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Forks EMS needs to prove itself worthy to regain trust of public

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Emergency squad troubles

The Forks Township Emergency Squad has major obstacles to overcome before it can resume coverage of the township and Stockertown – questions about missing money, burgeoning debt and the status of its state license. The squad, which suspended operations in July, was hoping to get back up and running by Sept. 11, but that deadline is on hold while the Eastern Pa. EMS Council conducts a review.

As much as the township needs its squad to get back in the black and regain public confidence, it needs to prove it is worthy of that trust. Three issues must be resolved.

n The township police department must conclude its investigation, to determine whether the debt is connected to criminal activity and not just poor management. Squad director Cory Dailey and her husband, volunteer Mike Dailey have resigned, but police haven't identified the targets of their investigation.

(The squad must get its house in order to the satisfaction of the state. Last week Everitt Binns, executive director of the Eastern Pa. EMS council, said he planned to recommend that the squad's license be suspended. That action could be lifted after a review, Binns said, a process that could take a month or two.

(The squad needs to clear up \$278,000 in debt and try to prevent the lapsing of its subscription period from digging that hole deeper. The public's willingness to renew subscriptions or start new ones will be affected by the squad's viability.

Forks Township owes a debt of thanks to Suburban Emergency Medical Services, which has been filling in. Likewise, the veteran squad members who have returned to try to salvage the squad are taking on headaches that would tax most full-time, paid professional managers.

The heart of the township's volunteer spirit is still beating; that's all that is providing a ray of hope. But the EMS Council and the township supervisors must be realistic – handing the keys back to an organization that can't meet the modern demands for Advanced Life Support and other services, along with raising money, doesn't do anyone any good. Least of all the residents who expect competent service.

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