



Belltown Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

8 Dorlen Rd.

Stamford, CT 06905

Phone: (203) 323-0626 / Fax: (203) 323-8819



April 17, 2017

Members of the Board of Representatives,

Please read the attached editorial which will be submitted to the Stamford Advocate for publication. We watched with interest as the Finance Board discussed the ongoing consolidation at their March 22nd meeting and felt it was a good opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of our volunteers and offer some further points for discussion. As you can see in the editorial we offer an opportunity for members of the Finance Board to visit our station at any time. That offer is of course extended to the members of the Board of Representatives, please do not hesitate to reach out to me to schedule a visit. In addition, I would be happy to attend any meetings where the fire service is being discussed so I can directly answer questions regarding our department and the ongoing consolidation. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Chief John Didelot
203-442-3500



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With talk of the Stamford Fire Service back in the news we wanted to take an opportunity to address some points of interest in the recent article and editorials published in the Stamford Advocate. In addition we want to recognize the dedication and hard work of our volunteers, the men and women of the Belltown Fire Department. Since our transition to an all volunteer operation nearly 10 years ago our members have put in countless hours staffing the station, conducting training, and responding to emergency calls. So far this fiscal year our membership has recorded 20,599 hours of station coverage and 1,829 hours of training. These numbers, which are submitted to the Fire Chief on a monthly basis, demonstrate a tremendous dedication to the residents of Belltown and the City of Stamford.

As of April 16, 2017 our department has responded to a total of 102 calls for service with an average response time of 3 minutes and 28 seconds. Each week we handle numerous emergencies from serious medical calls to motor vehicle accidents and fires. When necessary our firefighters and officers work side by side with career firefighters to safely mitigate these incidents.

Since the charter change we have encouraged progressive thinking within our department and led an atmosphere of positive change, we have embraced training and staffing requirements and cooperated with city leaders and the Fire Chief. Belltown Fire Department has demonstrated overwhelming fiscal responsibility outfitting a large group of members with expensive firefighting gear while properly maintaining our building, apparatus, and equipment all within our budget.

Our department is ready to take the next steps, and we hope that includes helping to provide a higher level of service to the city. Despite our willingness, it seems that there is a reluctance to utilize many volunteer resources unless absolutely necessary. The new GPS dispatching system has been praised for reducing response times, yet only one of our engines is fully configured to use it. During a recent fire at the Italian Center it took 14 minutes for a second ladder truck to respond to the scene from Harbor Point, our ladder truck could have responded in 6 minutes or less with state certified firefighters on board, however it was never called.

The Belltown Fire Department continues to look towards the future, we hope to become part of a unified fire service where unity, teamwork, and a sense of purpose for all personnel is promoted citywide. To the members of the Board of Finance who recently asked some tough questions about our service, we invite you to visit our station, meet our volunteers, and learn more about what we contribute. The City of Stamford has the potential to develop a world class combination fire department, however it will not become reality unless all involved accept the change and are carefully guided through it by fair, focused, and strong leadership.