



MOUNT MOURNE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Mount Mourne, NC 28123
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April 10, 2023

Iredell County, North Carolina
Beth Mull, County Manager
P.O. Box 788
Statesville, NC 28687

Re: Dispatch to Medical Calls

Ms. Mull,

In late 2017, the southern Iredell County fire departments began the discussion with Iredell County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) regarding response to medical calls. The conversation and proposal were to dispatch the five southern county fire departments, which includes the Lake Norman Fire Department, the Mooresville Fire Department, the Mount Mourne Fire Department, the Shepherds Fire Department, and the South Iredell Fire Department, to all medical calls within their respective districts. At the time and even currently, everyone believes this would provide the best service possible to our citizens. After an extended amount of discussion, the Iredell County administration gave us two options, which were (1) either being dispatched to only emergency medical calls or (2) being dispatched to all medical calls. All five southern fire departments mentioned above chose to be dispatched to all calls. With all of the above, the plan went live in April 2018, and we all were dispatched to every medical call within our fire districts.

Over the past five years, the above has proven very effective. Many times, we have responded to a low-priority call and been able to cancel the ALS truck, which keeps precious resources available for true emergencies within the county. Other times we have responded to a low-priority call and found a patient that was critical and been able to upgrade the ALS truck to emergency traffic so that they could get on the scene faster.

Ms. Mull, we have never asked to change from the above, as it is obvious what is best for the citizens of our county. We have never asked for additional funding to provide the above services. We chose to do this because it is just the right thing for our citizens. With it going very well, we never thought this plan would change, and no one ever alluded that it would change.

In late 2022, the Board of Commissioners created a governance board. We were told that the governance board was created to review and recommend fire, rescue, and EMS responses throughout the county. Our fire chief, Roger Hoover, was selected as the southern Iredell County fire department representative. At the first meeting, an agenda was presented, and on the agenda was the EMS response, denoted north vs. south. When the committee

began a discussion on that bullet point, they were quickly told by county administration that it could not be voted on, and it was already decided to have the same response countywide.

That meant all five southern fire departments would not be dispatched to all calls moving forward. The Governance Board Chairman, Glenn Kurfees, disagreed with this and did not understand removing the southern fire departments from the current response plan. Ms. Mull, you stated we could still respond to the calls if we wished; however, we would not be dispatched to them. That means we must monitor the dispatch channel and self-dispatch the calls. This is not a feasible option for us and creates a considerable liability. If we are not dispatched, our firefighters may lose their death benefits, and our insurance protection may cease on that call. Ultimately, it has been drilled in our minds by the state and our insurance carrier to never self-dispatch.

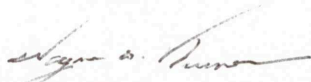
Well, on March 27, the changes went live, and there have been numerous calls throughout southern Iredell County that first responders have NOT been dispatched, and EMS has arrived to need us, and they had to request us for assistance.

With this letter, the Board of Directors of this fire department is making a formal request that we revert back to the way it was so that our fire department is dispatched to all medical calls within our response district. As a fire department that genuinely cares about our citizens, we cannot justify reducing the level of service that we've provided for the past five years, as it clearly worked. However, if this request cannot be accommodated, we will have no choice but to engage our citizens to let them know how the system was changed and how it is affecting them.

Why would the county change something that was working so well, that did not cost you anything more, and the new system within a few days has already shown failure? The goal of our fire department is to protect our citizens, and that is it.

Thank you for understanding this matter, and we look forward to helping our citizens again. We are more than happy to discuss this further if you have information that would prove the past plan did not work, but please understand the new program is already failing, so that will be hard to do.

Respectfully,



Wayne Turner
Chairman of the Board
Mount Mourne Fire Department, Inc.

Cc. Rick Howard
Randy Marion
George Moser
Steve Knox
Ben Hess
Benny Clark

Roger Hoover