



Lakewood First Aid & Emergency Squad

1555 Pine Street / P.O. Box 644
Lakewood, NJ 08701

February 14, 2010

Dear Editor,

On Thursday February 11th you posted a story about Classy Cleaners roof collapsing that occurred during the snowstorm Wednesday night. One of the comments posted on that story inspired me to write the following and I have also copied the comment here for all to see followed by my thoughts.

ff/emt says: February 11, 2010 at 11:50 pm

As the article stated, "Multiple FD, PD and EMS units are on scene", what it didn't say was when the incident became stable, the volunteers of the Lakewood First Aid Squad had used their personal vehicles to block off the road, freeing up some LPD officers for the many calls that were mounting. This happened on more than one occasion. My reason for stating this fact is because, for every action, there is a reaction. Obviously everybody knows by now of the fight to save the EMS department. But people are taking for granted that the Volunteers will not be affected. However, that is a fallacy. If a private entity comes into this, our home, and provides EMS for a fee, not to the township, but to the residents, why in the name of business would they offer to allow the volley's to do it for free? This entity, which ever it may be, will already be loosing money on the townships' homeless population, not to mention the undocumented citizens. There are many indigent people who also live among us. If the new entity has 1 call or 4, they will pull from their fleet of ambulances, with no need or desire of Mutual Aid, i.e., the Lakewood First Aid Squad. How long can an organization exist with no monies being generated. The Lakewood First Aid Squad depends on the monies from fund drives to operate; they do not receive a stipend from the township. If they are not servicing the citizens of the township, what is the purpose of donating to them? That is a sad statement but understood in today's economy. If the Lakewood First Aid Squad shuts its doors, so closes the doors on the Extrication Abilities of the township. Just one more service that will be lost because of privatization. Will you stand by and listen, knowing that there is nothing you can do for the accident victims that would have to wait (with victims undoubtedly in excruciating pain) for mutual aid to arrive from a neighboring town in order to be cut out of a vehicle? There is no doubt that the Lakewood First Aid Squad is a vital part in the Emergency Medical System of this township and without it, more hardships on our citizens and those who travel through this town will arise. I am not running in the street yelling that the sky is falling; I am only stating a fact... Without the Lakewood Township EMS, there will be no Lakewood First Aid Squad. The time is now for your voice to be heard. Let not just Mr. Langert know we need to keep the EMS Department, but let all the Township Committee Members know. We elected the committee to do what is right for this, OUR town, OUR home and this is what is right.

Dear Residents, Neighbors, and Friends

It is well known by now that the Lakewood Township Committee is going ahead with their attempt to disband the Lakewood Emergency Medical Services (LEMS). What is not commonly known is that there is another emergency service team that operates in town. This team is known as the Lakewood First Aid & Emergency Squad (LFAS). The two entities are technically separate though they work side by side and train together on a daily basis. LEMS is run by the township while LFAS is its own incorporated entity.

I would like to share with you a little history of the squad and what they do, and then I will explain my concerns as well as those of my fellow squad members as hinted to in the comment letter posted above.

The Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad was formed January 16, 1933 under the name Lakewood American Legion First Aid Squad, as we were affiliated with the American Legion at that time. In 1939 we took on the name we currently use,

Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad. The squad was located on First Street between Monmouth and Lexington Avenues, until 1992, at which time we moved to our current location, 1555 Pine Street. Since our inception, we have been providing unparalleled emergency care to the town and its residents by highly trained and experienced Emergency Service Providers. In 1979, the Township started the Township of Lakewood Department of Emergency Medical Services otherwise known as the Lakewood EMS Department. The reason for starting Lakewood EMS was to bring faster and better care to the town as Lakewood EMS would be ready to respond to emergencies at a moment's notice, unlike VOLUNTEERS who have to leave their home or work to respond. The Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad has remained as the primary backup to Lakewood EMS. When Lakewood EMS is providing Emergency Medical Services and another call should arise the Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad would respond. The Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad would be what is known as "hit out" for the call by the Lakewood Police Dispatchers using a plectron toning system that would alert a pager. If a member is available to respond to the call he would call into police headquarters by telephone, telling them they are responding. Now we use a very similar system but we all carry two-way radios so that we can communicate with the dispatchers and one another directly.

The Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad provide many essential services to cover the needs of our town. Our primary job is high quality patient care, motor vehicle and industrial extrication, Police and Fire standby and mutual aid to our surrounding towns and continuous training. We as volunteers give up endless hours of our time giving back to the town. Many dinners have been interrupted, nights go sleepless, or we have to skip family gatherings or events to fulfill this job that we VOLUNTEER for.

If the township does do away with LEMS who will provide extrication for the town?
Who will help train our new members that now work and train with the employees of LEMS that each have close to 25 years of EMS experience, and many of whom are paramedics as well?

What the township committee doesn't realize is that by getting rid of LEMS they are inadvertently getting rid of LFAS too.

I have noticed recently that many organizations in town have been getting recognition for what they do and I applaud them and thank them for their dedication. What is not known is that our members were out in Wednesday night's storm as well as the snow we had last Friday night. Going on many calls, transporting frum members of OUR community to the hospital on Friday night so that they don't have to drive in the snow, than going to pick up the midwife so the patient would feel more comfortable and at ease. We don't need the recognition but it's nice to know we are appreciated by the townspeople.

All we ask is the WHOLE town supports Lakewood First Aid and Emergency Squad and the Lakewood EMS Department. The decision made by the Township Committee has an impact on us all whether directly or indirectly. Please attend the Township Committee meetings. Call and/or write the committeemen. Your voice does make a difference.

Many articles and comments have been written in the past anonymously but I feel proud to put my name to this.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meir Neumann" followed by a long, horizontal flourish.

Meir Neumann - Captain LFAS

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