

Hunterdon Volunteer Firefighters To Gain Upgraded County Training Complex

Hunterdon County Volunteer firefighters from the twenty-seven County volunteer fire companies and other emergency first responders will receive state required training at an upgraded eight-acre County Emergency Services Training Complex, under a plan approved by Hunterdon County's Freeholder Board on July 2nd.

The long planned upgraded complex in Clinton Township, including a state of the art forty-foot live burn training tower, will replace the current facilities that are between forty and twenty-six years old and are at or past their useful lives. The \$6.9 million in capital funding required for the project was approved by the Freeholder Board in a 2016 ordinance.

Freeholder Board Director Suzanne Lagay stated, "The development of the training complex has moved through many iterations. The County's multidiscipline team and subject matter experts, working with the Fire and EMS Chief's association and the training staff, have developed a cost-effective project that will expertly meet the needs of our volunteer fire fighters and first responders for years to come."

Freeholder Board Deputy Director John E. Lanza, the Board's Public Safety liaison said, "This improved training complex will ensure our volunteer firefighters and other first responders have the necessary training and skills to protect not only the safety of the public in Hunterdon County, but also their own safety and those of their comrades, when battling blazes."

Freeholder Matt Holt pointed out, "The volunteer firefighters I know will tell you, nothing beats live practice to build teamwork and ensure safety at the scene of a fire or other emergency.

And we recognize that volunteer Fire companies are hard pressed for resources, so the training opportunities are at no cost for County volunteers or their companies. Another example of the County's commitment to shared services."

The County's Chief of Staff and Public Safety Director, George Wagner, told the Freeholders the training complex had 4500 registrants for 239 training programs in 2018, providing both Basic and Advanced Fire Fighter certifications required by the state Division of Fire Safety for volunteer Firefighters, in addition to other training and live practice activities.

Wagner stated, “The complex also provides training and exercises for numerous disciplines including; the HAZMAT team, Emergency Medical Services and all County volunteer rescue squads, law enforcement units throughout the County, the state Department of Corrections, the Sheriff’s Office and the SWAT team.”

The County’s architectural consultant for the project, Anthony Catana of Spiezle Architectural Group, Inc., presented a schematic at the July 2nd meeting that outlines the proposed facilities and infrastructure improvements at the complex.

County Architect Frank Bell told the Freeholder Board that once there is Freeholder approval, the plans will be presented to the Clinton Township Planning Board. Bell noted that when the project is ready, public bids will be sought.

The upgraded training complex will include:

- a five-bay fire vehicle and equipment storage facility to house and protect the five County owned fire vehicles used for training and equipment,
- facilities for confined space and utility trench training,
- large concrete pads for extrication training and other intense real-life response activities, such as vehicle fire simulator and Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) scenarios,
- a facility with classrooms equipped with audio visual and information technology infrastructure and instructor preparation areas,
- the 40-foot live burn tower structure

The architectural consultant advised that the complex should be ready for use in the spring of 2021.