LaFayette Ambulance Department Referendum On the Way!

Since Fiscal Year 2022 the Town Board and the LaFayette Ambulance Department, Inc. have worked together towards understanding what a 100% full time ambulance corps of paid employees would take in cost to provide the Town a 24/7 – 365 coverage. We are part-way there as of this article.

The Town Board approved for the Fiscal Year 2023 a budget increase that allowed the Ambulance Department to hire four paid EMT employees. This action was taken due in part to the fact that all the volunteer force was aging out and the hours of coverage resulted in only a 60% rate of weekly coverage. The approved budget permitted the Ambulance Department Board of Directors (BOD) the ability to fulfill a minimum of 100 hours of coverage per week with the goal of increasing the employee level over time to cover all 168 hours per week.

A prime Town Board responsibility is to protect our community. ***Our current Threat is:*** losing any ambulance service in the near future. For example, Cayuga County lost its entire ambulance service from American Medical Service (AMR) - the largest private ambulance company in the U. S. - at the end of Year 2023 citing rising cost and staffing shortage. The North Shore Ambulance Service in Oswego County closed effective July 26, 2024, ending 75 years of service! Both closures cited declining insurance reimbursement rates, increased operational costs, and declining volunteerism. But we in CNY are all facing an even broader regional crisis – "ambulance services in rural NY are teetering on the brink of collapse due to staffing and funding issues". The potential ambulance response times in the North Shore area of Constantia, Cleveland, Central Square, and Mexico would be up to 38 minutes due to losing the North Shore service! While our Town of LaFayette response time is estimated by the Ambulance Department to be within 6 minutes and 30 seconds of notice **IF THERE IS AN AMBULANCE EMT CREW IN SERVICE!**

The Town Board works to protect you by judiciously designating your tax dollars to fund the budgets for the Town Highway Department, the LaFayette Ambulance Department, and the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department for the Town Court. These services are paid for by OUR taxes each year. Thus, the Town Board finds each budget year a challenge to not only budget for these services but to also keep our tax rate under the 2% NYS Tax Cap and to keep our tax rate as low as possible! A true challenge each year – we have not been under the NYS 2% Tax Cap in the last two budgets.

Where are we today on this journey? The Town Board resolved during the January 2026 Town Board meeting to present the decision to the Town taxpayers on the November election ballot as a community referendum to choose to fully fund the Ambulance Service Department or continue with part-time service.

I've asked Councilor Nate Loughlin to work as the Town Board Liaison with the Ambulance Department BOD to bring this issue to life this year at our monthly Town Board meetings to outline what the cost would be to fund four-EMT-qualified crews of two people and to provide 100% coverage throughout the year. Nate has provided segments of effort, cost, outcomes, and other pertinent information. This is a communication and education effort for our residents to begin coordinating with the Ambulance Department BOD. Councilor Loughlin has provided the "high points" during the March 10th Town Board meeting which can be viewed on the Town's Facebook page.

The Town currently contracts with the Ambulance Department for 100 hours of staffed ambulance coverage per week. Two person crews work 48 hours per week with 48 hours off per week providing 96 of the 100 hours a week. Part time employees pick up the rest of the hours with little coverage to account for any last minute schedule changes. There is NO coverage the rest of the week. So, no coverage on the Third Day of the Rotation. Outside of these hours, volunteers may respond but there are currently only 2 volunteer EMT's.

The Ambulance Department has proposed expanding coverage to 24-7 with one crew but this would increase annual cost thus raising taxes.

From all this discussion, the Town Board proposed that the taxpayers vote on this issue because of the magnitude of cost that would be incurred. Thus, the recommendation of placing this on the November ballot!

—Bill McConnell, Supervisor

The LaFayette Ambulance Department's volunteer model that worked for many years just simply isn't working anymore in the post-COVID era. Once COVID struck, the volunteers stopped volunteering due to the risks of bringing the virus home to their families and the concerns of the financial impact it would have in missing work.

Since COVID, the Ambulance Department has gotten increases in funding for additional staffing to employ 4 full-time employees and part-time employees to fill shifts as needed. The Department has been in discussion with the Town of LaFayette for several years now about the need to have a full-time ambulance service to provide the town with 24/7/365 coverage.

