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Lower Paxton exploring the hiring of up to 10 full-time firefighters to supplement the volunteer force

Township is the largest PA municipality still solely relying on volunteers

Lower Paxton Township, PA (Tuesday, May 13, 2025) – While volunteer firefighters at Lower Paxton's three stations will remain the backbone of the Township's fire protection, officials are looking at hiring up to 10 full-time firefighters to ensure quick responses day and night.

Despite offering volunteers stipends of up to \$14,392 annually to work specific shifts, Lower Paxton — like volunteer forces statewide — continues to struggle to attract enough volunteers to cover all shifts.

- See the press conference [HERE](#)

"Public safety is our number one priority, and we are looking at whether having a pool of full-time firefighters will help guarantee quick response times," said Supervisor's Chairman Allen McCormack Jr. "Our goal is to make sure that no matter when a fire or other emergency occurs, we have the staffing to respond."

From 2023 to 2024, fire calls increased by 16 percent to 1,900 calls. Lower Paxton, with 55,000 residents, is the largest municipality in Pennsylvania to rely solely on volunteer force.

McCormack stressed that the Township's volunteer firefighters will have input every step of the way.

"We value our volunteers and cannot thank them enough for their sacrifice to keep our community safe," McCormack said. "Regardless of whether we hire a small group of paid firefighters, our volunteers will always be at the core of the Township's fire protection."

Today, Lower Paxton has 75 active volunteer firefighters in its three companies, Colonial Park, Paxtonia, and Linglestown. The stipend program, available to firefighters living inside and outside of the Township, has attracted 17 new volunteers.

Anticipating potentially hiring up to 10 firefighters, the Township's 2025 budget increased the fire tax from .635 mills to 1.24 mills for an additional \$2.03 million. *The increase equates to less than \$8 per month for the average homeowner.*

Earlier this year, the Township advertised that those interested in a possible paid position should fill out an application. The supervisors have also engaged a consultant to advise on what pay and benefits the Township may want to offer.

Deputy Fire Chief Brett Graham said there have been times when a volunteer company has not had enough staff to respond, meaning that other departments from within and outside the Township have had to respond. Graham said the rising fire call numbers continue to put pressure on the three volunteer departments and they are asking for help.

"Unfortunately, we have seen a persistent lack of staffing at certain times that has impacted our ability to respond to emergencies," Graham said. "The bottom line is that we need additional personnel – either volunteer or paid – to make sure we have at least three people in each unit available to respond."

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Lower Paxton Township is the largest municipality in Dauphin County and the 13th largest in Pennsylvania, covering a 28-square-mile area. To learn more, visit www.lowerpaxton-pa.gov and follow Lower Paxton on Facebook @LowerPaxtonTwp, X @LowerPaxtonTwp & Instagram @lowerpaxtontownship