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Paul Delys
President

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Mr. Paschall,

On the off-chance Legislators are unaware of the effort it takes to be a volunteer firefighter or medic, let me give a little background as to what CGFR requires of its members. Depending on their interests, new volunteers take a 120+ FireFighter 1 or EMT 1 class. Many volunteers ultimately take both. Another half dozen mandated, day-long classes are required before anyone can respond. These are the same minimum requirements to which most career/paid fire departments adhere. Beyond the initial training, volunteers must pull shifts and attend weekly training. Advanced firefighting, EMT, leadership and technical rescue classes are taken by many volunteers. All in preparation for actually assisting a (probable) stranger who called 9-1-1! As a rough estimate, the average CGFR volunteer's active contribution to the department is 160 hours/year, 4 full work weeks. Including shift time, the average volunteer probably gives 800-900 hours/year to the community.

Quite a few of our volunteers are college students who move on after a few years. Their services are invaluable, but CGFR's backbone is established local residents who volunteer, potentially, for decades. Years of training and experience are required to become a safe, qualified battalion chief, lead medic or company officer. These are the people whose leadership, decisions and actions save lives and property.

Today's society pulls people in many different directions. Increasing legal liabilities and training requirements continually pressure volunteer fire services to become more competent and professional. Many years have passed since volunteering in the fire service could be a casual commitment. Years of training and experience are the key to developing effective emergency responders. There's little public recognition of the substantial effort involved in volunteering. I strongly believe a \$200k property tax exemption will provide substantial motivation for volunteers to spend additional years in the fire service. That longevity is critical to effective emergency operations.

Respectfully,

Paul Delys
CGFR Board President