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Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2026 8:21 AM

To: Stephen Giesbrecht <sgiesbrecht@petersburgak.gov>; Assembly <assembly@petersburgak.gov>

Cc: Aaron Hankins <ahankins@petersburgak.gov>

Subject: Public Safety Response Outside Service Area One

Petersburg Borough Assembly and Manager Giesbrecht,

I am writing to raise a policy and funding concern regarding police, fire, EMS, and SAR responses outside Service Area One.

Historically, Petersburg Police, Fire/EMS, and SAR have responded outside the former City limits and now outside Service Area One in emergency situations. For the Police Department, I am not aware of any historical or current charge being made for police services provided outside Service Area One. For Fire/EMS and SAR, my understanding is that no separate charge is made for response outside Service Area One, other than the standard EMS ambulance fee when applicable. That same standard EMS ambulance fee is also charged within Service Area One, so there is not a separate service-area charge, reimbursement, or compensation back to Service Area One for Fire/EMS or SAR response outside SA1.

The concern is this.

Service Area One taxpayers are funding the personnel, equipment, vehicles, vessels, training, facilities, readiness, administration, and operational capacity necessary to provide police, fire, EMS, and SAR services. When those services are provided or expected outside Service Area One, the benefit of that public safety system extends beyond the taxpayers who are funding it.

The Borough Charter recognizes service areas and also references reasonable compensation when service-area resources are used beyond service-area boundaries. However, the practical issue is much larger than the cost of a single emergency response. The true cost of public safety is the full system that must exist before the call ever comes in. That includes staffing, training, equipment, maintenance, facilities, readiness, dispatch support, vehicles, vessels, insurance, administration, and the ability to respond when someone calls 911.

If police, fire, EMS, and SAR are available or expected outside Service Area One, then the cost of maintaining that system should not be placed primarily on Service Area One taxpayers.

As a taxpayer living in Service Area One, I pay for these public safety services. If I am outside Service Area One but still within the Petersburg Borough and need emergency help, I would expect police, fire, EMS, or SAR to respond. I believe most residents, visitors, boaters, hunters, property owners, and families would expect the same. That reality shows the problem with the current structure.

The Borough is treating emergency response as a Borough-wide expectation in practice, while funding much of the public safety system through Service Area One.

That creates an unfair taxation issue.

If police, fire, EMS, and SAR are truly Service Area One services, then the Borough needs to clearly define the limits of response outside Service Area One and explain those limitations to

the public. If these services are expected to be available throughout the Borough, then the Borough needs to establish an area-wide public safety funding structure, an expanded public safety service area, or another fair mechanism so the properties and residents receiving the benefit help pay for the system.

The current structure also creates an incentive problem. Areas outside Service Area One may have little reason to vote to fund public safety services if they receive emergency response anyway, funded primarily by Service Area One taxpayers. That is not fair to Service Area One taxpayers, and it is not transparent to residents outside Service Area One who may believe they have a guaranteed level of public safety response when funding, staffing, equipment, and service-area authority may not support that expectation.

This issue is especially important because public safety funding, recruitment, retention, staffing, and equipment are already major concerns. Police, fire, EMS, dispatch, corrections, and SAR depend on trained and experienced personnel. The Borough cannot continue expecting public safety services to stretch beyond the area funding them while also struggling to adequately fund and retain the employees needed to provide those services.

I am not raising this issue to stop emergency response. I am raising it because the Borough needs to acknowledge the real cost of providing public safety services and create a fair, legal, transparent, and sustainable funding structure.

The Assembly needs to make a clear policy decision:

Either police, fire, EMS, and SAR are Service Area One services and response outside Service Area One must be clearly limited and defined, or these are essential Borough-wide public safety services and should be authorized and funded Borough-wide.

Continuing the current approach places the burden on Service Area One taxpayers while creating Borough-wide expectations for emergency response. That is not fair, not sustainable, and not transparent.

I am requesting that the Assembly formally review this issue and develop a clear policy and funding structure for public safety response outside Service Area One. If public safety response is expected or provided anywhere within the Petersburg Borough boundaries, then the cost of providing those services should be shared by the properties and residents receiving the benefit.

Respectfully,

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