

Milesburg Fireman’s Relief Association Joint Meeting:
Boggs Township, Milesburg Borough, Union Township,
Unionville Borough, and Citizens Hook and Ladder Company, No.1
June 5, 2025
6:00 pm at the Milesburg Fire Hall

[Attendance: Union Township and Unionville Borough Solicitor, **Jeffrey Stover, Esq.**, 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 Mayor, **Donald Hassinger**, Unionville Borough: Council members: **Jason Crestani, Ben Narehood, 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, Ethel Kellerman, and Shirley Martin**; Citizen’s Hook and Ladder Company No. 1: Financial Trustee, **LuAnn Bruno**, President, **Jonathan McClure**, and Fire Chief, **Keith Russell**]

Jeffrey Stover, Esq., representing Union Township called the meeting to order at 6:10

Pledge of Allegiance

[Visitors were permitted to ask questions throughout the meeting]

A. Public Comment

[moved to last, but the public was allowed to pose questions during the entire meeting]]

B. Opening Remarks

Jeffrey Stover, Esq., began the discussion about the Intergovernmental Agreement that supported the Citizen’s Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1. This agreement was created in 2005 for a duration of 10 years and is set to be renewed automatically for another 10 years at the end of 2025. The Union Township Council members believed that since it had been twenty years since the original agreement, it was crucial for everyone to gather and assess if any modifications were necessary before the automatic renewal for another 10 years. The deadline for this evaluation was 6 months before the end of the year.

C. Discussion of Renewal of or Terms of a new Inter-Municipal Cooperation Agreement’

*Mike MacNamara, who represented Union Township, raised the following points:

1. Length of a new/extended inter-municipal agreement:

The Intergovernmental Agreement was in place for 10 years, while a supervisor's term was set at 6 years, and borough council terms were either 2 or 4 years. This setup meant that the newly elected supervisor or council member would not have the opportunity to contribute or take part in the process, as they would be starting midway through the term agreement.

2. Allocation of the annual contributions of the member municipalities, including method of allocation;

Currently, the fire company received funding of one and two-thirds millage each year, as per the Intergovernmental Agreement. Research showed that other fire departments used different funding methods apart from millage. While some based their funding on population and census figures, others-imposed fees depending on the number of call volumes.

Reporting by the oversight committee and fire company as to account balances and reserve funds;

Last fall, fire company representatives spoke at their monthly meeting to ask for financial help to upgrade their equipment and apparatus. They suggested to increase the annual rate to two mils, up from the one and two-thirds mils they currently receive each year.

Furthermore, as per the Intergovernmental Agreement, every municipality was supposed to get a copy of the fire department's meeting minutes, which included financial details each month. It was mentioned that this was not always dependable, and there was a request to make it more consistent so that everyone could be better prepared for the annual request.

3. Representation on the oversight committee, including who holds the right to vote;

To avoid any potential conflict of interest, he proposed that if you belong to the fire company, you should not hold a position on the board or council of a township or municipality, and he would like to see that added to the agreement.

4. Possible creation of satellite fire company locations;

The existing ISO score was a 10W, which could affect homeowners' insurance. He also considered the option to establish a satellite station near Unionville, aimed at reducing costs for residents and to enhance safety.

*ISO score (accessed by the fire department's capacity to provide sufficient fire protection to the communities they serve).

* ISO 10W score (risk for properties situated over five but under seven miles from the primary fire station and within 1,000 feet of a water source).

D. Any other matters to come before the meeting.

Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough, mentioned that the Oversight Committee lacked the power to raise millage, since that authority belonged to the townships and borough municipal bodies as per their specific codes.

A discussion was held about the fire company's finances, which amounted to \$600,000. It was noted that the amount would not last long, especially with the need for new equipment. For example, the fire department urgently required air-paks that would cost over \$500,000, and a new fire engine would cost more than \$600,000.

Additionally, there was a conversation about the life span of a fire engine Keith Russell, the Fire Chief of Citizens Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, noted that they had a model from 2002, which was near the end of its life span based on FDA standards. They also possessed a fire engine from 2010 and a tanker from 2006. Moreover, their brush truck was from 2009, and the utility vehicle was from 1999. Currently, they have a 2000-gallon tanker and hoped to upgrade to a tanker that could hold either 3000 or 4000 gallons.

