

PENNINGTON FIRE COMPANY

ORGANIZED 1891

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Leigh Abey
PRESIDENT

Roger Demareski
FIRE CHIEF

March 2, 2023

Mayor James Davy
Pennington Borough
30 North Main Street
Pennington NJ 08534

Dear Mayor Davy,

The Pennington Fire Company is a strong and proud volunteer organization with 65 members who responded to over 500 calls for service last year.

Like many, we were disappointed to learn of the closing of the Pennington First Aid Squad, 151. It is of concern to see a vibrant organization with such a rich history serving the residents of Pennington close after 50 years of service.

Although we share everyone's concerns, we see an opportunity to strengthen our organization and support our growing number of volunteers by acquiring the First Aid Squad building after they officially close. We propose the building be provided to the Fire Company under the same deed restrictions that exist today and at no cost to the Pennington Taxpayer. In addition, we honor the history and legacy of the Pennington First Aid Squad through the installation of a memorial wall within the main entrance of the building.

The benefits of acquiring the building are as follows.

1. **Capital Health – Emergency Medical Services.** The first aid squad building has three apparatus bays and several offices. We propose dedicating one or two bays to Capital Health as part of their contract to provide EMS service to the Borough and Township. This will place an ambulance within Pennington Borough and within the heart of Hopewell Valley and may provide an offset to the cost incurred by the Borough for EMS service. The offices could be used by Capital for storage or a ready room for their staff.
2. **Volunteer Coverage/Duty Crew –** There is a nationwide shortage of volunteer firefighters, and we consistently focus on recruitment and retention. We envision using the existing bunk rooms, kitchen, bathrooms and showers to support our duty crew program. Fire companies are utilizing duty crews to guarantee a staffed volunteer response

especially during evening hours. Many of our members cannot afford to live within our community but are interested in a duty crew night where they could sleep at the facility and respond at moment's notice to a call. In addition, we utilize duty crews at the station during forecasted storms and other events

3. **Volunteer Retention and Fitness** – Many fire companies are working to retain their members through amenities such as members rooms and fitness centers. In 2016, the fire company invested in a building addition which included a member's room. This investment has proved invaluable as we have seen visible improvement in the recruitment and retention of volunteers. During a recent survey of our members, the addition of a fitness center was one of their top items. In addition to helping members stay healthy in preparation for the type of work we do, a gym would be a way to keep members in town and retain them on the fire company.

Several years ago, we received a generous donation from Win Straube for training and education. We propose using these funds to create the W Straube training and fitness center in support of First Responders. We would propose opening the fitness center to all first responders in the Borough, including the police department and any previous First Aid Squad members who would like to use it.

4. **Space Needs**-The Fire Company needs additional storage space and had previously proposed a pole barn structure at the rear of the parking lot. The space needs would be satisfied for the most part by gaining room in the apparatus bay.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. By allowing the Pennington Fire Company to utilize the First Aid Squad building, you will ensure quick medical response to Borough residents, support the Pennington Fire Company space needs and reinforce recruitment and retention efforts all at no additional cost to the Borough.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh Abey
President

Roger Demareski
Fire Chief

