

Borough of West Mayfield
Mayor
Members of Council
Secretary-Treasurer
Code Enforcement Officers
Solicitor
Tax-Collector



Dear Borough of West Mayfield official:

The West Mayfield Fire Service Review Committee (FSRC) respectfully requests your attendance at a meeting for borough officials.

The purpose of this meeting is to further our fact-finding efforts and to better understand issues regarding fire prevention and fire protection matters pertaining to local government.

Our local government inquiry is focused on the following areas:

Leadership	ISO Public Protection Classification
Legislative & Legal Authority	Infrastructure
Duties & Obligations	Special Fire Police
Oversight & Accountability	Workers Compensation Insurance
Ordinances & Regulations	Municipal Financial & In-Kind Support
Fire Service & Mutual Aid Agreements	Emergency Management Integration
	Civic Engagement & Public Education

CURRENT FINDINGS - COMMUNITY SURVEY

The first phase of our work involved a robust gathering of community opinions that should be concerning to local government officials. Here's an overview of responses to our community survey:

Borough Ordinances: Fire Prevention & Fire Protection - A majority of citizens (59%) think the current ordinances are outdated and insufficient.

Council Authority: Oversight of the fire service - A majority of citizens (63%) think council does not have enough authority and oversight of the fire service.

Borough Support: Tax-payer financial and in-kind support for the WMVFD - 38% of citizens think taxpayers provide enough sustaining support to the WMVFD, while 18% feel that the borough should provide more support. A majority of respondents (48%) admit that they don't know what is an appropriate amount of taxpayer support to sustain the WMVFD.

Fire Prevention: Public education and community outreach efforts - A majority of citizens (54%) think the WMVFD's fire prevention education program does not adequately serve the needs of the community.

Neighboring Fire Services: Mutual aid leadership, staffing, qualifications, training, equipment, availability - A super majority of citizens (73%) think our neighboring fire departments offer better quality fire services than the WMVFD.

Community Support: Financial donations, participation in fundraising efforts - While a majority of citizens (58%) say they sometimes support the WMVFD's fundraising efforts, nearly a third surveyed stated that they do not or will not support the WMVFD's fundraising efforts.

Community Confidence: Community trust, faith, and confidence in the WMVFD to fulfill its mission - Another super majority of citizens (73%) think the community has lost trust, faith, and confidence in the WMVFD.

Future of the Fire Service - A super majority of citizens (90%) are evenly split over whether the borough and WMVFD should create a fire service corrective action plan or the borough should decertify WMVFD and outsource its fire service needs.

Future of Borough Fire Prevention & Fire Protection Program - A super majority of citizens (95%) think the borough's current fire prevention & fire protection program is insufficient and must be updated and modernized.

Of particular note, across the survey on average 30% of citizens admitted to not knowing enough to answer the questions, suggesting a concerning lack of public education and civic knowledge regarding fire prevention and fire protection issues in our community.

CURRENT FINDINGS - FIRE SERVICE ECOSYSTEM

The second phase of our inquiry has been looking at our fire service ecosystem. To date we have held meaningful conversations with several local fire departments and attended municipal council meetings of other municipalities as they discussed fire service matters.

Most of our neighboring municipalities, in partnership with their designated fire services, have begun to lean into the future regarding the many serious challenges facing their communities' fire prevention and fire protection programs. They are welcoming, not resisting or obstructing, the adoption of higher standards of emergency response professionalism, best practices, rigorous training, and higher levels of materiel readiness guided by the National Fire Prevention Association and other industry-leading organizations, as well as standards set forth by the Office of State Fire Commissioner and the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Our findings show that in most neighboring municipalities, forward thinking local government officials and fire service leaders are working together to negotiate pathways forward to better

serve and protect their communities. And a growing number of municipalities are beginning to organize themselves into formal fire districts.

FSRC MEETING WITH BOROUGH OFFICIALS

As part of our third phase of inquiry, the FSRC is conducting this meeting with borough officials; consistent with our other forums, it will be open to the public. Your participation is voluntary, but attendance will be noted. The aim of this meeting is to further our fact-finding mission, so there will be no open discussions or debating apart from the scope of our program.

Please note, this is neither a regular nor special council meeting. For participating members of council, this meeting is not held for the purpose of deliberating agency business or taking official action (voting) on any issue.

Based on our research, the FSRC committee has developed a list of questions for elected officials and duly appointed officers of the borough. As a professional courtesy, we will reach out soon to select officials regarding specific inquiries to help prepare for our meeting.

Please mark your calendar. We look forward to meeting with you in council chambers from 6p-8p, June 19, 2024.

If you have any questions or concerns about this meeting, please feel free to contact me directly.

PS: Before our FSRC meeting with borough officials, you may find it helpful and informative to review our current research regarding local government and other areas of inquiry. We encourage your comments regarding the accuracy and completeness of any information presented.

You can find this information online by following [this link](#):

<https://www.westmayfieldborough.us/fire-service-review-committee-fsrc/fsrc-local-government/>

Sincerely,



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