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Chester County Fire EMS Strategic Planning

Dear Sir or Madam:

As you are probably aware, Municipal Resources Inc. has been hired to work in partnership with Chester County Fire and EMS providers to develop a strategic planning tool that will help to maximize the future delivery of emergency services in your local jurisdiction, and in a larger sense, throughout Chester County. As municipal managers or administrators you deal with various matters related to public safety on a regular basis, the participation of local leaders in your positions is essential to this process.

As major stakeholders in this dynamic planning process, municipal managers and administrators are a critical component of this project. Municipal leaders are the ones who need to determine the acceptable level of risk for their local jurisdictions. Your input and perspective is very important to the project. In addition, local governing bodies will be the ones who will need to allocate the majority of the funding for the emergency services in the future.

- We need to determine the current level of service and the service level expected by the citizens of Chester County, and your local jurisdiction.
- We would like to hear the municipal leader's perspective on the current state of, and service levels provided by, local fire and EMS organizations.
- We need to know how do municipal leaders view the relationship between the governing body/administration and the fire and EMS providers?
- We would like to know if the level of risk has ever been considered or discussed (what level of risk you are willing to accept) in your local jurisdiction?
- We would like to know to what level do you currently support your fire and EMS providers?
- We need to understand any fire and EMS related issues (such as the inability to respond to emergencies) that have developed as issues within your local jurisdiction.
- We need to understand if municipal leaders believe that their constituents would be willing to pay more for enhanced service levels.
- We would like to know if municipal leaders would be willing to support increased funding levels (including possible tax increases) to enhance the current level of fire and EMS services?
- We need to know the thoughts of municipal leaders on alternative systems for providing fire and EMS services moving forward including a more regional or county-based approach.

To help us gather as much information as possible, we are asking you to complete the following questionnaire and return it to us by Tuesday March 31, 2020. We thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Brian P. Duggan

Brian P. Duggan
Director of Fire Services Group

Peter J. Finley, Jr.

Peter J. Finley, Jr.
Senior Consultant/Project Manager

CHESTER COUNTY FIRE AND EMS STRATEGIC PLAN
MUNICIPAL MANAGER/ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Municipality Name: _____

What is the population of your municipality? _____

Please list the fire and EMS agencies that provide coverage to your local jurisdiction and the percentage of the municipality they cover?

Do you have any formal written agreement or contract with the fire and EMS agencies that provide service to your local jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe: _____

If yes, how often are these agreements or contracts renegotiated? _____

What is your total FY 2020 municipal operating budget? _____

What is your total FY 2020 budget/contribution for fire and EMS services? _____

What is your total FY 2020 budget/contribution for law enforcement services? _____

Do you have separate budgets for both fire and EMS operations? _____

If yes:

Fire Budget: _____

EMS Budget: _____

Please list the fire and EMS organizations that you provide funding to and the annual amount to each:

Who should be responsible for the primary funding for the provision of fire and EMS services within your local jurisdiction?

- The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Chester County
- Local government/municipalities
- The fire and/or EMS agencies themselves through fund raising activities
- A combination of the above

Does your local jurisdiction have an emergency services tax? Yes No

If no, what is your opinion regarding the implementation of one? If you are in favor, should it be at the local or county level? _____

Do you contribute to a separate capital budget for apparatus purchases and other major expenses for the fire and EMS organizations that serve your local jurisdiction?

- Yes
- No

If you do not provide funding to a capital budget, do you know how the organizations fund capital purchases?

How would you rate the communications and relationship between your local jurisdiction and the fire and EMS agencies that serve it?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Additional comments:

Do you and/or the local governing body and the leadership of the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction meet on a minimum of an annual basis to review progress, discuss operational and budgetary needs, and discuss goals and objectives for the next year?

Yes No

Additional comments: _____

Do you feel that the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction are providing you with complete and accurate information regarding their operational capabilities, staffing, and financial needs?

Yes No

Additional comments: _____

Has the level of risk within your local jurisdiction ever been considered or discussed? In other words, what level of risk regarding fire and medical emergencies is your local jurisdiction willing to accept?

Yes No

Additional comments: _____

Who/what should determine the level of services to be provided to your local jurisdiction by the fire and EMS agencies that serve it?

- The department/company/agency leadership
- The local governing body
- Consensus agreement between department/company/agency leadership and the local governing body
- Research based needs assessment
- Benchmark standard (NFPA 1710/1720; PA Dept. of Health) driven

Do you receive periodical (monthly/quarterly) statistical reports from the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction?

- Yes No

If yes, do the reports include (check all that apply):

- Number and types of incidents
- Response time information (average, benchmark/standard of cover compliance, etc.)
- Listing of any missed or failed to respond to emergency calls within your local jurisdiction
- Other pertinent information (significant incidents, fire dollar loss, citizen injuries or fatalities, etc.)

Additional comments: _____

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710 sets a benchmark for career EMS services for a unit with Basic Life Support (BLS) capabilities to be on the scene of a medical emergency within 6 minutes of receipt of the call in the 9-1-1 dispatch, and a unit with advanced life support (ALS) capability with 10 minutes.

NFPA Standard 1720 for volunteer fire response sets the following response benchmarks for structure fire responses by volunteer fire companies:

- ✓ Urban communities: 15 personnel on scene in 9 minutes (population density > 1,000 per square mile)
- ✓ Suburban communities: 10 personnel on scene in 10 minutes (population density 500 – 1,000 per square mile)
- ✓ Rural communities: 6 personnel on scene in 14 minutes (population density < 500 per square mile).

How important is it that the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction meet these standards?

- Extremely Important
- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Very Important
- Not at all Important

Additional comments: _____

Do you believe the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction are currently meeting these standards?

- Yes No I don't have that information

Additional comments: _____

Do you believe that overall, the fire and EMS organization(s) that protect your local jurisdiction provide an acceptable level of fire and EMS protection?

- Yes No I don't have that information

Additional comments: _____

How would you rate the overall level of fire service that is provided to your local jurisdiction?

- Excellent
 Very Good
 Adequate
 Needs Improvement
 Poor

Additional comments: _____

How would you rate the overall level of EMS service that is provided to your local jurisdiction?

- Excellent
 Very Good
 Adequate
 Needs Improvement
 Poor

Additional comments: _____

Are there any fire and EMS related issues (such as inability to respond to emergencies) that have developed as concerns within your local jurisdiction?

Should there be a more regionalized approach to both the funding and operational control (such as standardized response assignments, minimum training standards, Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) based dispatching, etc.) of the fire and EMS delivery system throughout Chester County based upon consensus procedures and protocols developed by the Fire Chief's Association and the EMS Council, Inc.?

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Additional comments: _____

If there are individual fire companies or EMS agencies who do not want to comply with county-based standards such as those listed above, should they be required to do so for the greater good of the entire system and county?

Yes No

Additional comments: _____

In your opinion, what are the THREE most significant challenges facing the fire and EMS service in your local jurisdiction (and in a broader context throughout Chester County) in the next five (5) to ten (10) years?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Additional comments: _____

In your opinion how could the fire and EMS agencies that serve your local jurisdiction improve and provide better service to the community?

Please provide any additional comments that may be beneficial to the study team:

Name of person completing questionnaire: _____

Contact phone number: _____

Please Scan & Return Completed Questionnaire to:

Peter J. Finley, Jr.
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