

Erin Nelson

From: Gary Lichtenstein [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2026 10:54 AM
To: Josh Ewing; Jennifer Davila; Gary Haws; Britt Hornsby; Spencer Wade
Cc: Erin Nelson; Dawn Dilego
Subject: Opposing the Proposed Emergency Services Position--with an apology

PLEASE ENTER INTO PUBLIC RECORD

Greetings Town Council,

I write this in response to a Town Email submitted by Chief Dilego earlier today. Specifically, I wish to apologize on behalf of Bluff Fire for the misleading message sent out by our Chief. Bluff Fire has never in my 30 years on the crew taken a stand as an entity. Use of the word "we" throughout the message suggests a departmental stance. I think it's wrong for an emergency services organization to posture a political position. In any case, there has been no departmental communication regarding this issue.

I have been monitoring this issue since the proposal was first brought to light a few weeks ago. I have argued that the position is poorly conceived. We have not even until now seen a job description. Now we're told there is one that is kept from the public until the budget has been approved. In the Chief's message, the position title, formerly an *Emergency Services Administrator*, is suddenly referred to as an *Emergency Services Program Coordinator (ESPC)*. Is there now a program? If so, no one I know has heard of it. And what, exactly, is being coordinated? This unaccounted for shift in the position title reflects ongoing confusion and ambiguity about the purpose of the position, it's scope, and it's impact to residents and businesses.

For the past two years, I have advocated for a new vision for our fire and EMS services, grounded in an effective strategic plan. Our department leadership, including the current Chief, for whom this position seems to be created, has resisted this. I oppose this position because in the absence of a formal strategic planning process and a job description, the \$50,000 tax increase is only going to reinforce the status quo, which is not sustainable.

There has been absolutely no discussion by the Town Council regarding a strategic planning process for Bluff emergency services. If and when there is one, it must be public and engage key stakeholders, as all good strategic planning does.

While I agree that our volunteer emergency services are struggling, collapse is not imminent--thanks to the dedicated volunteers we do have. We should seek solutions to our significant challenges. But not hastily, in the time span of days or weeks. Let's take a few weeks or three months to get it right, determine whether such a position is needed, and how it will 1) lead to sustainable emergency services in Bluff, 2) integrate with County resources while mitigating jurisdictional challenges, and importantly, 3) directly impact Fire and EMS protection for Bluff residents and businesses.

Sincerely,
Gary Lichtenstein
Bluff Resident

