



*Borough of Stratford*  
*"A Clean Community"*  
*Est. 1889*

*From the Desk of Councilman Steve Gandy, Director of Emergency Services*

## **EMS UPDATE**

Since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been an increased need for EMS Services, not only in Stratford but also in the surrounding communities we serve.

The increased demand has been quite taxing on the volunteers of the Stratford Ambulance Association. To further exasperate matters, regulatory changes implemented by the State of New Jersey has reduced the number of volunteers who are eligible to provide EMS Services to our community. This problem is in no way unique to Stratford. In fact, there is a regional EMS crisis affecting municipalities throughout the State of New Jersey.

In Camden County, the Mayors Association is actively gathering information and hopes to lobby legislatures for funding to regionalize EMS services. We anticipate this to be a very long bridge to cross.

In the meantime, we as a Governing Body have been hard at work to ensure EMS Services continue uninterrupted.

Today, it is with great pride and relief we are pleased to inform our residents that a comprehensive plan has been developed and approved by Mayor & Council that has **SAVED the Stratford Ambulance Association from disbanding and or privatization.**

**Stratford EMS Services will continue in our community, in the current form, without disruption, without increased response time, without a reduction of staff and without a local tax increase to pay for these vital services.**

Additionally, Mayor & Council working cooperatively with the Stratford Volunteer Fire Department is pleased to report the Stratford Volunteer Ambulance Association will soon house their ambulances and offices in the Fire Department. Consequently, the shared facility will result in sizeable cost savings to both of these volunteer organizations. With this consolidation, Police, Fire, OEM, & EMS will be centralized within the 300 block of Union Avenue. We expect the shared facility arrangement to be completed no later than November 1, 2022.

Moving forward, we have put forth an ordinance that will require our large State Licensed Medical type facilities, who choose to use our ambulances for medical transports to pay their fair share in support of the Stratford Volunteer Ambulance Association.

Make no mistake, the Stratford Ambulance Association **WILL NOT BE HARD BILLING** homeowners for EMS Services. The ordinance introduced, pertains **ONLY** to State Licensed Facilities who utilize our ambulance services on a daily basis.

In addition, federal grant funds are on the way to support the Stratford Ambulance Association in 2023 and beyond.

In the coming weeks, we will have additional status updates to announce.

In the meantime, we are ecstatic to make this information public, and pleased to dispel some of the misinformation that has been circulated over the past few weeks.

Thank you for taking the time to read this very important update.