

Dutchess

**Dutchess
County
Executive**

William R. Steinhaus
County Executive

22 Market Street
Poughkeepsie
New York
12601
(845)486-2000
Fax (845)486-2021



August 4, 2009

Assemblyman Joel Miller
NYS Assembly
3 Neptune Road, Suite A19E
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Dear Assemblyman Miller:

Please be advised your letter to the County Executive regarding emergency services has been received. In the letter, you indicated your resolve to find a long-term solution to address the unacceptably high fire taxes in the Fairview Fire District, a creation of the New York State Legislature - a solution that has so far eluded you in your many years representing the District.

As I understand it, you are now proposing to initiate a process to consolidate the Fairview Fire District with one or all of its neighboring fire districts that could include Hyde Park, Arlington, Poughkeepsie, or perhaps even a countywide consolidation. Have you addressed these issues with the local elected officials of these communities, as well as the elected Fire Commissioners and Fire Chiefs in all the respective districts to garner support for, or understand the concerns about your consolidation proposal?

Perhaps you are unaware, Dutchess County has numerous governance entities that oversee and coordinate the emergency services in our county: Dutchess County Fire and Safety Advisory Board; Dutchess County Chiefs Council; E911 Oversight Board; EMS Council; and the Emergency Association of Fire Districts of Dutchess County. Protocol requires you advance your consolidation proposal with these respective entities, ask for their views, and receive their formal endorsements of consolidation. Have you done so?

Finally, as the sponsor and advocate for this merger, it is your duty to publicly advocate and convince the property taxpayers of the neighboring Fire Districts that they as property taxpayers should absorb the Fairview District, its expenses, overhead, and its tax exempt properties – and importantly not diminish the public safety of the residents of any of the districts with such a consolidation.

Once you have successfully moved your consolidation proposal at these local levels, which we all understand are the necessary first steps in any effort for you to remove a home rule governance, you should then contact County Legislator Jim Doxsey who represents the Fairview Fire District. It would be Legislator Doxsey whose responsibility it would be to then introduce legislation on the County level, knowing it's supported by the many important stakeholders locally.

Should you and County Legislator Doxsey then successfully advance your proposed legislation through the County Legislature, the adopted proposal would come to the County Executive's desk. At that time, I can assure you the County Executive will give it the careful and thoughtful consideration he does with all legislation.

It's apparent you have had a great deal of difficulty, and controversy, in regard to this issue over the recent few years as a result of your changing views. It's important for the Fairview taxpayers, as well as taxpayers in the surrounding area and the county, that you invest the time, study, and expertise necessary to progress your proposal through the required process.

Sincerely,



Nancy Giordano
Chief of Staff

cc: County Legislators
Senator Stephen Saland
Town of Poughkeepsie Council Members
Fairview Fire District Officials
Mark Bendel