

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad would like to take the opportunity to answer the Public Safety Committee Report. After reading the subcommittee report, the members of the Tabernacle Rescue Squad feel that this report does not reflect the "true" picture of emergency services in Tabernacle Township. We feel the report leaves out information provided by officers of the organization and other organizations in this community. The report contains misleading information. The information and opinions of the author(s) are not based on facts but on emotions and personalities. It paints our organization and leaders in a bad light and does not identify any real issues with the Tabernacle Rescue Squad and its operation. The Tabernacle Rescue Squad in 2004 set out on a plan to better the EMS and Rescue services in Tabernacle Township, which was supported by the township committee at that time.

In 2016, the squad has **met and exceeded** all of the goals that were set and we are very proud of these accomplishments. We feel that the subcommittee report and recommendations will greatly affect this successful operation and caused the rescue squad to go backwards, not forward. The other issue is that the squad has enjoyed having a great working relationship with the township committee. The rescue squad now feels that because we have not immediately met the demands of a few on the committee, our organization has become the target of these individuals and this will hurt our organization. The squad officers have been painted as hiding things, lying to the committee and verbally berated for not meeting these unreasonable demands. We feel that this report has not been written objectively but subjectively with a pre-determined conclusion. We feel that important information has been left out, improper information has been reported and identified problems not addressed. I will now provide the problems with this report and our response to them.

#1: (Page #1 Para 2) Purpose

*"...Revelation of a contract between the Tabernacle Rescue Squad and the Township of Shamong."*

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad DOES NOT HAVE A CONTRACT with Shamong. The agreement with Shamong was so that we would not balance bill their residents when requested through the County Mutual Aid Agreement which is signed by township committee. The agreement also states that when Shamong EMS became operational with its billing, that they would not bill OUR residents when they were requested for mutual aid into Tabernacle. This was done so that if we needed Shamong EMS to respond in to our township, our residents would not be balanced billed. There is no guarantee of service beyond the mutual aid agreement by the Tabernacle Rescue Squad for these responses. This agreement was signed with the understanding that Shamong was going to begin to balance bill, which they have not done as of this point. This agreement was also offered to Medford and Southampton but never returned.

#2 (Page #1 Para 3) Participants

*"The subcommittee met individually and with many concerned individuals and organizations...met with various officers and members of the Tabernacle Rescue Squad and Tabernacle Fire Company #1...Tabernacle Township staff members, residents of Tabernacle and surrounding communities, various local government officials from surrounding communities, former Tabernacle Township Committee Members, the Tabernacle Township Administrator and county, state, and federal government officials. Because of the Township Committee's commitment to the issue we also reviewed emergency management structures in other states."*

Who did the subcommittee meet with? The only people from the Tabernacle Rescue Squad that the subcommittee met with were Chief George Jackson III, Assistant Chief Keith Zane, President Jamie Wood and Vice President Terri Zane. No members of the rescue squad were met with, including the dual members of both organizations.

What Tabernacle Township staff members?

What residents of Tabernacle were met with?

What residents of surrounding communities were met with? Why?

What local governmental officials from surrounding communities? Why?

What former Tabernacle Township Committee members?

What county, state, federal government officials?

What "emergency management" structures from other states did they review?

The subcommittee reports that they spoke to all of these people but who was actually spoken to? Why are their names not listed in this report, what they were asked and what were the responses? What information was developed from these people that was used in this report? Which members of the subcommittee actually met with these people? During the meetings with the rescue squad, Mayor Lee met with the squad by himself three times, Mayor Lee and Deputy Mayor Yates once and Mayor Lee and Committeeman Franzen once. Throughout the subcommittee's ten-page report the only people that are remotely quoted are Chief Jackson and Chief Smith.

