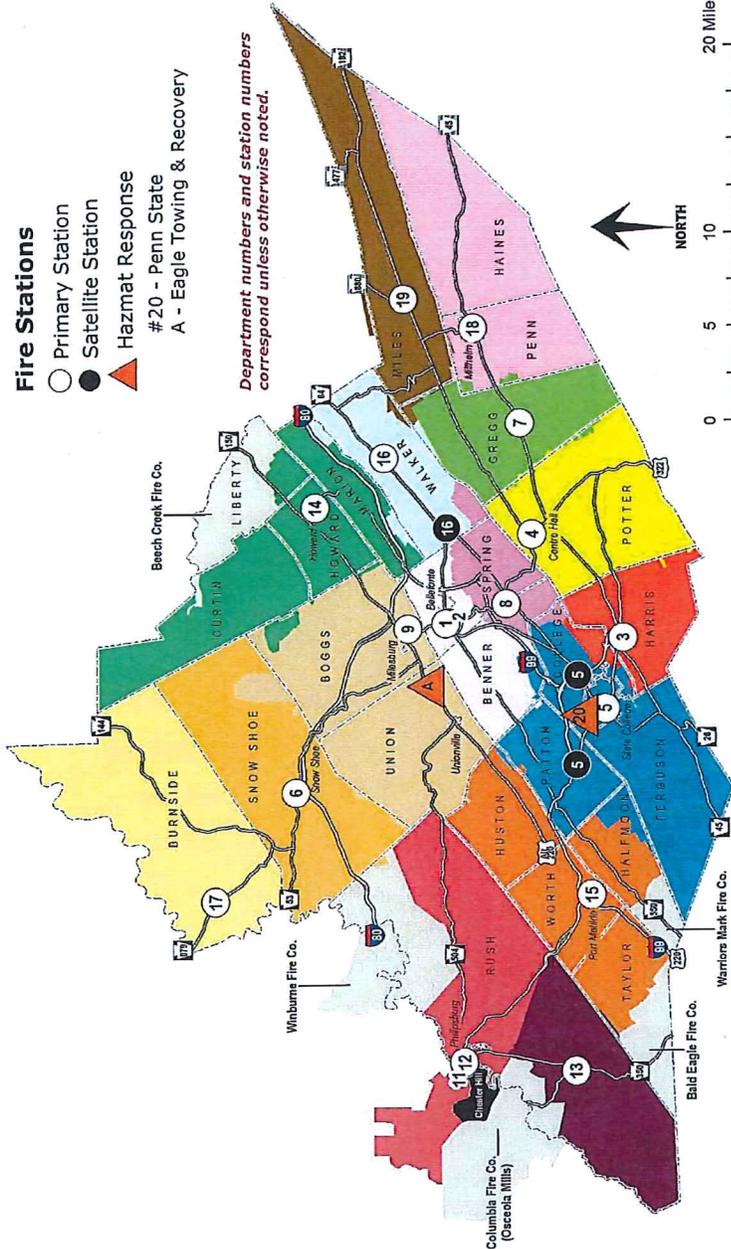
Estimated
 Actual



Fire Coverage Areas in Centre County

- Fire Stations**
- Primary Station
 - Satellite Station
 - ▲ Hazmat Response
- #20 - Penn State
A - Eagle Towing & Recovery

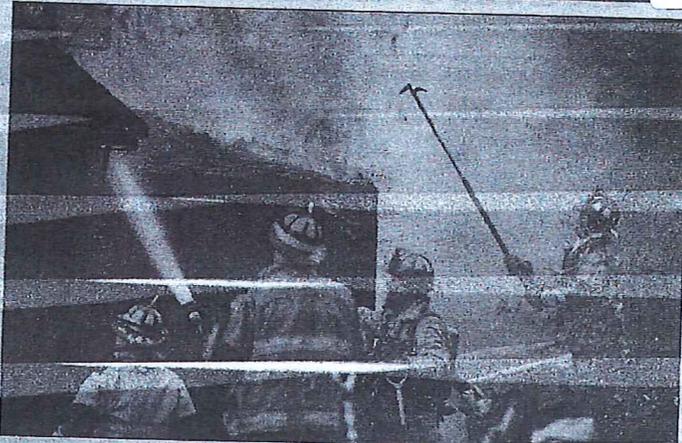
Department numbers and station numbers correspond unless otherwise noted.



