

LETTER TO THE Community

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Dear Neighbors,

The Plymouth Community Fire Department has been providing joint fire services for Plymouth Township and the City of Plymouth since 1995. The fire department is operated by the Township and provides contractual fire services to the City.

Recently the City of Plymouth gave Plymouth Township official notice they will be terminating participation in the joint fire department effective December 31, 2011. This will result in an immediate loss of the City's annual contribution of \$1 million and represents one quarter of the fire department's \$4 million annual budget.

With the City withdrawing from the joint fire department the number of calls for service will be reduced by 30%, the percentage of calls for service within the City. While it may seem logical to reduce staff and equipment by a similar percentage that drastic of a cut would severely impact the quality of service the community deserves and could necessitate the closing of a fire station.

First and foremost, we want you to know that the safety and welfare of every Plymouth Township resident is our highest priority, and we will NOT put that at risk. However we also face the daily challenge of providing the highest level of service while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Like most units of government Plymouth Township has been experiencing significant revenue losses for many years. Plymouth Township previously collected \$14 million in total revenues and that figure has dropped to \$12 million, a 15% decrease.

We have been addressing these challenges and to help offset decreased revenues the Township asked employees and elected officials to accept lower wages and reduced benefits. These have been modest, especially when compared to concessions made by private sector employees.

The Township has been successful at seeking wage and benefit concessions by almost all Township employees and bargaining units. Until recently, negotiating meaningful concessions with the fire union has met with continued resistance. While the Township continues to negotiate wages and benefits with the fire union, it is critical that we carefully study the options available for operating a fire department on a reduced budget to assure a smooth transition to a new operational model on January 1, 2012.

We believe there are three viable options to maintain the level of fire department services the community has come to expect including:

- 1) Cutting back the budget by at least 25% while implementing a new model of part and full-time Firefighter/Paramedics. This model would provide the EMS services we currently utilize, including the same level and number of Advanced Life Support (ALS) / Paramedic ambulances stationed within the Township.
- 2) Shared services with other communities
- 3) Citizen petitioned millage increase to cover both the projected public safety budget shortfall and the previous contribution from the City of Plymouth.

I encourage you to read this entire newsletter, as the issues covered are important to the future of our community. I also welcome your feedback, suggestions and questions. Working together we can come up with practical solutions that are best for the entire community and that will maintain our safety and welfare.

Sincerely,

Richard Reaume

Richard Reaume
Township Supervisor

Concessions and Wages

Below is an overview of just a few of the sacrifices made recently by Township departments and employees, as well as facts on Firefighter wages and benefits:

Plymouth Township Employee Wage and Benefit Concessions - Over the past two years, every Township employee has accepted wage and benefit concessions – **with the exception of the Firefighters union**. These concessions range from 5-10% pay cuts among union and non-union employees (including elected officials) and increases in employee and retiree healthcare premium sharing.

Plymouth Community Fire Department Compensation – Firefighters are the highest paid Township employee group at an average **annual compensation of almost \$118,000 per Firefighter**. Also, Firefighters **do not pay ANY premium sharing for their healthcare coverage**.

Position	2010 Total Cash Compensation	2010 Total Cash Compensation with Fringe Benefits
Fire Lieutenant # 1	\$ 101,611.35	\$ 141,155.02
Fire Captain # 1	\$ 99,694.25	\$ 139,141.38
Fire Captain # 2	\$ 97,564.49	\$ 136,534.12
Fire Captain # 3	\$ 97,613.31	\$ 134,577.37
Fire Lieutenant # 2	\$ 94,033.04	\$ 132,136.45
Fire Lieutenant # 3	\$ 93,869.61	\$ 131,228.26
Fire Lieutenant # 4	\$ 91,708.53	\$ 127,571.14
Fire Lieutenant # 5	\$ 93,309.71	\$ 120,686.91
Fire Lieutenant # 6	\$ 83,409.24	\$ 119,194.73
Firefighter # 1	\$ 82,809.73	\$ 118,145.05
Fire Chief	\$ 98,815.20	\$ 117,874.40
Firefighter # 2	\$ 80,741.07	\$ 116,489.42
Firefighter # 3	\$ 80,652.88	\$ 114,153.05
Firefighter # 4	\$ 78,487.40	\$ 113,101.71
Firefighter # 5	\$ 77,991.49	\$ 112,564.81
Firefighter # 6	\$ 76,416.57	\$ 110,310.82
Firefighter # 7	\$ 77,500.31	\$ 109,358.30
Firefighter # 8	\$ 83,555.00	\$ 109,048.93
Fire Inspector	\$ 72,950.37	\$ 107,085.13
Firefighter # 9	\$ 76,152.86	\$ 100,233.52
Firefighter # 10	\$ 76,114.28	\$ 99,983.78
Firefighter # 11	\$ 78,892.29	\$ 97,415.81
Firefighter # 12	\$ 79,080.40	\$ 97,155.25
Average Total Compensation		\$ 117,615.02

