

For Immediate Release  
December 5, 2024

Contact: Keldeen Stambaugh  
Paxtang Borough 717-564-4770

## PRESS RELEASE

### PAXTANG FIRE COMPANY NO. 1 IS NOT ABOVE THE LAW

Effective August 1, 2022, Paxtang Borough officially contracted with Swatara Township Fire and Rescue for Fire Protection Service. Since that time, the former service, Paxtang Fire Company No. 1, has not entered a contract with any municipality for fire service and has been operating without the necessary government delegation of authority or oversight.

Additionally, the former entity of Paxtang Fire Police has not been affiliated with nor authorized by any municipality or police department in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania since Paxtang Borough entered the contract with the Swatara Township on August 1, 2022.

The continued reckless and unaccountable actions by the Fire Company are the reasons why the Borough officials have been seeking to eject the Fire Company from the Paxtang Municipal Building to provide relief to the Borough Taxpayer.

*As reported on Crimewatch, on “Wednesday, December 4, 2024, the Swatara Police filed charges against 55-year-old Steven Bartholomew for Forgery, Recklessly Endangering Another Person and Driving Without a License related to his actions taken while a member of the independent Paxtang Fire Company #1. Beginning in January of 2024 Bartholomew drove fire apparatus owned and operated by the Paxtang Fire Company without a valid driver’s license to emergency and non-emergency incidents. Investigators also determined that Bartholomew created seven (7) fraudulent training certificates allegedly from the University of Maryland – Fire and Rescue Institute creating the appearance that he had completed advanced firefighting training. Bartholomew was charged with 7 counts of Forgery, 10 counts of Recklessly Endangering Another Person and 10 counts of driving without a license. These charges were filed with Magisterial District Justice Michael J. Smith’s office who will schedule preliminary hearing in the near future.”*

According to the affidavit of probable cause, Fire Company President Gavin Ford appointed Bartholomew to his position of Captain. Ford believed that Bartholomew had extensive firefighting training and experience and was qualified to supervise firefighters in his position of Captain. Ford relied on Bartholomew’s forged training certificates to validate his qualifications to serve as Captain for Paxtang Fire Company No. 1.

In October 2024, Paxtang Borough petitioned the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas to enjoin Steven Bartholomew from entering upon Borough property because he destroyed public property and repeatedly invited women and children into the Paxtang Municipal Building in

violation of a negotiated Facilities Use Agreement. The Court of Common Pleas denied the Borough's request for relief and permitted Captain Bartholomew to have free access to the Borough's Municipal Building.

This is the second member of the leadership of this Fire Company who has faced serious criminal charges since Paxtang Borough terminated their services in August 2022. The former-Chief of this Fire Company was arrested for theft charges graded as a third-degree felony in January 2023. The Fire Company did not suspend its former-Chief from fire company operations until more than a year after his arrest.

Based on Ford's actions approving Bartholomew as Captain, Paxtang Borough Council believes that Fire Company President Gavin Ford is unqualified to act as Fire Company President, and he should not be making personnel decisions such as appointing Captains to supervise firefighters. Additionally, according to the affidavit of probable cause, Paxtang Fire Company Fire Chief Jeremy Saul believed Bartholomew had a valid Maryland CDL Class A drivers license. Chief Saul stated Bartholomew was authorized to operate the fire company vehicles.

Paxtang Borough Council implores the Paxtang Fire Company cease and desist its unlawful operations and immediately vacate the Paxtang Municipal Building.

As a result of Steven Bartholomew's arrest, Paxtang Borough is seeking immediate judicial relief to prevent him from accessing the Borough's Municipal Building and otherwise engaging in fire company activities.

We applaud the work of the Swatara Township Police Department and the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office on this matter.

As we are currently in litigation, the Borough will not be available for questions. Trial is scheduled for January 2025. For details regarding the Ejectment of the former service, Paxtang Fire Company No. 1 from the Paxtang Municipal Building, filed by the Borough of Paxtang at the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas, filed January 1, 2023, please visit the borough website, [www.Paxtang.org](http://www.Paxtang.org)

# # #