

Fire Department Position Statement

Response to Moving Fire Department to the Industrial Park

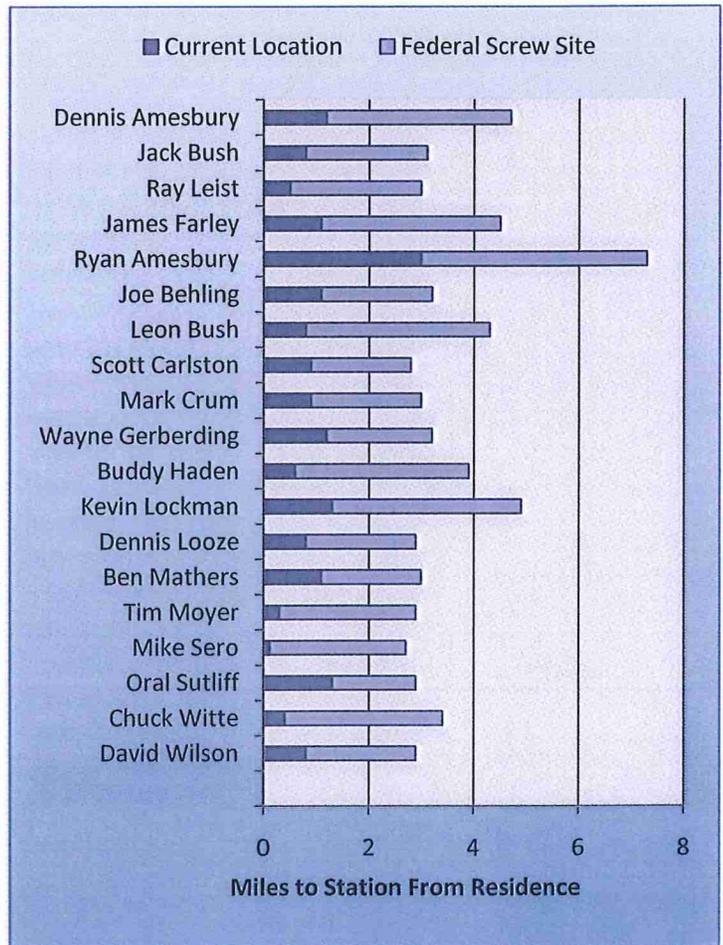
Synopsis

This paper shall outline the Fire Department's position on the City of Boyne City's recent interest in potentially utilizing the vacant Federal Screw building to accommodate public safety/DPW services. The Fire Department personnel respectfully challenge the idea that moving the fire service facility to the Air Industrial Park would be feasible or in the best interest of the citizens it serves and property it protects. There are several factors that need to be fully considered before a final decision is made as to whether or not to pursue this option. Specifically, this paper shall examine, 1) response times, 2) call volume/locations, 3) ISO ratings, 4) school location, 5) citizen support and, 6) other considerations.

Response Times

A structure fire, with typical fire load and ventilation, can double in size every 30-60 seconds. The "golden hour" is the time standard whereby a critical trauma patient (i.e. a car crash victim that requires extrication) needs to reach definitive care (operating room) to have the best chance for survival. The point of the previous two statements is that time is of the essence in the fire service. Moving a fire station to the Air Industrial Park will drastically increase response times to incidents increasing loss of property and, potentially, life.

The chart to the right presents the active, in-district, fire fighters mileage to the current fire station (from their residence) as compared to the proposed site. The response distance is more than doubled for nineteen out of nineteen firefighters. Total combined miles travelled to the current station by the represented personnel is 18.2 miles verses 50.4 miles to the proposed site.

