



From: Bette Peters

Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 6:35 PM

To: Mayor David Scapicchio; Tobey, Phil; Greenbaum, Rob; Perkins, Ray; Labow, Coleen; Pat Walsh; Roman, Alex; John Mania; Lashway, Lisa; dorseykingsemrau@dks-law.com; garbertoo@gmail.com; pgarber@mtolivechronicle.com; letters@dailyrecord.com

Cc: fcarlo@station27rescue.org

Subject: FW: e addresses

Gentlemen:

Attached please find a letter regarding the Mt. Olive Township volunteer emergency medical services, which Mayor David Scapicchio is proposing to eliminate. If either of the media outlets needs to contact me to confirm authorship, I will be out of state as of Wednesday 1-13-10, but available via this email address, which I will be checking from time to time.

Clare Bette Peters
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19 Church Street
Budd Lake NJ 07828
January 12, 2010

Mayor David M. Scapicchio &
The Council of Mt. Olive Township
206 Flanders Drakestown Rd
Flanders NJ 07828

Gentlemen:

[This letter is being sent, via email, to each of you as well as to the local media, in support of the volunteer emergency services of the township. Because of a prior commitment, I will be out of state on January 19; I have asked a friend to read this letter at that time so that it can become part of the record.]

Two years ago, Mayor David M. Scapicchio lauded the volunteer emergency services of Mt. Olive Township in his January 8, 2008 "State of the Township Address". He said,

"Our employees, working with the countless volunteers and organizations within the Township, such as, but not limited to, the volunteer emergency services and recreational organizations, are truly what makes us proud to live in Mount Olive and will continue to keep Mount Olive moving forward for years to come."

Just one year ago, in his January 6, 2009 "State of the Township Address", he concluded, *"...it is important to remember that we will need to work a little harder with each other and to focus on how we can keep Mount Olive an affordable place to live, and towards that end I, and everyone in my administration will continue to work cooperatively with the Township Council, employees, volunteers and all the professionals that represent Mount Olive Township."*

He was not wrong about the "countless volunteers and organizations"; he is wrong in his attempt to keep Mt. Olive "an affordable place to live". Rather, the volunteers and organizations in this town are the very things that have kept people here when rapidly rising taxes have made them want to leave.

Lest you think I exaggerate, I recently located my tax bill for the 2006/2007 tax year, showing taxes of \$4,193.52; that was at the beginning of the mayor's term of office. My recent tax bill for the current 2009/2010 tax year showing taxes of \$5737.58, an increase of \$1544.06 or 36.8% during the 3 years Mayor Scapicchio has presumably been trying to keep Mt. Olive an affordable place to live. Now he is suggesting that eliminating the township's volunteer emergency medical services is an effective way of cutting the budget, to the tune of approximately \$10 per year per household. I beg to differ, and I do so strenuously – this is not an effective way to cut the budget.

Last year, my husband Joseph Peters died of kidney cancer. While he was ill, we had several occasions to call the Budd Lake First Aid Squad for emergency situations due to his chemo

treatment, for example with an uncontrollable nosebleed, and for difficulty breathing. The response from the squad was always immediate, with the first responder arriving at the house even before the police. Most of the public, and perhaps some of the governing body, does not realize that the volunteer squad always has an assigned “first responder” who goes directly to the scene, giving aid well before the arrival time of the ambulance.

Let me preface my next comment by saying that my husband and I have had the privilege of being friends for over 35 years with a current member of the squad, Lt. Neal Nelson; because of this, we also are familiar with some other members as well. The members of both first aid squads, Budd Lake and Flanders, are township residents who are frequently also active in other areas – fire department, church, local businesses, and so on. Even if Neal had not been on the scene for the calls at our home, other squad members were people we knew from around town - from church, from the A&P, and so on.

I think almost any individual in medical services will tell you how important that kind of comfort level can be for a patient in an emergency situation. Hopefully, none of you will ever find out how comforting it is, as a patient, to see familiar faces there to help you during a frightfully difficult time. This is what these volunteers provide, whether it be for an elderly person with a diabetic crisis, a handyman with an uncontrollable chain saw, or an overzealous soccer player with a broken ankle. This is not something you can put a price tag on. This is not a piece of data, like number of calls, or ambulance arrival time, or any statistics that can be interpreted whatever way you want. It is simply fact.

This is not in any way to question the abilities or intentions of the paid hospital-based service that would be hired in place of the volunteer squads. I’m sure they are all properly certified and quite able; however, they also do not have any vested interest in the people of Mt. Olive Township, like the volunteers of the township’s emergency services.

I don’t know what happened in the past year that Mayor Scapicchio has gone from wanting to “work cooperatively” with the township employees and volunteers to wanting to eliminate the volunteer emergency medical services. Has he had complaints from residents? Has there been some drastic situation where some resident has suffered injury at the hands of our local volunteers? Have members of the police department or fire department, who work most closely with these volunteers, questioned their abilities? Somehow, I think if that was the case, the local media would have been right on top of the story, and that just has not happened.

There seems to be no real reason to make this change, and there is a very good reason to keep the volunteer emergency medical services: they are a vitally important, integral part of Mt. Olive Township, and we would do ourselves a grave disservice if we did away with their volunteer service.

Very truly yours,
Bette Peters
(Clare) Bette Peters