



Mountaintop Hose Co. No. 1

September 11, 2017

Fairview Township Supervisors Enact Fire Tax Referendum Resolution

The Fairview Township Supervisors have enacted a resolution that will place the fire tax requested by the Mountaintop Hose Company No. 1 on the ballot in the November 7th General Election. The referendum is seeking approval of tax rate of 3/10 of one mil to fund the operation of the fire company. The rate equates to \$30.00 per one hundred thousand dollars of assessed value for the tax payers of Fairview Township.

Currently the fire company is funded by three major sources of income, an annual contribution from Fairview Township, the Annual Fund Drive and the Annual Bazaar. The average funds flowing to the five from these sources is \$108,500. It is projected that the amount generated by the tax will be \$115,000 annually.

In 2017, the Township money that flowed through to the fire company is \$36,670.00. The tax will replace this outflow to the fire company. When the tax takes effect, these funds will be used by the Township in their general operations.

The net income to the fire company from the 2017 Annual Fund Drive is \$37,500.00 to date. With the tax instituted, the Fund Drive will be suspended. It is important to note that Fund Drive has experienced a decline in number of donors since 2008 when the fire company enjoyed a nearly 60% return of the fund drive to just a 43.5% return in 2017.

Finally, the fire company conducted its 44th and final Annual Bazaar in 2017. Although the Bazaar was financially successful it has become difficult to conduct due to lack of volunteers. Several immediate or near term challenges in conducting the Bazaar also contributed to the decision. The average net income for the past five years Bazaars was \$34,252.00.

These income sources, combined with funds received from smaller fund raisers along with successful grant applications for state, federal and various found systems has enabled the fire company to be well equipped to face whatever challenges they may face. Impressively, the fire company is debt free even having acquired nearly one million dollars in new vehicles since 2012 and completing a total renovation of the fire house in 2013 - 2015.

In researching, for the fire tax proposal, the fire company found that many fire companies in other areas of Pennsylvania are already funded through a fire tax. In 2017 volunteer fire service personal are strained by the necessity to train, maintain equipment/property and answer calls while balancing their family and professional obligations. The dwindling number of volunteers in Pennsylvania is staggering, from over 300,000 in the 1970's to less than 50,000 today. In many instances, the obligation to participate in fund raising is a reason given for lack of participation in the volunteer fire service.

The fire company will be conducting an aggressive informal campaign to inform and encourage the residents of Fairview Township to vote for the tax. A direct mailing will be sent to all residents. New media updates will be forth coming and informal meetings will be held. The fire company looks forward to the community supporting the referendum.