#3 (Page #2 Para 2) Emergency Medical Services

*"This building project was funded and continues to be supported by the taxpayers of Tabernacle."*

The Emergency Services Building (ESB) was constructed after being voted on by the residents of Tabernacle Township during the November 2010 election. The residents SUPPORTED this building being constructed and approved the funding of this multi-purpose building during a general election. The squad's initial intentions were to build a new station on our own for just the rescue squad. We were approached by the then township committee to build a multi-purpose building, which then became a township project. The squad paid for all of the architectural plans for the building. It should also be noted that the fire house renovations that were completed in the early 2000's were also approved by voters during a fire commissioner election. Why is the multi-purpose ESB being held against the squad? The residents of this community approved both building projects for the volunteers.

*"Although the TRS has been serving Tabernacle's residents since the early 1950's, only recently has the TRS been authorized provider of Ambulance and Rescue Services in the township pursuant to Ordinance. "*

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad was recognized by ordinance 2011-3 as the Ambulance and Rescue Services provider for Tabernacle Township. Prior to that, the rescue squad was recognized yearly as the Ambulance and Rescue Service provider for Tabernacle Township by way of a resolution. It

was changed to an ordinance so that a resolution did not have to be passed every year. It was also created as an ordinance for licensing purposes with the NJDOHSS OEMS.

*“In addition, the Township of Tabernacle economically supports the TRS for residents that do not have health insurance or limited insurance resources and therefore compensate the TRS for their services.”*

In late 2012 and January 2013 the Tabernacle Rescue Squad brought its plan to the Tabernacle Township committee to bill for service. One of the requests of the then committee was that the rescue squad would not balance bill township residents for services. Insurance billing is regulated by the federal government under the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG). To ensure that the program set up between the township and the rescue squad was legal and met all requirements, the rescue squad had the program reviewed by the OIG and an opinion issued to protect both the rescue squad and township. The opinion cost the rescue squad approximately \$10,000.

In October of 2014 the OIG issued opinion 14-09. In the opinion the following statement was made by the OIG.

**Under the Arrangement, the Township effectively assumes all Out-of-Pocket Amounts owed to the BLS Supplier for Residents. As we state in the OIG Compliance Program Guidance for Ambulance Suppliers:**

**A city or other political subdivision of the state... may not require a contracting ambulance supplier to waive copayments for residents, but it may pay uncollected, out of pocket copayments on behalf of its residents. Such payments may be made through lump sum or periodic payments reasonably approximate the otherwise uncollected cost-sharing amounts.**

#4 (Page #2 Para 3)

*“The TRS has been able to fund the reimbursement program by using some of the money collected from insurance companies and has also been able to finance the purchase of an ambulance and other equipment including, but not limited to power stretchers for each ambulance. “*

The reimbursement program is completely funded by the monies collected from insurance companies. Also funded was the remounting of 4392 at a cost of \$125,000, which was a savings of \$60,000 over a new ambulance, vehicle maintenance of all vehicles either township or squad owned, Equipment maintenance, medical supplies, rescue equipment, medical equipment, new stretchers and savings for future ambulance replacement.

#5 (Page #3 Para 1) FIRE Services

*“Firefighting service has experienced a substantial decrease in membership since the new Emergency Services Building was completed, the Tabernacle Fire District was dissolved and the township committee selected the TFC#1 as the provider of services.”*

How did the ESB contribute to the decline in membership? The building opened in 2012 and the dissolution of the fire district occurred in December 2014 and the TFC was appointed at that time. What was the decline in membership between the opening of the ESB and the changes made by the township? Do you have numbers to back up this claim?

#6 (Page #3 Para 2) Rescue Services

*"The rescue truck which was at the center of a lawsuit between the MFVFC and the TRS/Tabernacle Township is now housed in the new Emergency Services Building..."*

The rescue truck was not at the center of the lawsuit. There were two pieces of equipment, air packs and rescue struts, that were at the center of the lawsuit. The lawsuit proved the items were donated to the rescue truck and ultimately, the township. The lawsuit was settled by the fire company and township and the fire company gave up any claim to that equipment. The rescue truck has been housed in the ESB since 2012. It was the first vehicle housed in the ESB.

#7 (Page #4 Para2) Fire Services

*"Tabernacle Township is served by the same basic core of volunteers that work in the rescue squad."*

Other than stating that some the volunteers of the Tabernacle Rescue Squad are very dedicated to the residents of Tabernacle, what are you trying to say with this statement?