The American Heart Association indicates that in the event of a cardiac arrest, your chances of survival **decrease 10% every minute** without care! Stroke and trauma patients follow the "Golden Hour" and definitive medical intervention at a hospital is most effective within **ONE HOUR** to prevent mortality, minimize permanent tissue damage, and reduce long-term disability. When we are not in-service and time is of the essence, average mutual aid response times are 14 minutes 19 seconds!

Two calls of significance in June! One was an injury with an active arterial bleed that had to await TLC to respond from Onondaga Hill with a 19-minute response. One was a difficulty breathing call that had to await Manlius Ambulance to respond from Manlius with an 18-minute response.

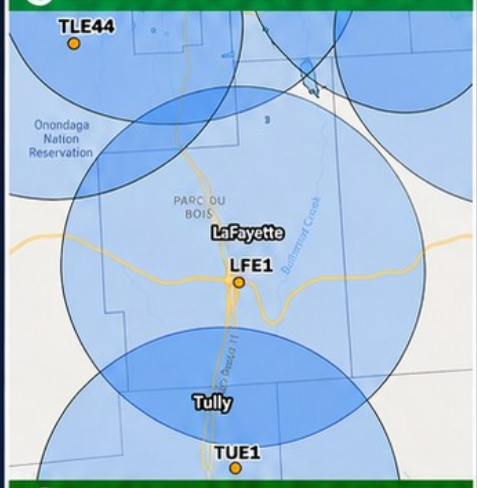
It is important that the residents understand that the increase is based on your home's ASSESSED value! We understand the economy and the impact this will have. We urge residents to not just look at this as another tax increase, but as a supplemental insurance policy! This funding WILL save lives!

—David Hoxie, Vice President, LaFayette Ambulance

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS.

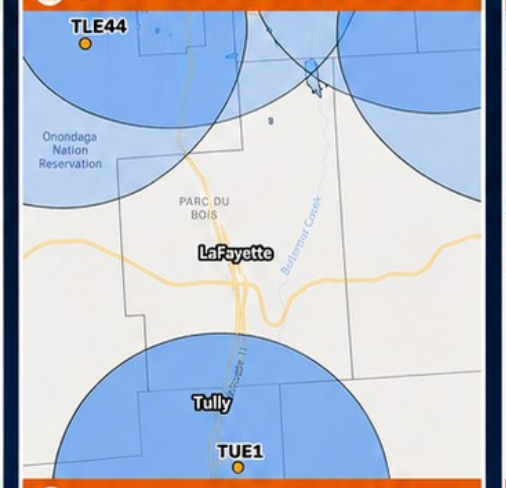
LaFayette Ambulance is an intricate piece of emergency response. Without it in service, there is a large coverage gap, forcing other agencies to fill the void at the cost of longer response times.

1 LAFAYETTE AMBULANCE IN-SERVICE



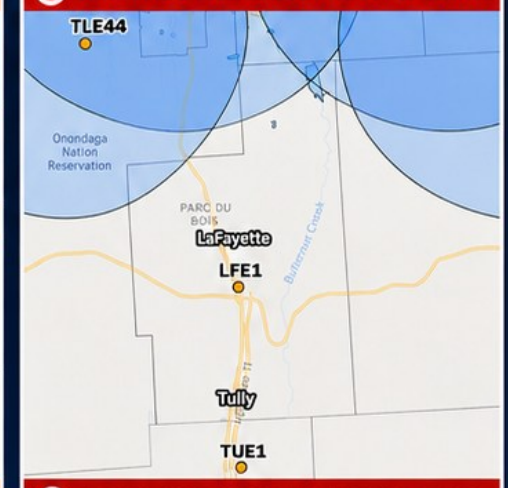
OPTIMAL COVERAGE | FASTER RESPONSE TIMES

2 LAFAYETTE AMBULANCE OUT-OF-SERVICE



LARGE COVERAGE GAP | SLOWER RESPONSE TIMES

3 LAFAYETTE & TULLY AMBULANCE OUT-OF-SERVICE



CRITICAL COVERAGE GAP | SIGNIFICANT DELAYS

THE NEED IS REAL. THE TIME IS NOW.

The Town of LaFayette is one of only two communities in Onondaga County without a 24/7 ambulance service.