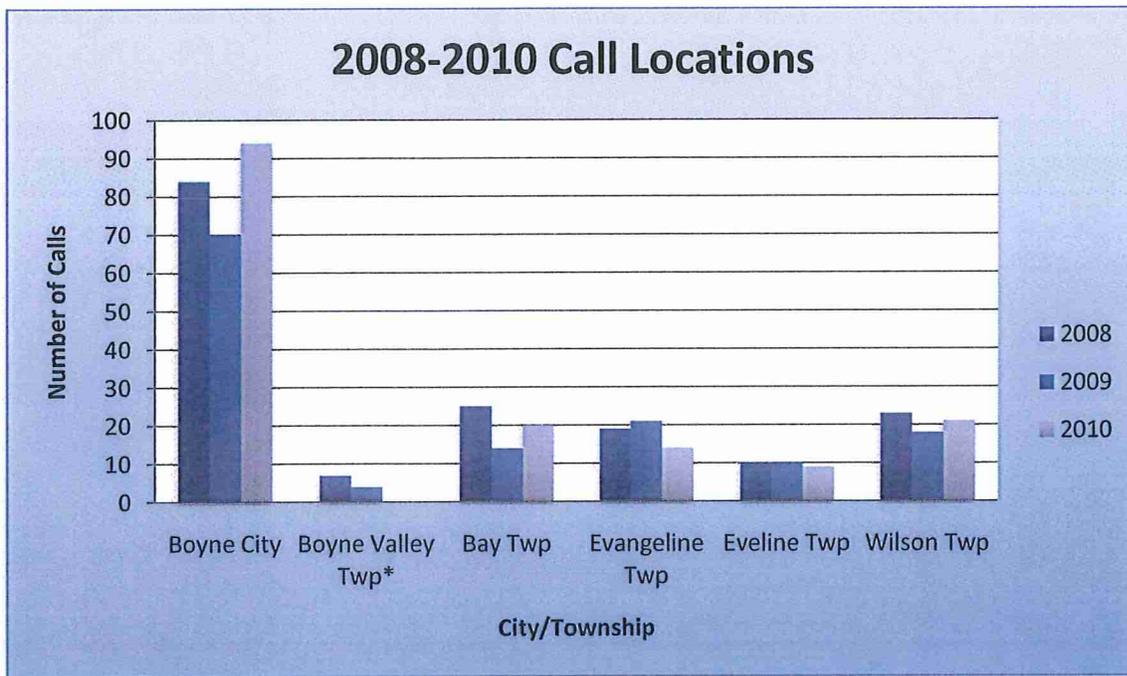


The fire department is integral to the protection of the downtown business district. Currently the fire station location is approximately 2 blocks to the downtown area. Moving the fire facility to the industrial park would increase that distance by two miles. While, on the surface, two miles does not sound like a lot, consideration must also be taken to the additional response time of current firefighters to that station location.

As a recent example of how response times can be impacted, the BCFD responded to a car crash with entrapment on Camp Daggett Rd. Conservatively speaking, based on responding personnel on that particular day, the response time would have increased, at least, an additional 10 minutes from call to scene. An additional ten minutes for a critically injured trauma patient can be the difference between life and death.

Call Locations

The Boyne City Fire Department responded to 162 calls in 2010, 139 in 2009, and 173 in 2008. The percentages of calls that are outside the city were 64% in 2010, 50% in 2009, and 51% in 2008.



ISO ratings

ISO provides information that is valuable to the property/casualty insurance industry. The *Fire Suppression Rating Schedule* is the standard that ISO utilizes to assess the fire-fighting capabilities of a community. ISO reviews the 911 Center capabilities (10%), Engine Companies (50%), and the available Water Supply (40%). The Public Protection Classification, a numerical grading system, assigns a “grade” based on the assessment information. Response times are reviewed in the engine company

assessment. Increasing response times by an average of 7-10 minutes will, undoubtedly, have some affect on insurance rates. More research is required to determine the extent of change.

School Location

During the school year, pedestrian and vehicular traffic increases around the Boyne City Public Schools campus. Several firefighters, when responding to the station to a 911 dispatch, would be travelling past the Middle and High Schools 100% of the time. Based on run history, fire equipment would be traveling back past the schools approximately 95% of the time.

Citizen Support

Fire personnel have had informal conversations with several city residents. There has not been one report of a Boyne City resident that would be in favor of such a move. It would appear, based on these informal conversations, that it would be difficult to get tax payer support, if needed, at a public hearing. Elected officials do have to make difficult decisions; however, they are also supposed to be the voice of the people. Hopefully, the lack of citizen support would be a consideration.

Other Considerations

- 1) The Boyne City Fire Department personnel would have to travel through a portion of Boyne Valley Township Fire Department's territory to get to their own fire station.
- 2) The surrounding townships of Bay, Evangiline, Eveline, and parts of Wilson would inevitably be disadvantaged by a slower response time. This may create a "hard sell" to get additional revenue out of the townships when the time comes.
- 3) Taking that industrial site/building out of the industrial park would eliminate tax revenue and the possibility of another industry/business purchasing the property. The best case scenario would be a new industry to come into Boyne City, utilize the building, and provide jobs to local citizens.
- 4) Extensive and costly remodeling will be required to make the building useful for the services involved.
- 5) Emergency vehicles would have to exit on to M-75 which is currently a 55 M.P.H. speed zone.

Conclusion

In conclusion, moving the fire department to the industrial park would be ill-advised based on information presented. Increased response times will inevitably result in increased property loss and potential loss of life. School zone safety, insurance rates, and citizen support are additional considerations. While it is recognized that there exists a need for a centralized public safety building, careful planning should take place.

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