- Department/Company**
- 3 Boalsburg Fire Co.
 - 4 Centre Hall Fire Co.
 - 5 Alpha Fire Co.
 - 6 Snow Shoe Fire Co.
 - 7 Gregg Twp. Fire Co.
 - 8 Pleasant Gap Fire Co.
 - 9 Citizens Hook & Ladder Co.
 - 10 Mountaintop Fire Co.
 - 11 Howard Fire Co.
 - 12 Bald Eagle Fire Co.
 - 13 Warrior Mark Fire Co.
 - 14 Port Matilda Fire Co.
 - 15 Walker Twp. Fire Co.
 - 16 Fine Glen Fire Co.
 - 17 Millheim Fire Co.
 - 18 Miles Twp. Fire Co.
 - 19 Philipsburg Fire Companies
 - 11 - Hope Fire Co.
 - 12 - Reliance Fire Co.
 - 20 Bellegonia Fire Companies
 - 1 - Logan Fire Co.
 - 2 - Undine Fire Co.
 - 21 Chester Hill Fire Co.
- Shown for map continuity only. Does not serve Centre County.*

Fire Companies

Exhibit 4 A



CDT file photo/Nabil K. Mark
Firefighters work to extinguish a structure fire, which burned a home along Route 53 in Morris Township in May.

Auxiliary: Developing
Junior firefighters: Established and accepting members from ages 16-18
Number calls/year: About 180
Service area: Centre Hall and Potter Township
For information or to volunteer:
364-1816, www.centrehallfireco.com

CITIZENS HOOK & LADDER COMPANY

Total members: 126
Active members: 30 to 35
Budget: \$190,000
Main fundraisers: Car show, auction
Equipment: 2009 Ford F550 Brush Truck, 2008 Polaris Ranger, 2002 KME Engine/Rescue, 1990 Grumman Engine/Rescue, 2006 Sterling/4Guys Tanker, 2000 Chevy Utility
Auxiliary: Inactive
Junior firefighters: Yes, age 14 to 18
Number calls/year: About 475-500
Service area: Milesburg and Unionville boroughs, Boggs and Union townships
For information or to volunteer:
355-1130 (website no longer active)

GREGG TOWNSHIP FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 250 to 300
Active members: 23
Budget: about \$80,000
Main fundraisers: Carnival, raffles,

hoagie sales, donations
Equipment: 1991 Frontline pumper truck, 2009 Chevy S500 Series Engine-squad, 1980 Four Guys International tanker, brush truck, six-wheeler
Auxiliary: Yes
Junior firefighters: No
Number calls/year: 27, not including chief or public service calls
Service area: Gregg Township, mutual aid with Centre Hall, Millheim and Miles Township
For information or to volunteer:
422-8626, www.greggtownshipfire.web.com

HOWARD FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 150
Active members: 57
Budget: \$125,000
Main fundraisers: Catering and membership mailing and Fall Festival
Equipment: One quicker-response unit, two engines, one tanker, one rescue and fire rescue boat
Auxiliary: Yes
Junior firefighters: Can join at age 14 but cannot participate in emergency calls; at 16 can participate in calls but cannot operate power tools
Number of calls/year: 245
Service area: Howard borough, Howard and Curtin townships, most of Marion Township
For information or to volunteer:
625-2761 or www.howardfire.com

LOGAN FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 225
Active members: 30
Budget: Is combined budget for Logan and Undine fire companies
Main fundraisers/revenue: taxes, Mail drive, dinners and chicken barbecues
Equipment: One engine, one engine-rescue, brush truck, Cascade Trailer and a special utility, attack engine
Auxiliary: 1 as reserve
Junior firefighters: 16 and older
Number calls/year: 350
Service area: Bellefonte, parts of Spring Township, most of Benner Township and parts of Marion Township, which is mostly Interstate 80 calls
For information or to volunteer:
355-3100 or
<http://www.loganfireco1.org/>

MILES TOWNSHIP FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 105
Active members: 52
Budget: \$42,000 estimate
Equipment: One engine, one engine/rescue, one tanker, one brush truck, one utility/QRS
Auxiliary: Yes
Main fundraisers: Carnival July 10-11th, shrimp feeds, hoagie sales, gun raffle, barbecues
Number calls/year: About 180
Junior firefighters: 16 and older
Service area: Miles Township and surrounding municipalities
For information or to volunteer:
349-8149 or fax 349-8942, www.milestownshipfire.com