*"The Fire Company Volunteers, in part, believe that their services are under-utilized and the Township assigns a greater amount of responsibility and resources to the TRS."*

The fire company is charged with providing fire protection to the residents of the township which is a very important job. The rescue squad is charged with providing EMS and Rescue Services to the residents of the township, which is an equally important job. The fire service has seen a decrease in call volume due to improvements in construction regulations, techniques and materials. EMS over the past two decades has become the busier service in just about every community in the country. As our population grows older and larger, EMS has seen an increase. Rescue services as performed by the rescue squad has seen a decrease also due to better and safer vehicles. Members for the fire company are not prevented from participating with the squad and there are several dual members. The squad has also formed a Special Operations unit which would allow fire company members to participate in rescue and other functions of the rescue squad that do not involve EMS. Additionally, the squad allows fire company members to participate in rescue in the township, providing that they meet the training requirements which the squad has set for everyone doing rescue, squad or fire.

As far as resources assigned to the fire company compared to the squad, we feel that this statements is not true. Currently, the township owns two vehicles that the squad operates, (Ambulance 4391, Rescue 4399.) The township owns all vehicles operated by the fire company, which were transferred from the fire commission. The township has not decreased the number of vehicles they operate and there is a new \$550,000 engine under construction. Both buildings are now owned by the township. The rescue squad shares its station with the Office of Emergency Management and Pinelands CERT. The fire company is the sole occupant of the firehouse. Both companies have a use occupancy agreement for their respective stations.

The township also provides insurance and fuel to both organizations. In 2015, the township provided the following direct financial support to the agencies:

Rescue Squad: \$70,000

Fire Company: \$90,000

In addition to the above monies provided to the fire company, the township maintained all of their vehicles and equipment out of municipal budget. The township also purchased equipment for the fire company in 2015 out of the municipal budget.

The rescue squad incurred all of the above expenses listed in their own budget. The township did not maintenance any of the squad's vehicles and equipment, or purchase new equipment in 2015.

In the 2016 budgets, these are the projected direct financial support to the agencies:

Rescue Squad: \$35,000

Fire Company: \$90,000- \$150,000

As of this writing, the township budget has not been completed.

*"it is believed that the continued issues since the dissolution of the fire district have been a large cause in many of the issues we are experiencing today. The TFC#1 has continued to answer the call in spite of the internal issues they are experiencing. Although not thoroughly investigated, there is currently in-fighting and conflicts regarding the overall leadership of the organization."*

There have been continued issues with the fire company since the dissolution of the fire district. This is due to no plan to operate the fire service in the township by the township committee. The fire company has been left with no direction on how to handle certain functions that need to be done as a part of normal operations. The township administrator has not been given direction from the committee on how to handle issues with the fire company. The Tabernacle Rescue Squad has a defined relationship with the township committee and township administrator. It has been a successful relationship that has benefited the township and the rescue squad in years past. During a meeting of the subcommittee involving Chief Jackson, Chief Smith, V. President T. Zane, Mayor Lee and Committeeman Franzen, Chief Smith addressed this issue with the subcommittee. Chief Smith requested assistance from the township in carrying out maintenance of the station, vehicles and equipment. Chief Smith stated that the functions were handled by the fire commission in the past and he is now tasked with them. Chief Smith stated that although he was handling the tasks currently, he felt that he would not be able to continue to handle them. He requested someone from the township to assist them. Both Chief Jackson and V. President T. Zane stated that the squad handles all of their maintenance internally and does not need assistance from the township. Chief Jackson suggested to Mayor Lee that they work with Chief Smith and consider a position within the township (like a fire administrator) that could assist the fire company with the running of the fire service in the township, or task the township administrator with assisting them. The responsibilities and expectations for running the fire service would have to be defined for the township administrator.