Rodney Beard, the Solicitor for Boggs Township, mentioned that the initial agreement was based on one and two-thirds millage which was intended for funding ongoing operations, but it did not cover strategic planning, and that was essential to secure the funds and prevent a major expense that could lead to financial difficulties. Additionally, if there was a desire to create a satellite station as an extra service for the community, this should be part of the overall strategic plan.

In 2016, Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough, mentioned that when the fire company required a new fire engine, the borough, which owned the equipment, took out a loan to purchase the 2010 fire engine. He also pointed out that the loan had recently been paid off.

Jonathan McClure, the President of the Citizen's Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, noted that they had few firefighters, with most coming from Boggs Township and Milesburg Borough. He also pointed out that fire companies in nearby towns were dealing with the same issue.

Unionville Borough would like to see a 3-to-5-year forecast from the fire company on the equipment they would need to help them prepare their annual budget.

During the meeting, it was stressed that when a township or municipality chose a representative for the Oversight Board of the fire company, it was essential to trust their judgment and have confidence in their selection.

The list of fire company members was discussed, and it was proposed that the Milesburg Borough Secretary-Treasurer should include this list when sending out the annual funding requests.

Mike MacNamara, the supervisor of Union Township, stated that when he explored the possibility to fund based on call volume, both Unionville Borough and Boggs Township would need to pay, while Milesburg Borough and Union Township would receive a refund.

Furthermore, to fund by population, Unionville Borough and Milesburg Borough would be required to pay, whereas Union Township and Boggs Township would receive a refund. Regrettably, in both scenarios, Unionville Borough would still be obligated to pay.

Additionally, the fire company stated that a budget based on call volume would be difficult because of annual variations and the differing lengths of each call.

The topic of billing for vehicle accidents via insurance policies was brought up. Jonathan McClure, the President of Citizen's Hook and Ladder Fire Company, No. 1, noted that the fire company had tried that a few years ago but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he intended to investigate this further and revise the ordinance in hopes to be able to bill insurance companies for vehicle accidents.

Tracey Benson, the Solicitor for Milesburg Borough, discussed a previous conversation about the large volume of calls the borough gets. He emphasized that the fire company's response time to emergencies in Milesburg Borough would require significantly less time and resources, which he felt was important to highlight.

A variety of discussions were held concerning the 10-year agreement, which included a proposal for a 5-year term; or to keep the 10-year agreement intact, with a 5-year review that would correspond with the fire company's 3-to-4-year projection of capital assets.

Finally, there was a talk about how to attract more active members to the fire company. Given the limited number of active members, it would be beneficial to have more members distributed across the municipalities and townships; this might eventually lead to the establishment of a satellite station.

Jeffrey Stover, the Solicitor for Union Township reviewed that there may be a consensus to go to a short term for the Intergovernmental Agreement, to bill for motor vehicle accidents that the fire company responded to, there was no agreement to go anywhere but an unanimous vote, to move forward with the discussions he suggested to pro-long the opt-out period and reconvene to further discuss the Intergovernmental Agreement. He would like to extend the opt-out period to July 31, 2025, to provide more time. All parties must agree per the agreement.

Boggs Township: motion made by David Veneziano and seconded by Terry Gates to extend the Intergovernmental Agreement opt out period to July 31, 2025.

Union Township: motion made by Mike MacNamara and seconded by Nick Taylor to extend the Intergovernmental Agreement opt out period to July 31, 2025.

Milesburg Borough did not have a quorum; nevertheless, they planned to add the Intergovernmental Agreement to the agenda and conduct a vote to extend the opt-out period until July 31, 2025, during the forthcoming council meeting set for June 9, 2025.

Unionville Borough did not have a quorum; nevertheless, they intended to convene a Special Meeting to vote to extend the opt-out period for the Intergovernmental Agreement until July 31, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Respectively submitted,

Robyn D. Dyke
The Milesburg Borough Secretary-Treasurer