

Milesburg Fireman’s Relief Association Joint Meeting:
Boggs Township, Milesburg Borough, Union Township,
Unionville Borough, and Citizens Hook and Ladder Company, No.1
July 15, 2025
6:00 p.m. at the Milesburg Fire Hall

Attendance: Union Township and Unionville Borough Solicitor, **Jeffrey Stover, Esq.**, Union Township and Unionville Borough Secretary, **Renee Swancer**, Union Township Supervisors: **Tammy Hanscom, Mike MacNamara**, and **Nick Taylor**; Boggs Township Solicitor, **Rodney Beard, Esq.**, Boggs Township Supervisors: **David Veneziano, II, Scott Bennett**, and **Terry Gates, Jr.**; Unionville Borough: Council members: **Jason Crestani**, and **Allen Runkle**; Street Maintenance: **Dan Boring**, Milesburg Borough Solicitor, **Tracey Benson, Esq.**, Milesburg Borough Secretary-Treasurer, **Robyn Dyke**, Milesburg Borough Council members: **Barry Campbell, Jr., Lauren Davidson-Haupt**, and **Kirsty Lloyd**; Citizen’s Hook and Ladder Company No. 1: Financial Trustee, **LuAnn Bruno**, President, **Jonathan McClure**, and Fire Chief, **Keith Russell**

[Citizens Hook & Ladder Co. 1 of Milesburg, Pa handed out a copy of their “Capital Improvement Plan, 2025-2030.” to meeting attendees]

Jeffrey Stover, Esq., representing Union Township, called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., p.m., Mr. Stover stated that the meeting had been publicly advertised, per the Sunshine Act, but that an agenda had not been publicly posted. He explained that, because an agenda had not been made available, no official action could be taken during the meeting. The meeting would therefore be limited to discussion among members of the 6 organizations present in regard to the renewal of the Intergovernmental Agreement, set to expire on December 31, 2025.

Pledge of Allegiance

[Visitors were permitted to ask questions throughout the meeting]

Jeffrey Stover, Esq., representing Union Township, reviewed the letter he sent on June 30, 2025, in response to the June 5th meeting. He listed the Township’s proposed changes as follows:

- 1) The Intergovernmental Agreement would be in effect for 5 years.
- 2) Future changes to the terms of the agreement would require only a majority vote rather than unanimous consent from all 6 entities (Milesburg Borough, Unionville Borough, Boggs Township, Union Township, Citizens Hook and Ladder Co #1, and the Fire Company Relief).
- 3) To avoid conflicts of interest, fire company officers should not be officers of the Fireman’s Relief Association.

- 4) To be more transparent, include the provision of financial records such as bank statements and monthly reports for all accounts.
- 5) A commitment to increase revenue necessary, for instance, by sending invoices for all vehicle accidents the fire company responded to, including those on Interstate 80, US 220, US 144.
- 6) Further discussion regarding the reallocation of funds among municipalities and townships to ensure equity.
- 7) Further discussion regarding the consideration of satellite location to enhance response times and improve public safety.
- 8) To conduct a regular audit by a committee of members from the municipalities and townships.

Tracey Benson, representing Milesburg Borough, stated that he had reviewed documentation from the time period 2004-2006, wherein discussion among municipalities gave rise to the initial agreement. He noted that Rodney Beard and Jeffrey Stover were involved in drafting that agreement. Summarizing the legal history, he explained that the initial agreement was developed to address a funding crisis, with first and second amendments drafted in 2005 and 2006, respectively, to address unforeseen issues. Benson stated that the agreement, as amended, has maintained functionality for duration of the subsequent 18 years, though set to expire at the end of 2025. As Milesburg Borough's solicitor for the past 15 years, Benson explained that the Borough has served as host municipality for Citizens Hook and Ladder and thus taken responsibility for addressing fire-related issues at each of their monthly meetings, including approving drivers, overseeing worker's compensation coverage, and maintaining the operational status and safety of the fire company (e.g., renovating major equipment and assuming the debt to finance purchases). Benson later pointed out that, among the four municipalities, only Milesburg Borough was willing to assume the financial debt and oversight.

* The following were the responses from Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, Milesburg Borough, and Citizens Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, and the Fireman's Relief Association, that concerned the letter sent by Jeffrey Stover, the Solicitor who represented Union Township.

1) The duration of the Intergovernmental Agreement would be shortened from 10 to 5 years:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough – there was a general agreement that the exact number of years was flexible. A proposal was put forward for a 10-year agreement that would feature a 5-year work session to review the past five years and strategize for the upcoming five years.

