



TOWNSHIP OF NETHER PROVIDENCE

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www.netherprovidence.org

December 2, 2025

Kaitlin McKenzie
President
4th Ward

Nether Providence Township Residents

Matthew Garson
Vice President
2nd Ward

Re: Fire Protection Services

Dear Township Resident(s):

Max Cooper
1st Ward

Beth Henry
3rd Ward

Shaina Barnes
5th Ward

Robert E. O'Connor
6th Ward

Candice Carbone
7th Ward

We write with exciting news about the future of fire protection services in the Township. Here in Nether Providence, we rely upon volunteers who sacrifice their time and put themselves in harm's way to provide us with fire protection. As you may be aware, there is a national trend of reduced volunteerism that is imperiling the all-volunteer fire company model of fire protection services and that could potentially result in delayed and understaffed responses to fire emergencies. We are not immune to these challenges in Nether Providence. In an effort to address and get ahead of this growing concern, the Township and the Borough of Swarthmore jointly retained a fire industry consultant to undertake a comprehensive study about the current level of fire services provided by Garden City Fire Company, South Media Fire Company, and the Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association, and to provide recommendations for improving the current model in terms of efficiency and response time.

Maureen Feyas
Township Manager

Kris Laubscher
Treasurer

The consultant prepared a Fire and EMS Protection Study dated October 1, 2025 (the "Study") which is available for review on the Township's website. I encourage you to review the Study as it is eye-opening. The Study concludes that all three (3) fire companies are underfunded and that Swarthmore Fire and Protective Association and South Media Fire Company are understaffed. The Study also concludes that South Media Fire Company is increasingly unable to respond to emergency calls due to such understaffing. Further, each fire company has overlapping equipment costs, bookkeeping costs and other administrative costs that are duplicative of each other. The Study therefore recommends that all three (3) fire companies be consolidated into one regional fire company serving the Township, Swarthmore Borough and Rose Valley Borough, with all three municipalities pooling their expenditures and resources for fire services to be provided by one consolidated fire company.

The plan is for each of the three firehouses to remain open and operational, but through a pooling of resources and strategic planning on a larger scale, the consolidated organization will be more robust, which will result in a timelier response to emergency calls and a response with the appropriate equipment and number of personnel.

We are deeply appreciative of the volunteerism and commitment to community that each of the firehouses has provided for decades, and we will seek to maintain that sense of culture and community while working with them to modernize and adapt to rapidly changing times. Each of the firehouses has participated in the data gathering and reflection leading up to the Study and we look forward to each of the firehouses working with the Township towards the shared goal of using taxpayer funds in the most efficient manner to provide timely responses to emergency calls with an appropriate team of personnel.

Of course, implementation may take some time, so please continue to respond to existing funding appeals that SMFC or GCFC may send!

Kaitlin McKenzie, President

Kaitlin McKenzie

Board of Commissioners

Cc: Board of Commissioners
Maureen Feyas, Township Manager
David Karlunas, Fire Marshal