



# The Future of Your Fire/EMS Protection

**UPDATED SEPTEMBER 24, 2021**

# It's Happening Everywhere

- ▶ **What the Town of Harmony is facing is happening all over Wisconsin and to a certain extent the entire U.S. Smaller communities that have depended on volunteer fire departments are now needing to staff their departments with Full-time, paid on premises and paid on call to fill their staffing needs. It's coming at a huge expense to tax payers everywhere.**
- ▶ **As you read this/we discuss this, there are several townships in Rock County who are struggling with their Fire/EMS contracts. They include Rock, Janesville, La Prairie, Lima, Johnstown and the village of Footville.**

# Putting out the fires in 2022 ?

- ▶ **For years the Town of Harmony has contracted the City of Milton/Town of Milton Fire Department for Fire/EMS protection. The contract is for protection covering approximately 80% of the township under a 3 year contract. The other 20% of the township is covered by the City of Janesville Fire Department, also under a three year contract. Both of those three year contracts expire on December 31 2021.**

# The Cost Go's Up

- ▶ **On 09-19-20 The City of Milton/Milton Township Fire Department alerted the Town of Harmony of a substantial increase for the 2021 Fire/EMS service contract. The Town of Harmony paid \$72,920.00 in 2020 in 2021 we paid \$225,158.00 That is a 305 % increase or \$152,238.00 more than in the year 2020. This increase actually did nothing for the Town as far as the Fire/EMS service. The Town was told that this increase went to raise the pay for the paid on premises and paid on call fire personnel, in an attempt to keep personnel from leaving the department and going somewhere else.**
- ▶ **As of 09-27-2021 the City of Milton/Milton Township Fire Department has not advised the Town of Harmony what the contract price for the 2022 year will cost us. (we estimate that cost to be \$242,000.00).**

# What happened in March 2021

- ▶ **On 03-10-21 The Town of Harmony learned that the City of Milton was only interested in breaking way from the Town of Milton Fire Department and effectively breaking up their joint Fire Department (leaving the Town of Harmony without fire/EMS service for 80% of the town as of 12-31-2022). The City of Milton would continue working with the City of Janesville for a complete take-over of their fire protection.**

# The cost continues to grow!

- ▶ **On 06-19-21 the City of Janesville notified Harmony Township that they would be raising our Fire/EMS protection service cost under a three year contract. In 2021 we paid the City of Janesville \$59,637.00. In 2022 we will pay \$88,449.00, 2023 \$120,000.00 and in 2024 our cost will be \$152,400.00. This is a 255% increase over 3 years.**

# What about Janesville

- ▶ **In July of 2020 In a meeting with Harmony's Town Chair, The City of Janesville Fire Chief (Ernie Rhodes) advised that as things stand, they would not be able to cover more than the 20% of the Town of Harmony. They do not have the facilities, equipment or personnel to cover any more than 20%.**
- ▶ **Numerous times since then, the City of Janesville has advised the town of Harmony that they would be interested in covering more or all of Harmony's Fire/EMS Protection Service but could only do it in two ways.**

# Shocking news from Janesville

- ▶ **Way number one, is that one or more new fire stations would need to be built at the sights of The City of Janesville choosing, That all new equipment would be needed to fill the new stations and all personnel would be needed to fill those stations. That the City of Janesville would not provide a single dime towards any of the above.**

# More bad news

- ▶ **The other way the City of Janesville would be able to cover our entire Town, would be to assume control of the Milton/Milton Township Fire Department.**
- ▶ **Should that happen, the four Towns and the City of Milton would have to contract with Janesville and have no say in how that Fire Department would operate.**
- ▶ **That one or two new fire stations would need to be built at the sights of The City of Janesville choosing, That all new equipment would be needed to fill the new stations and all personnel would be needed to fill those stations. That the City of Janesville would not provide a single dime towards any of the above.**
- ▶ **The 4 Towns and the City of Milton would be responsible for cost overruns at years end and invoiced for that amount payable in 30 days. Town's at year end are trying to figure if they can afford to buy a pack of copy paper let alone receiving a bill for \$20,000.**

# Your options to date

- ▶ **On the upcoming pages there are three options that are explained. As of this date, these are our options.**
- ▶ **The pages after that have costs for each option. I would ask that you be sitting down as you view these numbers, they are a bit shocking.**
- ▶ **Keep in mind, as we discuss these options, the number one and two priorities that is on everyone's mind is response time. Minutes Matter! And the cost.**
- ▶ **These options are in no particular order.**

# Some Thing to Keep in Mind

- ▶ **Because of response time, no matter the option we may need to keep the City of Janesville covering parts of Harmony.**
- ▶ **We do question the response times from Janesville's Milwaukee Street station and Kennedy Road station. How often are those stations empty due to other calls. According to the City of Janesville numbers provided to us, their response time was 9.75 minutes to Harmony.**
- ▶ **Janesville does not back fill stations as equipment goes out.**
- ▶ **Janesville alone can not cover Harmony. Not enough facilities, equipment or people.**

