May 10, 2011

Good evening, I speak tonight on a matter of Public safety.

I have worn a uniform in service to the public for 27 years. 10 years as a member of the armed forces, and 17 years as a Professional Firefighter.

The letter that the Mayor sent to me regarding the abolishment of EMS, is the most reckless and vindictive “Order” I have seen in these 27 years of sworn duty to protect the public. The rescinding of the letter is meaningless, as the Mayor has stated his intentions to pursue the matter.

It comes as no surprise to the 28 members of the Endicott Firefighters Union that the Fire Chief supports this dangerous plan. Chief Hrustich has been under a vote of “No Confidence” since 2009. He also under a vote of the same nature by the Johnson City Firefighters. The chief’s immediate and enthusiastic support for a plan that puts the public at risk is the most *damning of evidence*. What kind of Fire Administrator supports the removal of a proven life saving program? The “Vote of no confidence” now looms larger than ever, and its appraisal of failed leadership has proven prophetic.

And now for Union Volunteer Ambulance supervisor Mr. Fellows. Mr. Fellows has informed multiple media outlets that the public would be protected, and that the ambulance was 2 minutes behind (Binghamton Press.) Mr. Fellow words are an utter prevarication. The firefighters and UVES paramedics have ample documentation of multiple *Life threatening calls*, whereupon the ambulance was between 12 and 20 minutes away. Mr. Fellows is clearly out of touch with our brother and sister paramedics, who are out on the street, “doing the job“.

The elimination of fire based EMS will cost the residents the lives of their loved ones. Those in the print media, who are sure to cry “Scare tactics!” should review our own response times, and the number of dropped calls by the ambulance (99 this year to date.) This would be a refreshing break from the Gannett News Corporations constant agitation against paid professional firefighters.

Finally, is it really worth the .47 cents an hour, to jeopardize the public, in order to punish the firefighters union?

 Sincerely, Paul Higgins President IAFF Local 1280, Endicott.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Smy5zMYjB4&feature=share>

<http://www.pressconnects.com/article/20110504/NEWS01/105040408/Endicott-pulls-plug-EMS-program>