



# *Winslow Township Fire District #1*



12Dec22

To our Winslow Township Community, we hope this letter finds you and your family well. As many of you are aware we strive to provide the highest level of Fire and Rescue services to you, as well as being involved in many other positive programs here in the Township. At this time, I would like to make you aware of the needs within the Fire Department that will have impacts in our ability to deliver proper service levels in the years to come. With an imposed State Budget CAP of 2% for nearly a decade, our agency after making numerous financial cuts, is struggling to maintain service levels. This has especially grown more challenging since the pandemic and the increasing of various expenses relating to our operations. In addition, we are facing staffing shortages to meet emergency response needs safely and adequately as well as in the appropriate response time standards. Our department is made up of Career (paid) and Volunteer Firefighters who serve this very large community that is continuing to grow. We have amazing and dedicated Volunteer Firefighters, but frankly we do not have enough of them and those numbers continue to dwindle down (as in other parts of our County, State and Nation). There are many aspects to why this is occurring of which some are various requirements, mandatory training, increasing incident call volume, family and work obligations and the like. This is putting a significant increased strain on our organization in not only our response times to incidents, but also ensuring we are compliant with many mandatory requirements. The concern is growing, especially in light that we had to operationally close the Cedar Brook Fire Station this year due to volunteer staffing shortages.

We are desiring to financially support a second fire apparatus, staffed with Career Firefighters to balance the response times in Winslow Township. This unit will also be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year from the Waterford Works Fire Station (Station 25-8) located on Southard Avenue complimenting the already existing staffed unit located at the Sicklerville Fire Station (Station 25-7) located on Church Road. This will also aid in the reduction of response times throughout the Township, which is essential. In addition to the hiring of staff, this referendum request will also fulfill all ancillary needs associated, funding to continue Volunteer Firefighter recruitment and retention incentives, Volunteer Firefighter Duty Crew program, Training, Information Technology, Infrastructure Improvements as well as additional funds for fleet maintenance support and firefighting equipment. This move is to put **YOUR** Fire Department in a better position to serve the residents and commercial entities here. Winslow Township is growing with many residential and commercial projects that have either started or will be developed.

## **Administrative Office**

We know that this is a significant ask of you, especially with the current economic impacts of life. We did not take this decision lightly and it was determined the best approach was to ask once for this and not to piecemeal this program. We want to fulfill the requirements to meet the life safety emergency needs of our community. Attached is information for your review for our referendum question which will be asked on Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023. You will be able to vote in person here at Fire Headquarters (9 Cedar Brook Road, Sicklerville N.J. 08081) or through the "Vote by Mail" process. The in-person poll times are from 2 P.M. through 9 P.M. We will host a few open public meetings prior to the referendum for this and those will be announced in the near future. If you should have any questions on this or other Fire Department related topics please feel free to contact me at 609-561-4225 and ask to speak with Fire Chief Marc S. Rigberg. As the holiday seasons approach, we also want to wish you and your family a safe, healthy and festive holiday as well as a Happy New Year!

Respectfully



Marc S. Rigberg  
Chief of Department  
Winslow Township Fire Department