# Some Things to Think About

- ▶ **No matter the option chosen, all fire departments must maintain good working relationship and a mutual aid agreement is a must.**
- ▶ **Option #1, Towns and City of Milton have no voice.**
- ▶ **Contract pricing will be up to Janesville.**
- ▶ **The cost of the fire station new or remodel is not in the numbers that were provided by the City of Janesville. That will be an additional cost.**
- ▶ **Option #1, City of Janesville can charge the contracted municipalities with cost overruns at the end of the year.**

# Some Things to Think About

- ▶ **Option #2 and #3 would create a reserve fund for cost overruns so as not to surprise the municipalities at years end.**
- ▶ **Option #2 and #3, all members sit on the Board. All have a vote.**
- ▶ **At year 3 the Janesville 20% coverage of Harmony is estimated.**

# Option #1

- ▶ **The City of Janesville assumes control of the Milton/Milton Township Fire Department.**
- ▶ **The City of Milton and the Towns of Harmony, Johnstown, Lima and Milton would contract with Janesville for all services**
- ▶ **The City of Janesville would put NO money into the new station. All expenses including a new fire station, equipment and personnel would be paid for by the contracting entities.**
- ▶ **The numbers below do not include the Capital Expenses for either a remodel, repair and/or expansion of the current facility on Madison Ave.**

# Option #1

- ▶ **The numbers below do not include the Capital Expenses for a new fire station**
- ▶ **The City of Milton and the four towns would contract with Janesville and would have no say in how the fire department would operate, what equipment they would have and when, if or where a new station would be built.**
- ▶ **The City of Janesville would not be responsible to report the financials of this station to the contracting entities. Who's to say the City of Janesville would not use this department as a revenue stream for the City?**

# Option #1

- ▶ **Pricing each year would be at the sole discretion of the City of Janesville.**
- ▶ **This is the most expensive option at \$249 per \$100,000 in value over the 6 years.**
- ▶ **As of 9/23/21 this plan may not be in the mix as the City of Milton has expressed interest in the 5 municipality mixed with the Edgerton Fire Protection District which is option 2. This would leave the Town of Harmony to pay for all improvements such as a fire station and all equipment.**

# Option #2

- ▶ **In option #2 the City of Milton and the Towns of Harmony, Johnstown, Lima and Milton become equal partners.**
- ▶ **The partnership would eventually join with the Edgerton Fire Protection District.**
- ▶ **The Edgerton Fire Protection District is not a part of the City of Edgerton. It is an independent organization operated by the members of the organization each with one seat and vote on the Board.**
- ▶ **This would give us the possibility three or potentially four stations, Milton East, Milton West, Edgerton and potentially Newville all supporting one another.**

# Option #2

- ▶ **Should an ambulance leave Milton East, Paid on-Call members are brought in to staff reserve apparatus in the event of a subsequent call to ensure fast response time for all stations.**
- ▶ **Unlike in option #1, All four stations are figured into the Operational and Capital Expenses on the below sheets, so the financials are much closer to reality and may be lower.**
- ▶ **We want everyone to understand the Town of Milton will be building a new Town Hall and Police Station. . NONE of the funds that Harmony and the other townships would put into the Fire Station would be used for their Town Hall or Police Station. That is the Town of Milton's Expense only. That includes the property the Town of Milton purchased for the new Town Hall and Police Station.**
- ▶ **This is the least expensive option at \$214 per \$100,000 in value over the 6 years. Plus the expense is for 2 stations and possibly 3. And saves our residents \$1,884,565 over the 6 years.**

# Option #3

- ▶ **This option has the towns of Harmony, Johnstown, Lima and Milton becoming partners.**
- ▶ **A fire station would be built on High Street near Hwy 59 on the east side of Hwy 26.**
- ▶ **This partnership would join with the Edgerton Fire Protection District.**
- ▶ **Potential to build another station in Newville. For a total of three stations all supporting one another with backup equipment to ensure fast response times at all stations.**
- ▶ **Newville station improves response times to western Harmony.**

# Option #3

- ▶ **As in option 2, we want to make sure our residents know that the Town of Milton will be building a new Town Hall and Police Station. NONE of the funds that Harmony and the other townships would put into the Fire Station would be used for their Town Hall or Police Station. That is the Town of Milton's Expense only.**
- ▶ **This is in the middle for expenses at \$241 per \$100,000 in value over the 6 years. Plus this is for possibly two stations.**

# Explanation

- ▶ **Operational expenses are day to day expenses like Light bill, Gas bill, Payroll, Gas for Trucks, Supplies and Minor Repairs...**
- ▶ **Capital Expenses are long term durables like the Building, Vehicles, Fire Suits, Furniture, hoses...**
- ▶ **Capital Reserve. Money set aside for future capital expenses such as Truck Replacement, Roof Replacement, A/C or Heater Replacement...**