*Additional comments were that over the past 20 years, the Intergovernmental Agreement functioned well; why alter something that was not broken?

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association - commented that the duration of the agreement was not a concern for them.

2) Any proposed changes in the future would necessitate a majority vote from all 6 entities (Milesburg Borough, Unionville Borough, Boggs Township, Union Township, Citizens Hook and Ladder Co #1, and the Fire Company Relief):

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough - were not in favor of the proposed majority vote.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association - were not in favor of the proposed majority vote.

3) To avoid conflicts of interest, fire company officers should also not be members of the Fireman's Relief Association:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough – Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough, mentioned that the Fireman's Relief Association was established in 1943. According to the bylaws, to become a member of the Fireman's Relief Association, a person must be a member of the fire company in good standing; that does not create a conflict of interest. Both Boggs Township and Unionville Borough did not view it as a conflict of interest.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association – expressed that there was a shortage of people ready to assume an office; for example, the role of president for either organization demanded 10 to 25 hours of paperwork weekly, and made it difficult to find someone willing to commit that amount of time without pay. Regarding voting, they do not always vote in the same way; they represent two distinct entities.

4) To be more transparent, include the provision of financial records such as bank statements and monthly reports for all accounts:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough – all municipalities emphasized that they had never encountered any issues to obtain financial information from the fire company. Each month, following the fire company meeting, they received copies of the meeting handouts that contained all the financial reports. Additionally, the fire company was a regular item on their agendas, and their representatives on the Oversight Committee consistently provided updates during the meeting, especially if any matters required a vote or approval.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association - were uncertain about how to enhance their transparency. The president held meetings with the financial trustee every few weeks, and a detailed report was always included in the monthly meeting packets sent to the municipal secretaries. Additionally, their Oversight Committee representatives also received that information during the monthly meeting

5) A commitment to increase revenue necessary, for instance, by sending invoices for all vehicle accidents the fire company responded to, including those on Interstate 80, US 220, US 144, and any other pertinent roads:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough - there was a consensus that to bill for all motor vehicles the fire company responded to was an excellent idea. Boggs Township passed Resolution #2013-0806-1 *for Citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1 Recovery*, while Milesburg Borough enacted Ordinance No. 342, *Providing for the Reimbursement of Emergency Service Costs*, in 2013. Additionally, passed Resolution No. 2017-2 *To Adopt a Current Schedule of Costs and Rates to Reflect the Cost of Providing Emergency Equipment, Supplies and Related Services*.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association - they expressed their willingness to bill for all motor vehicles they responded to, but there was no assurance of payment, as insurance companies had previously denied claims when there was no damage to the equipment, among other reasons. Jonathan McClure, President of the Citizens Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1 mentioned that he had drafted an ordinance and intended to present it to the municipalities for their review, as well as to the solicitors for discussion at their upcoming meeting.

*Additional comments:

Although the initial Intergovernmental Agreement included a provision to bill for services, a new one was required under state law. Without an ordinance from the fire company, a third party would not accept them as a client, even if a resolution was established, as an ordinance remained necessary.

6) A discussion is required regarding the reallocation of funds among municipalities and townships to ensure equity:

Unionville Borough requested that the fire company provide a capital equipment forecast for the next 3 to 5 years, that would include: vehicles, turnout gear, air paks, etc. Boggs Township and Milesburg Borough did not mention anything further, as they felt that was the purpose of the meeting.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association, stated that they did not participate in the reallocation of funds; that decision was made by the municipalities. They represented the Intergovernmental Agreement in different ways.

7) There should be a dialogue to establish a satellite location to enhance response times and improve public safety:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough, everyone agreed that to establish a satellite location close to Unionville, PA would be advantageous; however, they considered it unlikely because of the financial expenses and their lack of membership in that region.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association, they believed to have a satellite location close to Unionville, PA, could be beneficial; however, they thought it was impractical due to the lack of active members in that region.

8) To conduct a regular audit by a committee of members from the municipalities and townships:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough were in an agreement that to conduct audits by a committee of representatives from the four municipalities was unnecessary, as the annual audit was already performed by a CPA firm and was available for anyone who wished to view it.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association, the audits are conducted by Fiore Fedeli Snyder Carothers LLP, a certified public accounting firm, and the audit report was presented to the fire company board annually.

9) To promote a better understanding of the meeting, financial information should be shared in advance:

Boggs Township, Unionville Borough, and Milesburg Borough, no comments.