*“With consistent support of the taxpayers of Tabernacle, the TRS has been recognized for their response, leadership, innovation and overall services throughout New Jersey. In 2013 they received recognition from the NJ First Aid council for their accomplishments which was clearly deserved.*

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad has received support from the residents of Tabernacle Township as outlined in the plan laid out by the rescue squad and township committee in the past. The goal was for the rescue squad to become less financially dependent on the township. After the first three years of billing for service (2013, 2014, 2015) the rescue squad requested a **REDUCTION** in the township’s budget from \$70,000 to \$40,000 which would just cover the write off amounts for residents as agreed upon by the township and the rescue squad, and written in the OIG opinion. The award received by the Tabernacle Rescue Squad was for Outstanding EMS Agency which was given by the New Jersey Department of Health Office of Emergency Medical Services. There are over 400 volunteer EMS agencies that are eligible for this award. This paragraph does accurately describe the hard work and dedication of the volunteers and shows the excellent level of service provided to our residents.

#9 (Page #5 Para 1)

*“In Tabernacle, vehicle rescues are “patient based” and provided by TRS while all other rescue services with perhaps the exception of equine, are provided by the fire company. However, the TFC is a rescuer provider through mutual aid in Woodland Township.*

What types of rescue are provided by the fire company in Tabernacle? The rescue squad is the recognized rescue company in the township and has been for many years. All rescue functions fall under the control of the rescue squad as per county policies and grids with the exception of fire ground RIT operations. The rescue squad also provides Marine and Off Road services. Other rescues such as confined space, trench, high angle, etc. are provided through the Burlington County OEM through the Burlington County Technical Rescue Team, the same as the county hazmat team. This team is run by the BCOEM and is made up of Fire and EMS companies from Bordentown, Mount Laurel, Evesham, Westampton and members of the Tabernacle Fire Company and Tabernacle Rescue Squad. Equine rescue is done as a collaborative effort with the Tabernacle Rescue Squad, Tabernacle Fire Company, Tabernacle OEM and CERT. Tabernacle OEM provided the training for both companies and members from both are trained in equine rescue. The rescue squad has a majority of the equipment and both stations are dispatched for equine rescues in Tabernacle Township.

The TFC provides rescue in Woodland Twp. as indicated above. The Tabernacle Township committee purchased Rescue 4399 in 2006 and the rescue squad equipped it. The rescue squad maintains a well-equipped state of the art rescue truck at no cost to the township. The fire company has now set up their own “rescue” to provide rescue service to Woodland. There has been a lot written about the squad providing mutual aid to other communities and what the cost is to the taxpayers. Why is the township allowing the fire company to maintain a second rescue for the sole purpose to provide rescue services in another community?

#10 (Page #5 Para 2)

*“ In 2012, a lawsuit filed between MFVFC and TRS over certain equipment that was used to build the truck for service.”*

The equipment that was donated to the truck and ultimately to the township, which was settled in the lawsuit. This incident occurred in December of 2010 and ended in 2013. Why do we continue to bring this up? The rescue was purchased in 2006 for the rescue squad and has been in their control since its purchase.

#11 (Page #5 Para 3)

*“It is clear to the subcommittee that the TFC#1 would like to be more involved with the delivery of rescue services, and previously were the primary staffing agency for the rescue truck #99, as it was housed at the facility on Hawkins Road... The fire company believes that the dedication of rescue services to the TRS has weakened to volunteerism associated with fire service. Unfortunately, this conflict has been increasing difficult for dual members and has been on-going for some time.”*

The fire company has NEVER been the primary staffing agency for the rescue truck. This claim was made in 2010 by then Fire Chief John Welling. Chief Jackson III produced a report that showed that claim to be not true. Out of the approximate 200 dispatches during that period of time, there was only one occasion that the rescue truck was occupied by just fire company members and it was in response to a fire. There were several occasions that the squad occupied the truck solely. The top responder on the rescue truck was Chief Jackson III and he was on 60 percent of the truck responses. The report also showed that the Taskforce was working at the time and members of both organizations were operating on the truck. During 2010, the township and rescue squad were told to remove the truck from the fire house by Chairman of the Fire Commissioners which was later retracted. In 2012, as planned, the rescue truck moved to the ESB.

