

# Whitemarsh Township Fire & Emergency Services Planning Project

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## Process

- May 21, 2025 – Introductory Meeting with ESB
- June and July 2025 – Meetings with Key Stakeholders
- Online Survey of Supervisors and civilian ESB members
  - 4 out of 10 responded to the survey
- Data and document review
- Phone calls and discussions with leaders
  - 28 people
- Fall – 2 group meetings with fire companies and EMS
  - Meeting 1 – 23 attended, Meeting 2 – 18 attended

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## Dedication

- Passion for firefighting, medical care, training
- Long term commitment to the community.
- Care about the community.

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## Critical Issues

- No agreed upon strategic direction.
- Long term real or perceived conflict and distrust between each organization and with the township.
- Perceived or real lack of collaboration between organizations.
- Ensuring consistent staffing with trained and certified firefighters and fire officers.

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## Critical Issues

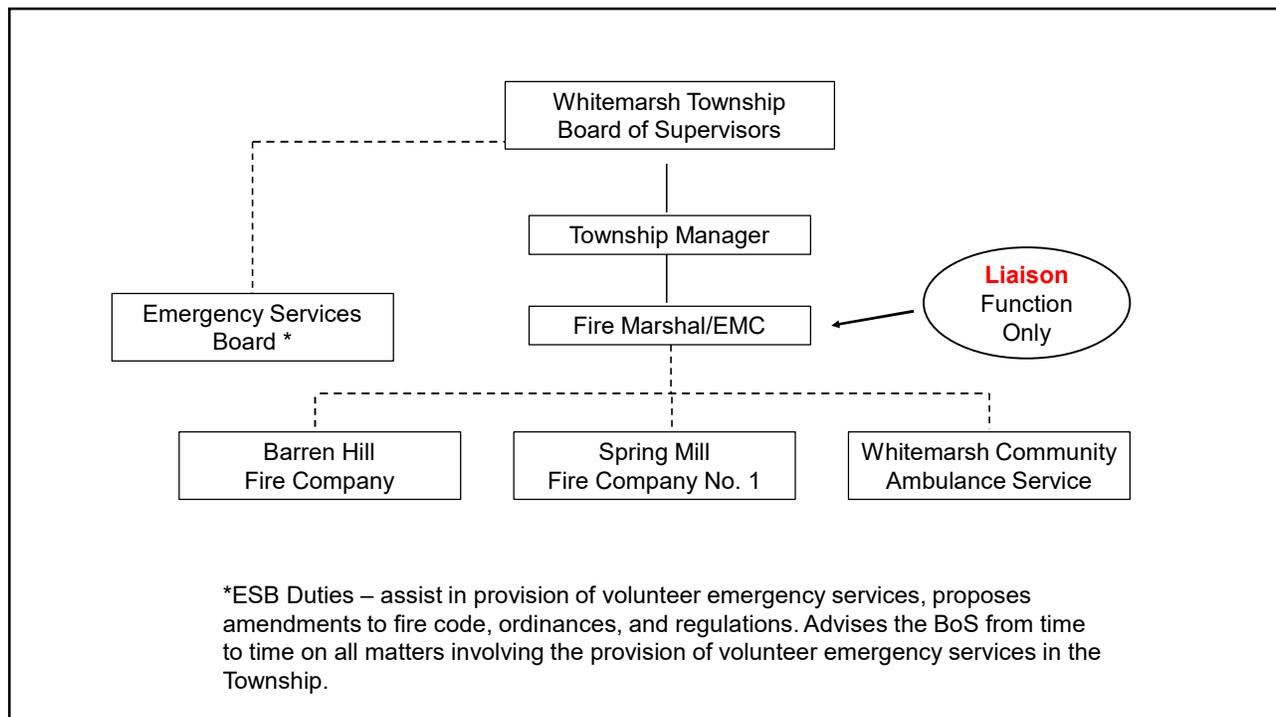
- Facilities designed for modern fire and EMS operations.
- Increased cost of operations and capital equipment for fire companies.
- Sustainable and predictable funding for the ambulance service to ensure continued staffing and equipment updates.

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## Current Organizational Structure

- Limited formal requirements.
- No expectations or formal reporting relationships.
- Township provides critical funding with NO means of assuring adequate service delivery.
- ESB is ineffective to deal with complex problems.

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## NO Leadership and NO Accountability

- There is an absence of effective leadership to ensure collaboration.
- NO ability to develop a shared consensus on a future vision to ensure effective provision of modern fire and EMS.
- The CURRENT organizational cultures prevent any effort to “voluntarily work together”

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## Leadership

- No one leader has the:
  - *Responsibility*
  - *Authority*
  - *Credibility*
- To drive organizational change and improvement

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## Environment

- The Township Supervisors have the authority and responsibility to establish an effective organizational structure and appoint professional leadership.
- *A collaborative and transparent* approach is very important.
- The independent nonprofits (2 FCs and Ambulance) have dedicated members and significant assets.