Citizens Hook and Ladder Fire Company No. 1, and The Fireman's Relief Association, no comments.

MacNamara, Union Township Supervisor

- ◆ He mentioned that some of the questions he had were simply due to miscommunication about the lack of financial information received from the fire company.

[It was emphasized again that the financial trustee from the fire company sent the meeting packets to the municipal secretaries, which contained a comprehensive financial report, among other things, following each Oversight Committee meeting.]

- ◆ Suggested new funding that relied on population, assessed value, and call response rather than bill per capita; mentioned that other fire companies were considering this to ensure fairness. He indicated that the original agreement had proven its durability but included only one opt-out period in the last 20 years.
- ◆ The 5-year term arose because the supervisor elected in January would not have any influence over the contract. He recognized that the agreement would require amendments; however, additional stipulations could be included, such as to prohibit representatives from increasing the millage on municipalities. He proposed to revise the Intergovernmental Agreement to make it clear and straightforward.

[Barry Campbell, Jr., Councilperson for Milesburg Borough reiterated that the council's term was 4 years; so, the 5-year agreement wouldn't allow them to

have any say, and suggested Unionville Borough's proposal to a 10-year agreement that featured a 5-year work session.]

- ◆ The reason why they proposed to vote by majority rather than unanimously was that if one member disagreed, they could exercise veto power over the others.

[Jonathan McClure, President of the Citizens Hook & Ladder Company, No. 1, explained that the section of the agreement that required a unanimous vote pertained to the terms of the agreement; however, the meetings were conducted based on a majority vote.]

A discussion took place regarding Milesburg Borough's ownership of the fire company building and certain apparatus.

A 2016 lease agreement, wherein Milesburg Borough provided financial backing for the purchase of the white fire engine, was made between Milesburg Borough and the Citizens Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1. The agreement indicated that the fire company building, and certain apparatus were owned by Milesburg Borough for a period of 100 years. Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough, explained that the building and apparatus acted as collateral, given the borough was the only municipality willing to back a loan for the fire company.

Barry Campbell, Jr., Councilperson for Milesburg Borough, indicated that he had been exploring the possibility of transferring ownership of the building and apparatus to the fire company. He stated that when the fire company repaid their loan from the Borough in 2025, accrued interest was returned to the fire company.

Milesburg Borough also stated that they do not view the fire company building and apparatus as assets; they are instead providing oversight of facilities and equipment that are critical to fire protection for their own residents, as well as those of the other municipalities.

Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough stated that there was a period when the leadership of the fire company was not as strong as it was now, and as long as the Milesburg Borough maintained ownership of the land and equipment, the fire company would not be at risk of losing it.

Jonathan McClure, President of the Citizens Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1 mentioned that the fire company owned the utility truck, the brush truck, and the two UTVs (Utility Task Vehicles) as they were purchased through grants.

Keith Russell, the Fire Chief of Citizens Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, stated that if you visit other local fire departments, you'll find that those municipalities own the equipment. Typically, the municipality that hosts the fire company holds the titles for the equipment.

Further remarks came from individuals who had either been part of the fire company at some point or contributed in other ways – they all agreed that Milesburg Borough was the only entity willing to assist the fire company with their debt; all other municipalities declined to help.

Discussion on billing for motor vehicle accidents that the fire company responded to – Boggs Township and Unionville Borough both agreed to create an ordinance to support that.

Barry Campbell, Jr., the Councilperson for Milesburg Borough, noted that when thinking about giving more duties to the fire company, we should keep in mind that the members of the fire company are volunteers.

Visitor comment - Had anyone explored the possibility of obtaining grants to assist the fire company?

Lauren Davidson-Haupt, the Councilperson for Milesburg Borough responded that she had been looking into the option of applying for grants for the fire company; however, one issue she faced was that, as a volunteer fire company, they did not qualify for a lot of grants.

Conclusion:

Jeffrey Stover, the Solicitor for Union Township, noted that there might be a consensus to pursue a shorter-term agreement and to bill for motor vehicle accidents that the fire company responded to, and there was no consensus to alter the unanimous vote to a majority vote.

To keep the discussions going, he suggested to extend the opt-out period for an additional month, until August 31, 2025, to provide more time for to discuss the Intergovernmental Agreement; and all parties must consent as per the agreement to move the opt-out period.

Without an agenda, no motions could be presented at the meeting, and not every municipality had a quorum. To cast a vote, all municipalities needed to participate in a regular monthly meeting or convene a special meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Robyn D. Dyke
The Milesburg Borough Secretary-Treasurer