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Faith Lutheran Church buys former Forks EMS property; Suburban EMS to lease land from church

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FORKS TWP. | The now-defunct Forks Emergency Medical Service has sold its garage and grounds to Faith Lutheran Church next door, ending the saga of the emergency squad's efforts to pull itself out of debt and remain the township's basic life support provider.

Squad members were unable to rescue themselves and closed their doors for good last August.

The sale helps repay the squad's six-figure debt. It also ends a long struggle with township supervisors, who withdrew the squad's status as its sole basic life support service.

For the church, the acquisition of the property along Sullivan Trail begins to fulfill a long-held dream to add an elementary school to the church's preschool.

Faith Lutheran's church property Chairman Paul Macher confirmed the land purchase Tuesday.

The church is in discussions with Suburban EMS of Palmer Township to lease the building until the church moves forward with school expansion plans, said Barry Albertson, executive director of Suburban EMS.

Suburban was granted Forks Township's approval as sole emergency medical provider.

"I think the church is doing a real nice thing for the community," Albertson said.

Suburban is operating as a guest entity out of space in the Forks Township Volunteer Fire Co. at the township municipal complex about a quarter-mile south of the church on Sullivan Trail.

"They have been gracious, but we'd like to find another location to build within the township," Albertson said.

Operating out of its own building would allow Suburban to install computer systems.

"Right now our people have to go to our Main Street, Tatamy station to do their paperwork," Albertson said. "We'll be (at the Forks EMS location) until the church decides what to do with it."

Church President Joseph Affuso said the former Forks EMS property is 1.07 acres and includes the garage, a rear parking lot and a wide swath of grassy area contiguous with the church's northern boundary.

Former Forks EMS Director of Operations Michael Keifer referred questions to his father, William Keifer, who served as the squad's board president.

William Keifer did not return a telephone call, but Michael Keifer did say he is relieved that the sale went through.

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