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## Environment

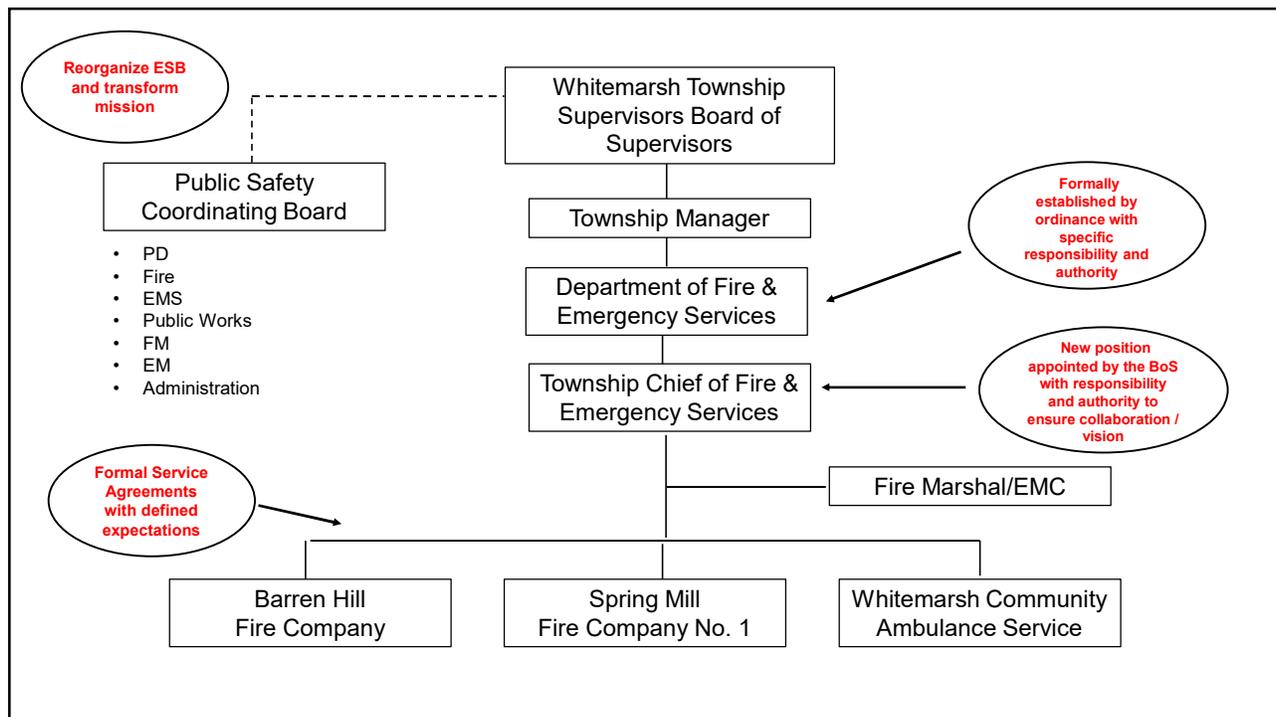
- Review of comparable municipalities in Pennsylvania.
- Low expectations for Supervisor action on this study.
  - Nothing will be done, and we will keep doing the same.
- Rumors, personal agenda, historical disagreements and past actions.

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## Recommendations

1. Chief of Fire and Emergency Services / Township Department of Fire and Emergency Services
2. Establish formal agreements with nonprofits.
3. Implement unified organizational and operational structure.
4. Transform ESB to Public Safety Coordinating Board.
5. Fire Chief conduct community risk assessment and develop a standard of cover for fire and EMS.

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## Chief of Fire and Emergency Services / Township Department of Fire and Emergency Services

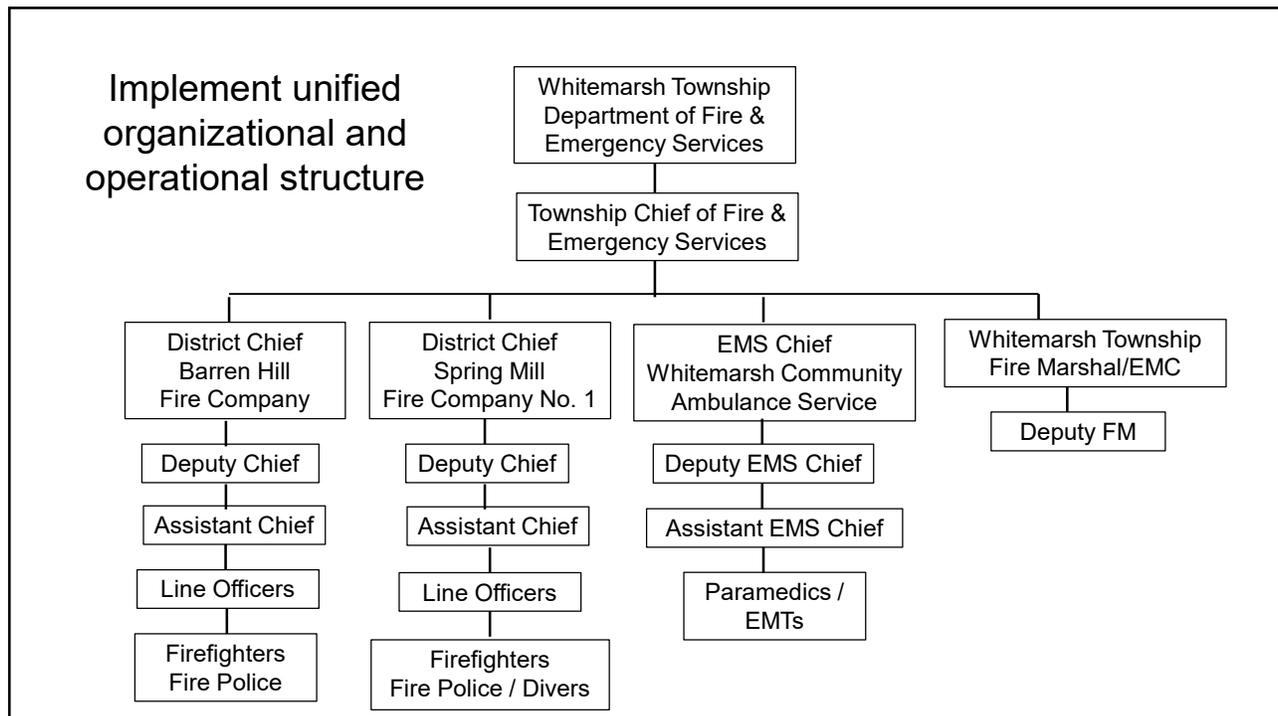
- Township employed subject matter expert
- Independent voice in the room
- Ability to build consensus and develop vision and strategy
- Provide strong leadership and support
- Must have authority

