



**FIRE / EMS / RESCUE**  
**GOVERNANCE REFORM**

Respectfully Presented July 19, 2019

## Boone Emergency Services of Tomorrow (BEST) Study



### BOONE EMERGENCY SERVICES OF TOMORROW

COMPREHENSIVE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATION

- Initiated October 2017
- Released October 2018

- Comprehensive Study
  - 296 pages with 483 footnotes/references
- Literature Review, Self Analysis, & Comparative Peer Analysis
- Direct survey input from Firefighters & Chief Officers within the county
- Operational Task Force Research/Reports included subject matter specialists
- 3 Separate Analysis
  - Retaining Independence
  - Enhancing Cooperative Agreements
  - Full Consolidation

## Why Governance Reform Legislation?

### Fire Agencies

- Tax reforms reduce revenues essential to providing fire/EMS/rescue services
- Economic growth & development create service demands before revenues realized
- Unequal cost share for services
- Decreasing volunteers & labor shortages create operational costs far beyond prior legislative funding models

### Legislators

- Seek direct public accountability of service Boards
- Seek taxpayer protections
- Desire November ballot elections for governance
- Represent taxpayer interests for essential services with timely delivery
- County Clerks need service boundaries consistent with ballot precinct boundaries for general elections to be possible

### Public

- To have a strong and direct voice in level of service expectations for their local community
- Voters decide amount the taxpayers in that locale are willing to pay for emergency services

# Current Challenges to Fire/EMS/Rescue

## DECREASING/DISAPPEARING/LIMITED

- Volunteers
- Labor pools
- Revenue authority & sources
- Grants/Alternative funding

## INCREASING

- Residential/Commercial growth and sprawl
- Run volume
- Service demands/expectations
- Personnel costs
- CERS contribution rates
- Operational costs

# **FIRE / EMS / RESCUE**

# **GOVERNANCE REFORM**

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Problems
  - Operating well beyond expectations of original charter
  - Changing Mission/Responsibility
- 20<sup>th</sup> Century Structure
  - Misunderstanding of how we are elected
  - Misunderstanding of our authority/responsibility
  - Limited revenue authority



# Anticipated Benefits of Consolidation



- Combine administrative functions and eliminate redundant administrative efforts
- Create a diverse specialized-skill career path for personnel currently unsustainable
- Recruitment and retention improvements by growing workforce strengths
- Strengthen mid-level officers/management
- Expand/Strengthen specialized divisions/services
- Reduce/Eliminate redundant capital
- Increased purchasing power, better pricing

## Creation of New Entity

1. Voluntary opt-in for various existing emergency service entities
  - Existing Chapter 75 Fire Districts or other organizations can opt to remain independent entities as they currently exist
  - Municipalities/Counties can opt to continue to provide their own services
2. Clear accountability of governing board – majority elected on general November ballot
  - Election boundaries would conform with recognized electoral districts
  - Limit such *consolidated* emergency service district to no more than one per county
3. Diversified revenue and taxing authority
  - Same revenue authority as other governmental bodies providing these services
  - Local control over best taxing model for local conditions
  - Ensure all users of system share tax burden

## New Entity Legislation Needs to Address:

1. Existing retirement structure protected; inclusion provides no greater, and no less, retirement system benefit status for employees
2. Legislation protects existing health plan coverages already in place, to allow continuation of existing health insurance coverage; no state health insurance mandate
3. Taxation beyond any established caps would be required to present to voters for a direct ballot decision



# **Accountability: 3 Steps**

1. Existing elected Boards must pass a majority decision to opt-in to a consolidated emergency service district
2. Voters directly elect majority of the Board governing a consolidated emergency service district
3. Voters directly vote to approve/deny any taxation beyond existing limits



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**Local Voters  
Local Decisions**

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