MILLHEIM FIRE COMPANY

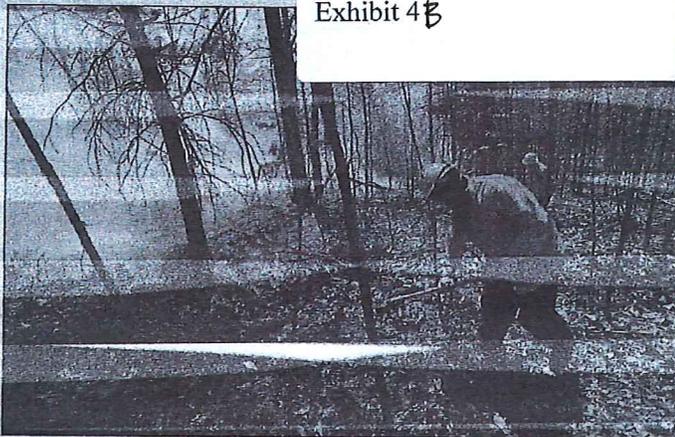
Active members: 50-60
Budget: \$32,000
Equipment: Two engines, one rescue truck, one utility truck and one tanker
Auxiliary: Yes
Main fundraisers: Carnival
Number calls/year: about 140
Junior firefighters: 14 and older
Service area: Millheim, Haines and Penn townships, western part of Miles Township and eastern half of Gregg Township
For information or to volunteer:
349-8164 or www.millheimfire.org

MOUNTAIN TOP FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 60
Active members: 43

See Fire Companies, Page 66

Exhibit 4B



CDT file photo/Nabil K. Mark

Beech Creek Fire Company firefighters Adam Kleckner, front, and Greg Shady, back, fight a brush fire near Brownson Lane in Howard Township in May.

Main fundraisers/revenue: Monthly dinners, annual homecoming celebration, Chinese auction, various raffles and drawings

Number calls/year: 50
Junior firefighters: 12 and older
Service area: Burnside Township
For information or to volunteer: 387-4277

PLEASANT GAP FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 250
Active members: 45
Budget: \$330,000 (Pleasant Gap owns and operates its own ambulances.)

Main fundraisers/revenue: Carnival, donations and annual fund and mail drive
Equipment: One engine unit, one engine rescue unit, one heavy rescue unit, one tanker, one utility unit, one brush truck unit, three basic life support transport ambulances.

Auxiliary: EMS
Junior firefighters: 16 and older
Number calls/year: About 200 fire and rescue calls and 1,300 ambulance calls

Service area: Parts of Benner and lower Spring townships
For information or to volunteer: 359-2102 or www.fire8.com

PORT MATILDA FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 130
Active members: About 50
Budget: \$105,000*

Equipment: One engine tanker, one pumper, one engine/rescue truck, a brush truck, fire police unit and utility truck

Auxiliary: Yes

Main fundraisers: Sunday dinners, carnival, gun raffle, special dinners and events

Number calls/year: About 240
Junior firefighters: 14 and older
Service area: Port Matilda and Worth, Huston, Halfmoon and Taylor townships

For information or to volunteer: 692-4074 or visit www.portmatilda.com or on Facebook at Port Matilda Fire Co. 15

SNOW SHOE FIRE COMPANY

Total members: More than 400
Active members: 25 to 30
Budget: \$75,000 to \$100,000

Main fundraisers/revenue: Chicken barbecue, gun raffle, carnival, township and borough picking up price of truck
Equipment: two engines, rescue unit, tanker, brush truck

Junior firefighters: Age 16 and older
Number calls/year: 70 to 100
Service area: Snow Shoe borough and township; part of Burnside Township; mutual aid with Pine Glen Fire Company

For information or to volunteer: 387-6835

UNDINE FIRE COMPANY

Total members: 800
Active members: 53
Budget: About \$157,000 (combined budget for Logan and Undine fire companies)

Main fundraisers/revenue: Bingo, yearly raffles, building rentals, barbecues and social club

Equipment: Two engines, one ladder

truck, one tower truck, one tanker, one brush truck

Auxiliary: No

Junior firefighters: No

Number calls/year: 392 in 2012 (latest numbers available)

Service area: Bellefonte and parts of Benner, Spring and Marion townships

For information or to volunteer: 355-7265 or www.undinefireco.com

WALKER TOWNSHIP FIRE COMPANY

Total members: About 300

Active members: 35

Budget: About \$90,000

Equipment: Two engines, one tanker, one brush truck, one rescue, one utility

Auxiliary: No

Main fundraisers: Carnival, ham sandwich sales, gun raffle and mail campaign

Number calls/year: About 125

Junior firefighters: 14 and older

Service area: Walker Township, part of Marion Township. Also includes western substation on Cemetery Drive near Zion

For information or to volunteer: 383-4538, www.walkertownshipfire.com

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“Helping Grieving Hearts Heal.”
 The only thing a funeral absolutely has to be is whatever you want it to be.

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