The rescue services have been the responsibility of the Tabernacle Rescue Squad since the early 70's when the rescue squad purchased its first set of porta-power tools. In 1983, the rescue squad purchased their first set of the “JAWS of Life” and has continued to build the rescue program to what it is today. The rescue squad being assigned the rescue duties is nothing new to the fire company and has not affected the membership or weakened the company in the past. Before Rescue 4399 arrived, while it was housed in the fire house temporarily, after it left and moved to the ESB, the fire company membership changed with no impact from the rescue truck. As discussed earlier in the report, the construction of the ESB, the dissolution of the fire district and the change of the fire company from the MFVFC and TFC have been blamed. The rescue truck being here since 2006 and the ESB being here since 2012 never had an impact. The dissolution of the fire district, change of the fire company, internal issues and conflicts regarding leadership have contributed to the weakening of volunteerism to the fire service.

#12 (Page 5 Para 4)

*“The Fire Company Members believe that TRS has been too restrictive in allowing them to participate as part of the Joint Taskforce 439...”*

“Taskforce 43” which is a dispatching protocol has not changed since its creation in 2006. As far as the Fire Company Members participating in rescue services in Tabernacle Township, the same rules have applied since the beginning. If you participate in the on-going training, you may do rescue. This rule is the same for both the members of the Rescue Squad and Fire Company.

#13 (Page 5 Para 5)

*“Although speculative on the subcommittee’s part, this conflict is perhaps a result of the type of training required by Chief Jackson, who oversees #99.” The TRS under the direction of Chief Jackson trains their members in-house under guidelines that are above and beyond what is required to be certified in other rescue companies outside of Tabernacle.”*

Since 2006, the Tabernacle Rescue has used the same system of training requirements to be certified to do rescue in Tabernacle. This is the same training requirement, which both the fire company and rescue squad members all participated in 2006. In years past, the fire company and rescue squad trained together in this rescue training which was agreed upon by the Chiefs of both organizations. This style of training promoted teamwork, skills, and working together to provide “patient based” vehicle extrication. Only in the past few years has the fire company decided to not participate in the group training. The rescue squad provides all training free of charge to the members of the Fire Company and Chief Smith is provided a list of the dates each year. The training meets the standard of NFPA 1006 and 1670 which is the NFPA’s regulation and guidelines on rescue training, which all rescue companies should be training to. The training is done by an internationally known extrication instructor, which has produced textbooks and other education materials and writes a column for a national trade publication on rescue and vehicle extrication. Chief Smith has stated that he wants to send his members elsewhere for training but still participates in rescue. Chief Jackson feels this breaks up the teamwork practices, which ultimately affects patient care. Chief Smith stated that he wants to send his members to the Burlington County Emergency Services Training Center (ESTC). The ESTC charges \$225.00 per student for the basic extrication class, which is ultimately paid for by the taxpayers. The student will train with other students that they will likely not work with again. Chief Smith feels that his members should not have to participate in any of the on-going training with the rescue squad which again affects the teamwork approach. The fire company feels that they are required to do more when in fact they are required to do the same level of training as the members of the rescue squad. Since the beginning, all members are held to the SAME standard. Chief Jackson III does not believe in just doing the minimum requirement and neither should the committee or the residents of Tabernacle.

#14 (Page 6 Para 1)

*“There are a variety of operational issues that have developed between both organizations over many years that have resulted in Township Committee making operational decisions which they are not only unqualified to make, but does not allow for the best mechanism for harmony between the two organizations. It has resulted in public political debate which has led to the Twp. Committee perceived of “taking sides” in the continued debates and raises service level question within the community.”*

What operational decisions have the township committee made?

What sides have been taken?

What service level questions have been raised in the community? Are you trying to say that the rescue squad is not providing the proper level of service? Please give examples of such a statement because there is no indication of that anywhere else in this report.

#15 (Page 6 Para 2)

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad income and expense are discussed and shown in this paragraph. Where is the financial information for the fire company? Wouldn't it be important to show what monies they have? Has the fire company provided you with a budget or audit for the \$90,000 they received from the township? The rescue squad has provided an audit every year to the township committee.