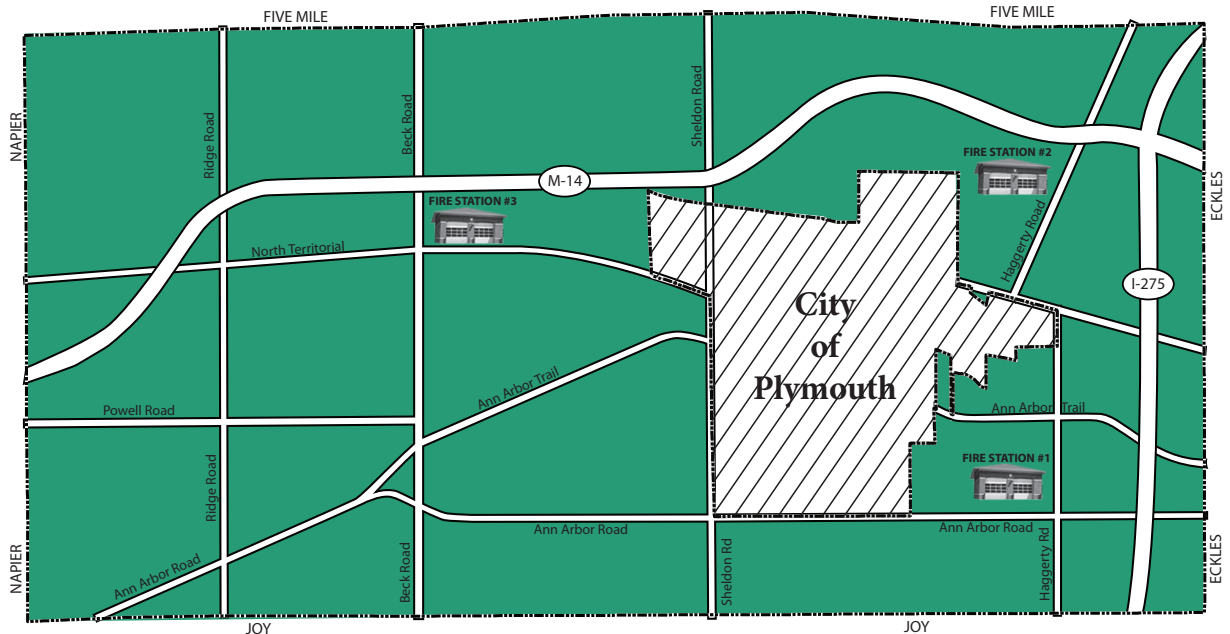
Firefighter Hours – Firefighters work 24 hour shifts - **9.3 days per month** leaving them with **roughly 21 days off each month**. In addition, there are **no work duties scheduled evenings, Saturdays, Sunday or Holidays**.

Average Number of Fire and EMS Runs – There were 499 fire runs and 1,479 EMS-related runs in Plymouth Township made by the fire department in 2009, or an average of 5.4 runs per day. This **averages 1.8 Fire and EMS runs per station, per day**.

Firefighter Retiree/Legacy Costs – Firefighters can retire after 25 years at **70% of their pay**. Retirees also receive **free lifetime medical coverage** and **pay no out-of-pocket premium sharing costs**. The total of these “legacy” costs alone is expected to be **\$11 million over the next 20 years**.

Runs, Coverage and Possible Solutions

The City of Plymouth will be ending their participation in the joint community fire department effective December 31, 2011 to partner with the City of Northville and their less expensive paid on-call fire department. Plymouth Township is faced with the current \$300,000 fire department tax revenue shortage and the loss of the City's \$1 million annual contribution. **The number of calls for service will be reduced by 30% and the geographic area of responsibility will also be reduced.**



Fire Department averages 1.8 Fire and EMS runs per station per day

There are three options currently under consideration:

Operate the Fire Dept. with a budget reduced to less than \$3 million – Maintain the current 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage at all fire stations with full-time firefighter/Paramedics and the addition of part-time firefighter/Paramedics. The private ALS Paramedic ambulance service will continue to respond and perform the majority of medical transports just as they have done for the past 16 years along with the firefighter/Paramedics. This level of Fire and EMS/ALS service will continue to qualify for reciprocal Mutual Aid from surrounding communities and maintains average ambulance response times of 4-6 minutes that meets the Wayne County Medical Authority ALS licensure requirement.

Shared services with other communities – Just as it was with the City of Plymouth this option can be successfully implemented with other communities. The Township is currently in preliminary discussions with adjoining communities to investigate any potential for shared Fire and EMS/ALS services.

Millage Increase – Township citizens have the right to petition a vote for a millage increase to raise additional Fire Department funding through a property tax increase.

There may be other options the Township has not yet explored and we invite all Township residents to provide their feedback and suggestions.

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Brief Overview | FAQ's

What are the issues with the Township Fire and Paramedic services?

Lower property values and decreased tax revenues have played a part in a change to the City of Plymouth/Plymouth Township shared fire and emergency services agreement. The tax revenue declines along with the City of Plymouth withdrawal from the joint Plymouth Community Fire Department will result in a **\$1.3 million Fire Department budget deficit beginning January 1, 2012.**

How will it affect me?

The Township will be forced to make some difficult decisions regarding potential Fire Department employee cuts and a reconfiguration to the Township fire and emergency services.

Will I be losing Fire and Paramedic services?

No. Although the Township faces a serious financial challenge, we want to assure you that **we hold your safety as our highest priority, and we will not leave you without round-the-clock Fire and Paramedic services** stationed within Plymouth Township providing response times **as good as or better** than we have now.

What can be done to maintain our Fire and Paramedic service levels?

There are currently three possible solutions that would provide the Fire and Paramedic service that Plymouth Township residents have come to expect and deserve. Please look inside for more details, and we encourage your feedback and suggestions.