



SPARTA TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ryan C. Odom
Chief of Department

PO Box 121
Sparta, NJ 07871
Tel: (973) 729-5080 X5050
r.odom@spartanjfd.org

The Honorable Neill Clark
Mayor, Township of Sparta
Via Email- Neill.Clark@spartanj.net

cc: Mr. James Zepp, Township Manager
Mr. Anand Dash, Esq.

Re: Respectful Resolution and Continued Cooperation

Dear Mayor Clark,

I would like to thank you for meeting with me to discuss your concerns regarding the off-duty conduct of our volunteer members. During our conversation, you and the Township Attorney acknowledged that the Fire Department had taken appropriate action in response to past issues, and that there are inherent limits to the control we have over volunteers while they are off duty.

You also made a fair and reasonable request, that members conduct themselves with decorum and professionalism, both in public and on social media, and that if they choose to express disagreement, they "attack the policy, not the person." I fully support that standard, and I have already communicated this expectation to the membership.

However, I was troubled by one particular concern you expressed that in the event of an emergency, your family would not receive the same level of care due to perceived animosity between you and some members of the department. I want to assure you, as I did in our meeting, that this department operates with the highest standard of professionalism. Protecting life and property is not just our mission, it is our moral duty and a core principle of our service. You should already be well aware of this commitment, as you personally administered the oath of office to our officers earlier this year, an oath that binds each of us to serve all members of the public with fairness, integrity, and dedication.

Respectfully, I found your statement both disappointing and unfair to the dedicated men and women who volunteer their time and energy to serve this community. Even so, I remained committed to a respectful and constructive discussion, and I left our meeting believing that we had achieved mutual understanding and common ground.



SPARTA TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

Ryan C. Odom
Chief of Department

PO Box 121
Sparta, NJ 07871
Tel: (973) 729-5080 X5050
r.odom@spartanjfd.org

Following our meeting, I addressed the membership at our regular department meeting. I shared your concerns about off-duty conduct and reiterated your message that members should maintain professionalism and, when expressing opinions, "attack the policy, not the person."

I recognize and respect the responsibilities and challenges of the position of Mayor. I have always extended you that respect, both personally and professionally. However, I must also advocate for my members, who volunteer countless hours in service to this community.

I trust that we will move forward in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, keeping our focus on what matters most, serving our residents together.

Very respectfully,

Ryan C. Odom
Chief of Department
Sparta Twp. Fire Dept.