PROPOSED FULL TIME CONTRACT *(Amount for current 100 hour contract)*	$431,338.00
2027 BUDGET REQUIREMENT Planning now for the 2027 budget is crucial to secure funding and ensure this critical service becomes a reality.	$583,039.00
PROJECTED REVENUE (Claims Reimbursement & Other Revenue)	$171,500.00
INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY This investment reflects our commitment to the health, well-being, and future of LaFayette residents.	$1,185,877.00

STRONGER TOGETHER. SAFER TOGETHER. LAFAYETTE STRONG.

WHY DOES LaFayette NEED A DEDICATED AMBULANCE SERVICE?

AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME WHEN LAFAYETTE AMBULANCE IS IN SERVICE	AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME WHEN LAFAYETTE AMBULANCE IS NOT IN SERVICE
6 MINUTES 30 SECONDS	14 MINUTES 29 SECONDS

TIME MATTERS!

FASTER RESPONSE SAVES LIVES | STRONGER PROTECTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY | DEDICATED TO LAFAYETTE

TAX INCREASE OF $1.66 PER THOUSAND OF ASSESSED VALUE

Assuming no other changes to the budget, the rate would be

$12.33 PER THOUSAND for 2027 (Proposed) **VS.** **$10.67** PER THOUSAND for 2026**

***Based on 2026 rate of $10.67 per thousand of assessed value.*

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR HOME

ASSESSED VALUE	TAX INCREASE (per year)	EXAMPLE
$100,000	$166	*That's about $13.83 per month*
$200,000	$332	*That's about $27.67 per month*
$300,000	$498	*That's about $41.50 per month*
$400,000	$664	*That's about $55.33 per month*

COMMUNITY IMPACT: DELAYED CARE CAN BE DEADLY.

LONGER RESPONSE TIMES | INCREASED STRAIN ON OTHER AGENCIES | HIGHER RISK TO PATIENT OUTCOMES

SUPPORT LAFAYETTE AMBULANCE. SUPPORT A FASTER, SAFER RESPONSE FOR ALL.

Town of LaFayette
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LaFayette, NY 13084

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This is what you will see on the ballot

TOWN OF LAFAYETTE, NEW YORK

ADVISORY REFERENDUM

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF LAFAYETTE, NEW YORK, AUTHORIZING THE SUBMISSION OF AN ADVISORY REFERENDUM TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE TOWN REGARDING A POSSIBLE TAX INCREASE TO FUND FULL-TIME AMBULANCE COVERAGE WITHIN THE TOWN

WHEREAS, questions have been raised concerning the availability, cost, and funding of full-time staffing (24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year) of ambulance services to be supplied by the LaFayette Ambulance Department, Inc., within the Town; and

WHEREAS, information presented to the Town Board indicates that funding full-time ambulance coverage could require an increase in Town taxes estimated to be approximately $332 per year for a home assessed at $200,000, although actual tax impacts may vary depending upon assessed value, equalization rates, and the final cost of any proposed service; and

WHEREAS, the Town Board desires to obtain the views of the qualified electors of the Town before considering whether to pursue any proposal relating to the funding of full-time ambulance coverage; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Commissioner of the Onondaga County Board of Elections has opined that the placement of such a referendum on the November ballot is appropriate.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of LaFayette hereby authorizes the submission of the following advisory referendum to the qualified electors of the Town at the General Election to be held on **November 3, 2026.**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is authorized and directed to take all actions necessary to request placement of the foregoing advisory proposition on the ballot in coordination with the Onondaga County Board of Elections and in accordance with the applicable law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Board takes no position through the adoption of this Resolution regarding whether a tax increase for full-time ambulance coverage should or should not be enacted, and the purpose of this referendum is solely to obtain voter input; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the results of this referendum shall be advisory only and shall not, by themselves, authorize the levy of any tax, establishment of any district, issuance of debt, expenditure of Town funds, or any other governmental action except as may subsequently be authorized by law.

ADVISORY REFERENDUM QUESTION

Do you support an additional increase in Town of LaFayette taxes to fund full-time staffing (24/7/365) of ambulance services within the Town by the LaFayette Ambulance Department, Inc., with the additional taxation estimated to equal $332 per year for a home assessed at $200,000 and represent an increase in Town taxes of 15.7%?

☐ YES ☐ NO