#16 (Page 6 Para 3)

*"Thus far, this billing revenue windfall has not been used to reduce or offset the public support and monies contributed to the TRS by the taxpayers."*

First and foremost, there is no windfall of money, that is just an inflammatory statement. When the Tabernacle Rescue Squad went to billing for service, they met with Township committee and requested that the township contribution stay the same, \$70,000, for the first three years (2013, 2014, 2015) to ensure the billing income would be steady. In December of 2015, the rescue squad appeared in front of the township committee and asked for a reduction of the budget line item, which the township committee has reduced from \$70,000 to \$35,000 or 50% in its 2016 budget. This \$35,000 represents the amount of money required for the township to contribute to cover the write off amounts. Also, the rescue squad paid for an ambulance and several other large purchases without township support.

*"The public support being provided to the TRS, includes direct financial support, the payment of fuel and insurance expense and the provision of rent free space."*

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad receives direct financial support, although less than the fire company when fuel and insurance expenses are the same as the fire company. The rescue squad does not pay rent to the township on a monthly basis. In 2013, the rescue squad turned over the old rescue squad building, 81 Hawkins Road, to the township for \$1. The building was appraised by the township at \$389,000 at the time of transfer. This was an agreement with the township and again a contribution to the township. The Rescue Squad pays \$20,000 a year in expenses at the ESB including 100% of the electric, ground maintenance, cleaning and other maintenance costs while sharing the building with the OEM and CERT. Does the fire company pay rent? The fire company may possibly cover expenses at the fire house as the rescue squad does, however, the fire company is the sole occupant of that building and is allowed to rent that building and make profit from those rentals.

*"Many individuals interviewed during this response, that the Township Committee must review the current public level of support and current financial needs of TRS."*

Again who was interviewed?

Who felt this way?

Why did they feel this way?

*"The Fire Company believes that the reimbursement program has weakened its volunteerism associated with the fire service and that the LOSAP Program is not equal in its ability to support the efforts of its volunteers."*

What is the proof of this? Please give examples.

The squad was never allowed by the fire district to participate in LOSAP for many years. The LOSAP Program never affected the volunteerism at the squad. The squad developed our current program to reimburse their members the costs with volunteering and providing such a great service to our residents. If the fire company is not satisfied with their LOSAP Program as you have identified in this report, they need to open the dialogue with the township committee and come up with their own program. It is not the fault of the squad or its reimbursement program that their volunteerism is down. Those reasons have already been identified.

#17 (Page 7 Para 3)

*"... Contract between TRS and Shamong Township..."*

As explained before there is no contract.

*"...Balance billed amounts for calls in Tabernacle Township which total \$34,070.28 for 2014... Tabernacle Township paid \$70,000 for the year.. leaves a surplus of \$35,929.72..."*

The Township committee agreed to continue the \$70,000 a year for the years 2013,14,15. The squad budget line item has already been reduced to \$35,000 for 2016 which was the agreed upon plan. As stated before, we met our goal as set in the three-year billing plan.

#18 (Page 7 Para 4)

*"During the information gathering portion of the subcommittee, the TRS and TVFC#1 was asked to provide information concerning their plans for the future and to share and long range plan and goals they may have developed. The TRS responded by indicating that they could not develop such plans without direction from the township committee as it concerns the committee's future intentions for the management of emergency services."*

This was not exactly what the email asked for. In an email dated 1/28/2016 from Mayor Lee, he asked the following response from both organizations;

*"Please provide any information regarding your idea on a future structure of emergency services and the township in writing by Sunday, Jan 30. If you have a 5-year and 10-year long range plan for your respective organizations, that would be helpful as well."*

Chief Jackson prepared a four-page response to the Subcommittee and responded by email on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

To the question that is listed in the subcommittee report here was my response:

**"Also requested was the inclusion of a 5 and 10-year plan for our organization. The squad has just recently completed a 10-year plan to improve our organization. The Tabernacle Rescue Squad is proud to report that we met and exceeded our goals that we have set. The rescue squad will continue on with its vehicle replacement plans as set out. The squad also plans to increase revenue and become less depend on the township for funding in**

