



Borough of Collingswood

678 HADDON AVENUE • COLLINGSWOOD, NEW JERSEY 08108
(856) 854-0720 • FAX (856) 854-0632 • WWW.COLLINGSWOOD.COM

M. JAMES MALEY, JR.
Mayor
Director of Public Safety & Affairs

BRADFORD C. STOKES
Administrator

JOAN C. LEONARD
Commissioner
Director of Public Works, Parks and Recreation

March 31, 2009

MICHAEL A. HALL
Commissioner
Director of Finance & Revenue

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Theodore Z. Davis, COO
City of Camden
City Hall, Suite 1300
520 Market Street
Camden, New Jersey 08101-5120

Re: Fire Department Services

Dear Judge Davis:

I am writing this letter seeking your attention to a serious problem that has evolved in the Fire Service and to advise you of steps being taken by the Borough of Collingswood with respect to responses to Camden fires. I have placed several telephone calls to your office and left messages with various personnel in an attempt to have a discussion on these matters.

First, let me point out that we understand that the City of Camden faces dire economic conditions. We understand that you are working to generate a budget that provides adequate services to the residents of the City. You must also understand that we are attempting to do the same for our residents. Unfortunately, some of the steps that have been taken with respect to the Camden Fire Department's budget are having an adverse impact on the Collingswood Fire Department and on the taxpayers of the Borough of Collingswood.

We understand that there have been budget cuts in overtime for Camden fire personnel resulting in various shifts running with less than full manning. We have come to learn that Camden firefighters that are on vacation or call out sick or are injured are not being replaced with overtime workers. This situation has meant that the Collingswood Fire Department is being called to respond to City of Camden fire calls. In all of 2008, the Borough of Collingswood responded to 10 mutual aid fire calls in the City of Camden; in the first two months of 2009, the Borough of Collingswood has made 40 responses in the City of Camden. This cannot continue.

We have also been advised that equipment in the Camden Fire Department is not being promptly repaired. This morning, the Borough Fire Department was called to provide a ladder truck because two of the City's three ladder trucks are out of service. We understand one of those ladder trucks is expected to be repaired and the other is not. The Borough of Collingswood is not able to provide its fire equipment to replace fire equipment lost by budget cuts in the City of Camden.

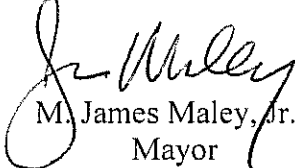
In order to protect the interest of the Collingswood taxpayers who pay for our provision of services within our community, and in order to minimize the additional risk to our firefighting staff, and to ensure the availability of our firefighting staff for response to Collingswood emergencies, I am forced to issue a directive to the Camden County Department of Communications advising that the Borough of Collingswood is to be dispatched to the City of Camden only for "all hands" working fires. The Borough of Collingswood will not respond to dispatches for alarms and other calls that are less than "all hands" working fire dispatches.

We take this step as an initial step. We request that you please advise as to the City's intention with respect to replacement of its fire equipment. We must receive assurances that the fire equipment is being promptly replaced and that Collingswood will not be required to respond with its own equipment in order to cover equipment shortfalls created by budget concerns within the City. If we are unable to receive such assurances, we will contemplate further reductions in the response of our Borough Fire Department to Camden City calls.

All of our neighboring communities respond at a moments notice to emergencies. Unfortunately, some of the budget issues within the City have caused the Borough of Collingswood to respond in non-emergency conditions as a substitute for Camden services. We cannot allow this to continue.

We would be happy to meet with you regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,



M. James Maley, Jr.
Mayor

MJM/kjk

cc: Chief John Amet
Honorable Joan Leonard
Honorable Michael Hall
Bradford C. Stokes, Administrator