



November 16, 2021

Dear Ben Avon Residents and Community Members,

At the November 16th Borough Council meeting, the Ben Avon Council voted unanimously to engage the services of the Emsworth Volunteer Fire Company as the provider of fire protection services for Ben Avon Borough ("Borough"). Multiple factors, including dwindling volunteerism, duplication of local services, and rising operating costs, factored into Ben Avon Council's determination that it was in the best interest of our residents to evaluate how fire protection services are provided in the Borough.

The Ben Avon Volunteer Fire Company provided over 100 years of volunteer service to our community and we thank them for their dedication, service and commitment as our first responders. We have nothing but the greatest respect for the efforts, sacrifices, and the bravery of past and present volunteers.

In 2008 and 2009, two Fire Protection Evaluation studies were conducted by professional fire management consultants at the request of Ben Avon Borough and the surrounding communities. They concluded that the consolidation of fire companies in the North Boroughs, specifically Emsworth and Ben Avon, would benefit the residents of the municipalities served by the fire companies. These studies can be viewed upon request by emailing benavon@benavon.com.

The key benefits of fire service regionalization include standardized training and operating procedures; a regional approach to recruitment and staffing; lower apparatus replacement costs and operating costs; and, most importantly, improved overall fire response preparedness. Ben Avon currently participates in regionalized partnerships with surrounding communities for police and EMS services, with the Ohio Township Police Department and NorthWest EMS.

In 2021, the Ben Avon Mayor and Council thoroughly reviewed the Borough's emergency services contracts and lease agreements (where applicable). A multi-year agreement has been reached with the Ohio Township Police Department; and updated Lease and Service agreements are being finalized with NorthWest EMS. Unfortunately, the Ben Avon Volunteer Fire Company declined to participate in developing a formal fire service agreement with the Borough.

The Emsworth Volunteer Fire Company has demonstrated dedication and professionalism in their operations, strong volunteer membership, recruitment and training, and efficient coordination with other volunteer companies. Therefore, it is the Borough's intent to execute a service agreement with the Emsworth Volunteer Fire Company, effective immediately, to provide the residents of Ben Avon with a continued high level of fire protection service.

Respectfully,

Melanie Holcomb
Melanie Holcomb, Mayor

Jennifer Bett
Jennifer Bett, President of Council