

LAURELVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

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“Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Economic Development, Commerce & Labor Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 163.”

My name is Butch Valentine, Fire Chief at LVFD

I have been a Volunteer Fire Fighter for 45 years and have been Fire Chief for the last 28 years. We furnish fire protection to 3 townships in rural Hocking County and 1 Township in Vinton County with 154 square miles and 4500 residents. We do have the main station in town and operate 3 sub-stations with 11 fire apparatus. Two of these stations opened in 1996 with a local property owner giving us a pole barn which we converted into a Fire House and the Eagle Twp. Trustees gave us a bay in their building which we have an engine located there. This substation is 20 minutes away from our main Station in Laurelville. Without the use of these 2 buildings we would still be answering fire calls from 1 main Station.

We are trying to build a new fire station for our Fire Department in the Village of Laurelville. Our current station was built in the mid-1950 and then 2 more bays added in 1968. Our meeting room consist of a room above the Town Councils Chambers which has room for about 20 fire fighters. When we have a meeting or training we usually have to move a fire truck out of one of the 4 bays and hold training in the truck bay area to have room for the 45 members.

We are working with WDC Group in Springfield for the design of a new Station which I have been working on for over 10 years and have put a budget together for \$750,000 for the 6000 sq.ft. structure (Cost \$125 sq ft). I wanted to build a clear span steel structure but the architect is telling me that since we are going to be using tax dollars collected from the fire levies with the townships we will have to PAY Prevailing Wages for the construction. But in order to cut cost we are going to bid a Post Frame construction building with 7 bays and 5 bay doors. I had not anticipated this until now and this alone is going to drive the cost of construction up 30-40% which will put the building beyond what we can afford at the \$750,000. Their Construction Cost Given to the Village Council on 3/13/17 was for \$1,078,019 or \$180 per Sq Ft.(attached)

We built our 3rd Sub-station in 2013, a 40x40 block building to house 2 Fire Trucks in the north end of Perry Township to give the residents quicker response time from us when they are in need of the fire department. We built this structure for \$109,615.00 or \$68.50 sq. ft. The 5 acres of land it sets on was donated to the department by Holiday Industries.

This additional cost of prevailing wage will cost my department \$300,000 which is a BRAND NEW FIRE Truck for us. In 2013 we purchased a 2014 Pierce Responder with a 1250 pump/1250 tank and we are in the 4th year of a 6 year payback program and with interest will have \$266,260 in the fire truck.

I am sorry but I am from the old school that when you are spending tax payer's money you should get the most bang for the buck!! A person driving a nail or wiring a building should work for their everyday wage and we should NOT have to pay additional money for that service.

School Construction is exempt from this so why are not Public Service Agencies that is trying to survive get the same reduction in kind, and not have to PAY Prevailing Wages??

If we cannot get some sort of exemption for this or extra funding, we cannot build the New Station in Laurelville. We are already having our residents pay a 2 mill fire levy in all townships to be able to fund the 4 stations with 11 fire apparatus, and 45 Volunteers firemen to answer the call when needed.

I know other Volunteer Fire Departments **across this great state are struggling** to make ends meet so **help us help ourselves and change the law**. We need to change the Law to allow Tax payers money not to be wasted and get the most out of the dollar spent on Public Safety buildings.

“Thank you Chairman Young and members of the committee for your time. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee at this time.

Butch Valentine
Fire Chief