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Borough Assembly

The Cooper Landing Emergency Services (CLEES) Board strongly supports Ordinance 2017-09 creating the Eastern Peninsula Highway Emergency Service Area (EPHESA).

For years, CLES has diligently answered the call for emergency services on the Northern Peninsula. Continuing staffing challenges find us unable to provide the necessary services without “paying” for some volunteers and bringing in others from outside the area. Much like the State of Alaska for the last couple of years, our service has been running in the red. This year alone we are budgeted to operate with expenses a full 55% higher than our revenues. Last year we put in two RV Sites and this year we are setting aside money to improve our living quarters for our non-resident volunteers, all in the hope of making it more appealing to volunteers in Cooper Landing. But, just like the State, we realize we can’t continue to operate in a deficit mode.

Quite truthfully, it sometimes feels as if CLES is being swept down a raging river, able to keep our head just above the water level, coming close to shore at times, and then pulled back into the current, fighting but losing the battle.

We feel a duty to provide much needed services to the highway corridor that everyone driving onto the peninsula utilizes, but there is no doubt this stresses our severely limited resources. While the ordinance before you does not give specifics on how EMS will develop, it does provide an avenue for oversight and the funding needed to address the problem along the highway corridor. We fully appreciate that the Mayor, the Health Care Task Force and the corresponding workgroup have worked together to offer an option to help address this critical issue. CLES is ready and willing to work with the Borough and the surrounding communities to improve and provide consistent EMS care, however it may develop.

Sincerely,

Dan Michels
President
Cooper Landing Emergency Services