

Township of Lawrence  
County of Mercer

Ordinance No. 2404-21

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATIVE CODE  
ESTABLISHING A LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL  
SERVICE DIVISION UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

**WHEREAS, fire protection services for the Township of Lawrence is provided through a career fire staff (Station 20) and three volunteer companies: Slackwood Fire Company (Station 21), Lawrence Road Fire Company (Station 22), and Lawrenceville Fire Company (Station 23); and**

**WHEREAS, the career firefighters and the volunteer firefighters provide an invaluable service to the community by responding to a wide variety of emergencies involving fires, explosions, hazardous conditions, natural and human-made disasters, as well as non-emergency service calls; and**

**WHEREAS, emergency medical services for the Township of Lawrence are provided through a career staff of emergency medical technicians and a supervising chief; and**

**WHEREAS, emergency medical services, also known as ambulance services or paramedic services, provide urgent pre-hospital treatment and stabilization for serious injuries and transport to definitive care for the residents and visitors to our community; and**

**WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that the community's fire protection services and emergency medical services are prepared, staffed, and equipped to carry out their mission at the level of expectation of the residents and taxpayers; and**

**WHEREAS, the governing body requested and funded an *operational audit* of the Township's fire services by a qualified, independent group of fire professionals in which a report was prepared and provided to the governing body in November 2020; and**

**WHEREAS, the operational audit report (hereafter, the Report) included, among other things, a recommendation (# 19 of 38 total recommendations) to restructure the fire department to create a single, combination volunteer and career fire division that includes the Fire Official (aka, Fire Marshal) and fire inspectors (as more fully described in N.J.A.C. Sec. 5:71-3.2 et seq.) and Emergency Medical Services and under the authority of a full-time career fire chief (effectively creating a department known as, *Lawrence Township Fire & Emergency Medical Services Division*); and**

**WHEREAS, it is has become necessary and is appropriate to implement the recommendation described in the preceding paragraph (and more detailed in the Report) to improve the organizational structure of municipal operations and to better serve the community as well as to preserve and improve the longstanding tradition of service by the volunteer fire companies; and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Township Council of the Township of Lawrence, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that the following shall be implemented:**

1. There shall be created a *Lawrence Township Fire and Emergency Medical Services Division* (hereafter, the “Division”), under the authority of a full-time career Chief.
2. The Fire Department shall combine the career firefighters (Station 20) and the volunteer firefighters of Slackwood Volunteer Fire Company (Station 21), Lawrence Road Volunteer Fire Company (Station 22), and Lawrenceville Volunteer Fire Company (Station 23), and the Division shall also include the Fire Official (and Fire Inspectors) and Emergency Medical Services.
3. The Director of Public Safety (hereafter, the “Director”) shall appoint a Chief of Fire & Emergency Medical Services (hereafter, the “Chief”). The Chief shall serve as the ranking executive officer of the Division under the direction and supervision of the Director.
4. The three volunteer fire companies shall maintain their autonomy consistent with their charters and as non-profit organizations in all respects except for fire ground operations.
5. Each volunteer fire company shall consist of the following: 1) One *Deputy Chief* (entitled to a \$2,500 annual stipend paid by the Township), 2) One *Battalion Chief*, 3) One *Captain*, and 4) Three *Lieutenants*. All officers shall be elected by the qualifying members from each fire company (not later than November 1<sup>st</sup> before the terms expire) and conditioned upon approval by the Chief and Director of Public Safety. The Chief shall define responsibilities for each officer.
6. The Career Firefighters, the Fire Official (and Fire Inspectors), and Emergency Medical Technicians shall maintain their current form and functions subject to the changes to the overall organizational operations made herein.
7. The Division shall be under the Department of Public Safety of the Township of Lawrence. See the attached *Organizational Chart* as Exhibit A.
8. The Chief shall have the primary responsibility to:
  - a. Establish policy, procedures, and orders for the efficient operation of the Division, and ensure compliance with the same;
  - b. Establish and implement a program for proper training of all members of the Fire and Emergency Medical Services departments;
  - c. Establish orders for the efficient operation of fire ground operation, with advice from the Deputy Fire Chiefs and the supervising officer of the Career staff;
  - d. Provide adequate equipment and materials for the Division to operate. Including, but not limited to, ensuring each member of the Division is properly uniformed and equipped to perform duties professionally and safely;
  - e. Maintain compliance with local, state, and federal laws in the operations of the Division;
  - f. Identify and apply for grant and other funding opportunities related to Division operations;

- g. **Coordinate box alarm plans with each Deputy Fire Chief for approval by the Director;**
- h. **Assist the Deputy Fire Chiefs with the development of a volunteer recruitment program;**
- i. **Complete any other duties required as a department head and as designated by the Director.**

**9. Any article, section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or other provision of the Lawrence TOWNSHIP Municipal Code inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance are now repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.**

**10. If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision so adjudged, and the remainder of this ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.**

**11. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication and as otherwise provided for by law.**

**Adopted: September 21, 2021**

**RECORD OF VOTE**

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>AYE</b>	<b>NAY</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>MOVE</b>	<b>SECOND</b>
<b>Mr. Bobbitt</b>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Ms. Lewis</b>	<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>	
<b>Mr. Powers</b>	<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>
<b>Mr. Ryan</b>	<b>X</b>						
<b>Mayor Kownacki</b>	<b>X</b>						

**ATTEST:**

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**Kathleen S. Norcia, Clerk**

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**Hon. James Kownacki, Mayor**

**I, Kathleen S. Norcia, Clerk of the TOWNSHIP of Lawrence, do hereby certify that the preceding is a true copy of an ordinance duly adopted by the governing body of the TOWNSHIP OF LAWRENCE on September 21, 2021.**

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**Kathleen S Norcia, Clerk**