

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESPONSE
TO PINE KNOLL SHORES EMS

After reading a paid advertisement in the local paper, a series of "letters to the editor", receipt of numerous letters of resignation (which have been accepted), and having "the rumor mill" literally explode with angry, self-serving recriminations, the Pine Knoll Shores Commissioners have reluctantly decided that it was time to publicly respond. The entire County has been subjected to one side of the current EMS controversy in Pine Knoll Shores. With this letter, we have chosen to advise the Citizens of Pine Knoll Shores of some facts that regretfully have been either neglected or deliberately ignored. This is not our preferred way of doing business, these letters left us with no alternative but to publicly tell you the truth.

Foremost is our concern that Pine Knoll Shores Citizens are being left with the distinct impression that our EMS is not appreciated or admired by the Board of Commissioners. That is simply not true, has never been true, and, on the contrary, we remain totally aware of their rapid response time, careful scheduling, training accomplishments, and efforts to attract more volunteers. All are elements of the sincere service EMS has offered to Pine Knoll Shores for years. Please do not accuse the Commissioners of not appreciating the service that has been offered.

Secondly, despite the resignation of many obviously unhappy Volunteers, Emergency Medical Services in our Community will continue, and it will continue to be improved. Carteret County Officials are currently addressing the plight of Volunteer EMS activities throughout the County, and are responsibly confronting this County-wide problem. Training requirements have escalated, legal liability has grown, the population to be served has increased substantially, and the ability to attract volunteers has diminished – not just in Pine Knoll Shores, but everywhere. In response, we have advertised for qualified Firefighter/EMT's to be employed by the Town. With the resignations, and with Carteret County considering a new approach to EMS, we must take appropriate steps to ensure quality service for our Citizens – and we are.

Finally, we bear ill will toward no one, and regret that the only remedy the Pine Knoll Shores EMS genuinely opted for was to "go public" with one sided accusations. In fact, the current controversy arose when the Commissioners decided to modestly, but sincerely thank BOTH our Fire and EMS Volunteers with token financial payments to help defer their "out-of-pocket" expenses for the service they have collectively been offering. A number of options were reviewed including a point system and were discarded in favor of the reward system employed.

While they have carefully avoided the use of the word, what the Pine Knoll Shores EMS apparently wants is absolute POWER, not mere money. When it became apparent several years ago that full-time staff was needed to coordinate both Fire and EMS activities, both squads were informed and involved in the decision process. The Fire Department has smoothly and successfully adjusted to an improved operating procedure, but EMS has steadfastly resisted. They have insisted that the Town was taking authority and responsibility away from them, and that they want to do things their own way, without any involvement from the Town. Each year, to support EMS, the Town budgets between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to defray their cost. Evidently, "appropriate the money, and just leave us alone" is the message from EMS.