

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS AND TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Manistee County, Michigan • Public Safety Coalition

SUBJECT: LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY PROFESSIONALS CALL FOR A "NO" VOTE ON THE PROPOSED FIRE/EMS AUTHORITY AND TAX INCREASE

As current and former public safety professionals—encompassing paid, combination, and volunteer fire officers, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, law enforcement officers, and emergency communications dispatchers—we, the undersigned, are writing to formally voice our opposition to the current program as proposed. We encourage our fellow citizens to vote NO.

To be entirely clear: we agree that the emergency services system in Manistee County requires modernization and improvement. We fully support working collectively across jurisdictions to enhance response times, capabilities, and safety. However, after a thorough professional review, we firmly believe that the specific framework presented by the steering committee on recent mailers and websites is not a viable plan. It fails to serve our communities financially, operationally, or strategically.

We would further note that, as of this writing, the actual ballot proposal has not been made public. Citizens are being asked to support the modernization of a countywide public safety system on the strength of promotional mailers and a website, while the specific language they will ultimately vote on remains unavailable for review. Asking the public and the professionals who staff these systems to commit to a plan they have not been permitted to read is, in itself, a fundamental problem with how this program is being advanced.

The information and assurances provided by representatives of the steering committee have not adequately demonstrated that this specific program is the correct path forward. A public safety system designed without the comprehensive buy-in and structural input of the boots on the ground is fundamentally flawed.

We are speaking out today not as official representatives of our respective municipal departments or agencies, but independently as dedicated professionals and taxpayers who live, work, and serve within this county.

For these reasons, we stand together against the framework slated for the upcoming ballot. We ask you to join us in voting NO, so that we can collectively return to the table and build a transparent, functional system that truly serves everyone.

Respectfully submitted by local professionals representing over 440 combined years of frontline public safety experience:

SIGNATORIES

Wesley Hull, Chief/MFR
58 Years of Active Service

John A. Dodson, Chief (Ret.), Paramedic I/C
39 Years of Service

Keith Truax, Firefighter (Ret.), Paramedic
36 Years of Service

Gayle Witkowski, Paramedic
24 Years of Service

Shaine Kuczynski, Captain
17 Years of Service

Jordon LaPoint, FF/Paramedic
15 Years of Service

Aaron Shaver, Firefighter/EMR
14 Years of Service

Megan Wells, Firefighter/EMT
12 Years of Service

Brandon Brotherton, Firefighter
10 Years of Service

Jacob Peter, EMS Lieutenant
5 Years of Service

Jazmyn Booker, EMT
5 Years of Service

Taylor Summers, EMT-B/Public Safety Telecommunicator
4 Years of Service

Anna VanDuinen, Firefighter/EMT
3 Years of Service

Fred R. LaPoint, Fire Chief/Paramedic
50 Years of Service

Douglas Dominick, Captain / Paramedic (Ret.)
25 Years of Professional Service

Cynthia J. McKenney, Registered Nurse/Paramedic
31 Years of Service

Joseph Wells, Fire Chief/ EMT
20 Years of Service

David L. Pete, Fire Captain
16 Years of Service

Kristy Merrill, Firefighter/EMT
15 Years of Service

Ronald Cole, Ambulance Captain, FF/EMT
13 Years of Service

Kenneth Wilson, Fire Lieutenant/EMR
10 Years of Service

Angelina Wilson, EMT, Assistant Medical Officer
7 Years of Service

Patricia Dixon, Firefighter/ EMT
5 Years of Service

Adam J. Boers, Firefighter
4 Years of Service

Dawn M. Boers, EMT-B
3 Years of Service

Titles and ranks are listed for identification purposes only. Signatories are speaking as individual professionals and citizens, independent of any specific municipal employer.