

## **2024 SPECIAL MEETING**

A special meeting of the Duryea Borough Council was held at 315 Main Street, Duryea on November 18, 2024, at 5:05 pm regarding the possibility of paid firefighters, with council president, Stephanie Shupp presiding. After a pledge to the flag, an attendance roll call was taken: (5) council members present; Brudzinski and McGlynn were absent. Mayor Bauman was in attendance. With a quorum present, the meeting continued. This public meeting was advertised in the Times Leader.

Discussion was had regarding the possibility of paid firefighters within the borough. Points of discussion as follows:

- Gino Marriggi explained the proposed plan
  - Plan A funded by borough
  - Plan B funded by fire tax (ems tax)
- Stephanie Shupp questioned if there is a reason other municipalities are using the general fund vs an ems tax.
  - Jeff Hughes stated that there is no reason but should eventually use ems tax as it progresses.
  - Jef Bauman stated that other towns used the minimal amount to start from their general fund. Eventually all expenses from the fire department could be paid through the ems tax. But currently it's small enough to go with the general fund.
  - Jeff Hughes stated that all equipment is currently housed so that doesn't need to come from the ems tax yet, but eventually will.
- Other local FD – how many part timers?
  - Jerry Marsh – one part timer at most. two at Pittston City, Pittston Township and Jenkins.
- Gino Marriggi questioned how the drivers will be chosen? Jeff Hughes stated that applications/qualifications are listed in the proposal. Jerry Marsh stated that certifications are necessary for any applicant.
- Stephanie Shupp brought up a question from Allison Brudzinski: if we choose to staff only one dept during the day, how would that affect the scheduling. What's the resolution for senior employees wanting the same shift. Joe Korea stated there would be rotations for employees. Seniority may not play into this process. Hire date would be counted for the start date, not time spent in hose company. Mike Wall stated that there is an app to put shifts out to all employees. Stephanie questioned one paid driver vs two: what would the pool of people look like? Jeff Hughes, for 2 drivers would need at least 20 applicants, filled by both departments. Drivers are interchangeable for both hose companies to drive both sets of equipment.
- Jef Bauman questioned the negative for only having one driver? Jim Gromelski stated drivers going to another town for an incident would cause an issue. Jeff

Hughes stated that other towns do that also. Jim questioned how the four towns currently having paid firefighters move forward with an agreement without Duryea? Jeff stated that they moved forward without waiting for other towns. Joe Korea stated that council from those towns addressed firefighters at Hughestown and Dupont. Jim questioned what the chances of revisiting the four-town agreement? Jeff stated it could still be on the table. The four-town agreement two years ago was Duryea, Avoca, Hughestown, and Dupont. Jim believes it would work better with the four towns rather than going on or own. Volunteers would continue to show up to calls also.

- Stephanie Shupp questioned if other departments have less volunteers since putting on paid drivers? This might affect the volunteers not being paid to come out to nonemergent calls.
- Gino Marriggi questioned if there are any incentives for volunteers? Jerry Marsh stated that there was talk of a tax incentive for volunteers but it had been shot down.
- Stephanie Shupp questioned if a municipality would be in a better position to get grants if they used the ems tax? Fire department is unsure. The pool is getting smaller but the number of fire departments is getting larger.
- Jeanne questioned the payroll and how to budget for overtime. The fire chiefs will try to attach a number for that line item.
- Since there are no line items in current budget, council will need to discuss during the next budget meeting.
- Jef Bauman stated that the borough could possibly use funds from the emergency funds line item.
- Joe Korea stated that they will bring back feedback for the next meeting.

This discussion ended at 6:01pm and went directly into the scheduled budget meeting.

At the conclusion of the budget meeting, a motion to adjourn was made by McGlynn, second by Marriggi.

*Carolyn Santee*  
*Borough Manager*