**the future. The squad is constantly training our members in the latest patient care and rescue techniques to provide the best level of care to our patients.**

**Unfortunately, there are several reasons that we cannot provide a written plan at this time. First, the rescue squad does not know what its role within the township will be in the future. This makes it difficult to set any future plans. Second, there are several questions about expansion of our organization that we need to discuss with the township to get an idea on what the township expects from us. Third, there are several regulations changes coming and lawsuits in the EMS community (Virtua vs Cooper for example) that could deregulate advanced life support and completely change the face of EMS not just in Tabernacle but the entire State of New Jersey. We cannot put together a 5 or 10-year plan together in three days that we would feel comfortable with. When the squad plans its future we meet with the executive committee and discuss all ideas and spend times formulating a plan. We take our time and are very diligent in outlining our plan for the future. Right now it is impossible to set any plans with these discussions going on. The squad needs to meet with the township, explain future goals and hear the expectation of the township before formulating a plan. "**

How can you state the squad did not respond to you or only stated that we could not provide any plans? In this report is the document that Chief Jackson provided in two days to the subcommittee.

*"Although the Fire Company did not provide a formal plan, they indicated a new fire truck is set to be delivered in 2016 and they are actively recruiting membership."*

How did the Fire Company provide their response? The rescue squad gave you more than the fire company however, it's not mentioned in the report.

In this subcommittee report, it is mentioned that both the Office of Emergency Management and the Tabernacle Rescue Squad are well run, well respected and award winning. There are no identified issues with the Office of Emergency Management. Colonel Lowe is mentioned as having "the respect and admiration of many, and we are very fortunate to have an individual of his stature working on the behalf of the township." It has been reported that the Township has received in the area of \$300,000 in FEMA reimbursement through Col Lowe's hard work in documenting emergency events in this township. In recommendation #4 on page 7, it calls for combining the PSC and EMC into one position. Col. Lowe who has to step down from his position with no guarantee of reappointment to the new position. Why would we change the highly regarded Office of Emergency Management and competent leader to add another paid position within the township? We are already in a tough budget year and why would we add another salary or an increased salary to the township payroll?

The Tabernacle Rescue Squad has been recognized for their response, leadership, innovation and overall services throughout New Jersey. In 2013, they received recognition from the NJDOHOEMS for their accomplishments which was clearly deserved. The rescue squad has worked hard to increase membership, improve care, provide more efficient cost effective service to the community that it serves. The rescue squad, in the January 30<sup>th</sup> 2016 letter to the subcommittee, looks to increase revenue and in the future work to further reduce the cost to the taxpayers. The squad has already made great strides in doing this but we have to work slowly and carefully. We need to ensure the funding is there to deliver the best possible service to our community. The rescue squad is not about the money but about the people that we serve. It's about the service to the people and the members are very proud in everything we do. The subcommittee looks to possibly change the structure of the squad or even go out

to RFP to replace the squad with a paid professional provider of EMS. You have a rescue squad that serves well providing you excellent EMS and rescue services. Why would the committee want to change this very efficient system?

The fire company in town is new and has gone through many changes that has greatly affected their agency. As identified in the Subcommittee report, the dissolution of the fire district, change of the fire company, internal issues and conflicts regarding leadership have contributed to the weakening of volunteerism to the fire service. Chief Smith requested assistance from the township in carrying out maintenance of the station, vehicles and equipment. Chief Smith stated that the functions were handled by the fire commission in the past and he is now tasked with them. Chief Smith stated that although he was handling the tasks currently he felt that he would not be able to continue to handle them. He requested someone from the township to assist them.

The above statements show that the fire company needs assistance from the township. Give the fire company the assistance that is needed and leave the two other services in the community, OEM and The Tabernacle Rescue Squad to operate as they are. The fire company needs to focus on its core responsibility of providing fire service to the residents of this community. If the members want to assist in providing rescue services have them continue to operate under the Taskforce program that has shown to be successful in the past.