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## Establish formal agreements with nonprofits.

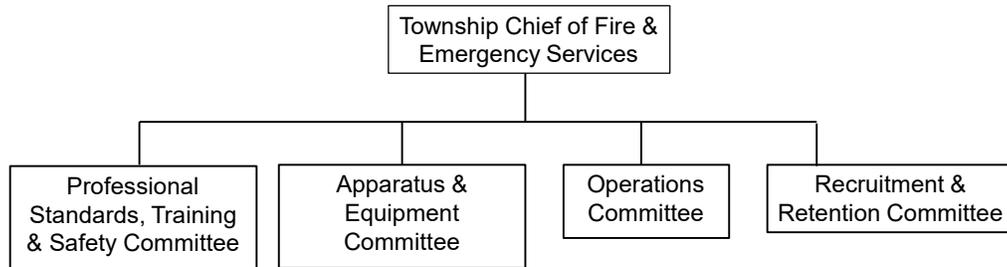
- In collaboration with FCs and ambulance service develop an agreement for services.
  - Expectations
  - Performance measurement
    - Financial
    - Response and staffing
  - Accountability

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## Unified Administrative Structure



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## Transform ESB to Public Safety Coordinating Board

- PD
- Fire
- EMS(Ambulance)
- Public Works
- Fire Marshal
- Emergency Management
- Township Administration

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## Implementation Timeline

Date	Action	Responsibility
February 2026	Approval of Plan Recommendations	Township Supervisors
February - June 2026	Establish the position, recruit, and hire Chief	Township Manager / Staff
April - July 2026	Develop and authorize ordinance	Township Manager / Staff
July - September 2026	Establish vision for the future	Chief of Fire & Emergency Services
September - November 2026	Establish services agreement for year 1	Chief of Fire & Emergency Services
September - November 2026	Establish unified command structure	Chief of Fire & Emergency Services
January - April 2027	Develop township standard of cover	Chief of Fire & Emergency Services

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### Whitemarsh Township Chief of Fire & Emergency Services Example Year One Plan

Activity	Attendees / Responsibility
<b>1st Quarter</b>	
Introductory email	All key stakeholders
Meet and Greet social event	Elected officials, Fire company members, twp. staff
Fire Company Board meeting attendance	Fire company leadership
Attend fire company training	Fire company members
Individual interviews	Anyone who would like to provide feedback
Membership survey	Develop/distribute online survey to seek feedback
Mutual aid leadership meeting	Meet with area Chiefs in an informal setting
Run calls	Be available to run calls with the companies
Develop strategic planning committee	Twp. Supervisors, FD leadership, Twp. Manager
<b>2nd Quarter</b>	
Mission & Vision Development Session	Strategic planning committee
Strategic Planning session	
- SWOT	Strategic planning committee
- Develop year-one goals	Strategic planning committee
- Complexity analysis	Strategic planning committee
Gaining consensus activities	Strategic planning committee
Identify administrative / operational challenges	Strategic planning committee
<b>3rd Quarter</b>	
Provide update briefing	Supervisors, Manager, FC members
Strategic plan endorsement / approval	Twp. Supervisors
Fire company board meeting attendance	Fire Chief
Develop implementation timeline for next year	Fire Chief
Next year budget development based on goals	Fire Chief with input from stakeholders
<b>4th Quarter</b>	
Budget Presentation	Fire Chief
Identify possible future regional solutions	Fire Chief
Next year administrative / operational planning	Fire Chief

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## Wrap Up

- Something must be done to improve the current situation.
  - Nothing will change without some action
- Some stakeholders have expressed frustration others will be happy if nothing is done.