

**MINUTES**  
**October 15, 2020**  
**Milford Township Milford Borough Milford Fire Department Joint Zoom Meeting**  
**6:30 p.m.**

A joint meeting of Milford Township, Milford Borough, and Milford Fire Department and Ambulance was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Frank Turquino through a Zoom call, the meeting ID for which had been advertised in advance in the Pike County Dispatch. Also present were Gary M. Williams (Milford Township Supervisor), Rachel Hendricks (Milford Township Supervisor), Joseph Dooley (Milford Borough Supervisor), Ed Nikles (Dingman Township Supervisor), Jane Neufield (Delaware Township Supervisor), Jeff Christensen (Milford Fire Department Chief), Jill Mann (Milford Fire Department Treasurer), and Shahana Shamim (Milford Township Secretary).

Mr. Turquino thanked the Fire Department personnel for their service to the community. He added that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed ambulance tax referendum, which was added into the ballot for the upcoming election, and services and financial needs of the Fire Department. Rachel thanked the Fire Department for their continuous effort, and she added that these volunteers put themselves into risks for their services to the community. Rachel said that she had asked the Fire Department to present the cash flow report and service plan of the year and how much money would be needed for this planned service.

In reply to the meeting attendants' inquiries Mr. Jeff Christensen said that they enjoyed providing this service, but the situation was going out of hand because of lack of volunteers, and not because of COVID-19. They would continue providing services that they were providing, which is 24 hours for all seven days of the week. Rachel inquired if they would bill for paid services in the nights when they run out of volunteer services, and Mr. Christensen replied that they would continue with 12-hour service in that case. He continued that they had lost one of EMS workers because of injury, and two more night-time EMS workers were supposed to join soon. They had received 502 calls so far to date, 39% of those calls came from Dingman Township, 17% from Milford Township, 23% from Milford Borough, 7% from Shohola, 3% from Sussex, 6% from Delaware, 2% from Blooming Grove, and 3% from Westfall Township. 448 responses, which is 88% of all calls, were made. He pointed out that 35% calls happen at night.

Rachel inquired if the Fire Department would need to purchase any new equipment. Mr. Christensen replied that the rescue truck was recently refurbished, and everything would be ordinary in the current year. Rachel commented that the fund raising was a significant line item in the budget of the Fire Department. Jill Mann said that the Bingo and coin tosses had been a big source of income before COVID-19 had started. Municipal marketing, which is the other source of income, is a fund-raising company, it mails financial requests, and brought in \$23,605. Last year Bingo brought in about \$60,400, whereas only \$24,000 was spent for supplies, food, paper products, and postages for mailings. Bingo was stopped, and it won't start until the COVID-19 is settled. Mr. Mike Bello is in charge of taking care of grants, and that might help for the rest of the year. They started other fund-raising activities, such as, pool fills and selling

lottery calendars. Mr. Turquino said that along with working as EMS volunteers, they also go on Saturdays to run the Bingo.

Mr. Christensen said that they did not have the dollar amount of what was acquired from insurances, as a time difference of six months existed between the billing and receiving the money. He continued that the amount of money depended on the type of insurances. They received \$500 from Medicare for providing all kinds of services, whereas some receipts from other insurances were as low as \$35. Rachel asked for an average of the amount that was billed and the amount that was received from insurances for the past three years. Jill Mann replied that an average of \$104,500 was received out of the billing in 2017, 2018, and 2019, and that was a huge part of the operating budget. The average income and expense of Fire and Ambulance for these three years were \$393,341 and \$372,001.36 respectively. EMS had a bigger profit in these three years, and the average was \$155,600, and the average expense was \$88,866.23. The income and the expense for Fire was \$237,000 and \$283,135.13 respectively.

Rachel requested to explain the fiscal control, fraud prevention, and accountability policies, as a large portion of taxpayers' money would be contributed. Ms. Mann replied that Myer & Myer, the accountant's office, did their books every year, and it is audited every year. There are finance committee meetings every month, any expense, which is higher than \$600, comes to the committee. All credit cards have limits, and checks are signed right before being paid. Rachel asked to share audit reports for the transparency of taxpayers. She inquired if the tax money (if the referendum passes) would be used for third party services. Mr. Christensen said that they would keep providing services with third party staffing until they run out of this new money, and they will stop providing services whenever this money runs out. Only volunteers would work from then on.

Rachel said that if the tax increase referendum passes, then the ambulance tax money would start coming in March of 2021. She continued that they (Milford Township Board of Supervisors) had already increased the tax by half a mill, as the ordinance had allowed to do so. An ambulance tax referendum is placed in the ballot to raise this tax to two mills. They had changed the front wall sign to urge residents to vote for the ambulance tax referendum, and if the referendum passes, then Milford Township would be able to generate \$56,000 for the ambulance. Mr. Dooley said that Milford Borough had advertised to vote for two mills of ambulance tax referendum, and Milford Borough would be able to generate \$40,000 if this referendum passes. He continued that they had posted the ad in their website also. The total of these two would cover half of what is needed to cover 7am -7pm call service. He asked Mr. Christensen to work on breaking down the call volumes based on each day of a week.

Mr. Ed Nikles suggested keeping paid EMS in weekdays and using volunteers in weekends to keep the cost down to \$130,000. Mr. Christensen replied that they were losing volunteers, as these volunteers preferred to get paid by working somewhere else. Rachel said that Shohola Township had prepared their budget already, and she inquired if that Township had allocated any money for the Fire and Ambulance. Mr. Christensen said 'no'.

One of the residents said that the money from two mills of tax referendum by Milford Township and Milford Borough would cover a lot of months of the year. She enquired what percentage of calls they received from Belle Reve Senior Care Center. Jeff replied that they usually get a lot of calls from there, and it is roughly about half of the calls that they get from Milford Borough. He continued that they receive about \$500 for each call from this senior center, and they call whenever there is really an issue. Seniors are covered by Medicare, which pays well, but the payment is less if they just treat on the spot, and not transport. This resident

inquired if Shohola Township was approaching to help in this situation. Rachel replied that Shohola had given some money for ambulance, but that would be reimbursed from the COVID-19 relief. She added that no tax referendums for ambulance were added in that township's ballot either.

Rachel said that one of the residents in regular meetings had suggested putting a liaison into the table of Fire Department in order to improve the communication and understanding. Jeff replied that one representative of each Municipality would not be a problem. Frank said that one of the representatives of the Fire Department used to present activities in Milford Borough meetings. Jeff replied that these presentations would resume soon. The meeting ended at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully.

Shahana Shamim  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Milford Township  
Pike County