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January 19, 2010

Mount Olive Township
Office of the Mayor
Attn: David M. Scapicchio
P.O. Box 450
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

Re: Volunteer EMS Services

Dear Mr. Mayor,

I understand with the economical challenges that our nation is currently facing it has catapulted our local communities to examine and reevaluate all overhead expenses. I completely support the idea of trimming expenses and determining which services are instrumental to our continued overall success. I have given a lot of consideration to your proposal of privatizing Budd Lake's Emergency Medical Services and while I understand that you and your councilmen are convinced that this will save our township approx. \$250,000 will it really? Have you given any consideration to what the tax payers want? Perhaps this should be publically voted on? Or better yet, another idea that I wanted to propose was to privatize the snow removal by way of a contract. This will alleviate township employees getting paid premium for their overtime. Also, by way of contract you will be better suited to budget these expenses.

On two separate occasions, I unfortunately had some very personal experiences with the Budd lake First Aid Squad. Back in the summer of 2007, my husband was cutting wood on a circular saw and accidentally cut his fingers. All I can recall was the blood was every where, at that point I thought that he cut them all off. I immediately called 911 and the First Aid Squad was dispatched. No sooner did I hang up the phone, I heard the sirens heading in my direction. At this point, I was in a sheer panic, so when they got there not only did they attend to my husband but they calmed me down as well. In fact, I remember seeing a neighbor (a familiar face) I believe her name was Diana she was one of the first responders and she offered me a hug and spoke to me in a calm and soothing manner and assured me that everything would be alright. And it was. My second experience with the First Aid Squad was when my 12 month old son had a seizure. Talk about frightening, oh my goodness, I never experienced anything like that before. Well, the crew came in and immediately took over the situation like the true professionals they are. In fact, one particular gentleman who rode in the back of the ambulance with me and my son his nickname was "Shrek" not sure of his real name but he stayed with me, and my husband until my son was called into the examining room. He was genuinely concerned and showed so much compassion, as a matter of fact, he even gave my son an Oscar the Grouch stuffed animal. Who does that?

I'm sure you have heard hundreds of stories like this and I hope that you truly consider every single one of them and then make your determination of which unnecessary expenses our township should eliminate. In my opinion privatizing the First Aid Squad is not the answer. After all, the crew members volunteer their time. They are our family, friends and neighbors. These people have the ability to respond within a blink of an eye and handle our tragedies with such professionalism. I couldn't do what they do and they "volunteer" to do it. I never received a bill for their services. Ever! With your new plan will the taxpayers be billed for their services?

I'm a Mount Olive Taxpayer and I am extremely emphatic that we should retain the volunteer squad and perhaps examine other avenues at which to cut expenses without jeopardizing peoples lives. Thank you for your time and consideration and I hope and pray that you make the right decision.

Sincerely,

Laura Russo-Kay
18 Church Street
Budd Lake, NJ