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OPINION

LETTERS

Windham council backs fire district

During the July 17 meeting of Windham Village Council, the Joint Fire District Exploratory/Advisory Committee presented its advisory recommendation with many attachments supporting the recommendation. The committee's recommendation was for the Windham Village Council and Windham Township trustees to form a joint fire district.

Windham Village Council voted to endorse the JFDEA Committee's recommendation.

Village Council looks forward to working with the Windham Township trustees to form a joint fire district. We strongly believe, as does the exploratory committee, that this will serve the best interest of all Windham residents, the fire department firefighters, the emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

Village Council is hopeful that the township trustees will accept the committee's recommendation and begin working with council to begin forming the joint fire district. If the trustees accept, then Village Council is ready to enter into serious discussions to form a joint fire district.

Our expectations are 1.) Begin discussions at the earliest agreeable date; 2.) Have a resolution forming the joint fire district agreed to and signed no later than Nov. 1; 3.) The

new joint fire district and its board members to commence on Jan. 1, 2008.

Village Council believes there is no other choice but to pursue this option.

We thank the trustees for their hard work and believe that changing to a joint fire and EMS district is a necessity due to both parties being on a collision course, which would be bad for our Windham community.

Coming together gives us opportunities as one unit instead of being at odds with each other.

Council President

Scott Garrett

Council members Phil Snyder, Jodi Minotti, Robert Donham II, Rachel Barrett, Marian Garrett

Mayor C. James Moore
 Windham

Trustee responds

With all due respect to Al Friedl, a past president of the Rootstown Water Co., I cannot disagree more with the water company's opinion on who is responsible for hydrants within the boundaries of Rootstown Township ("Hydrant issue," Record-Courier letters, July 26). A separate concern has been who does the water company believe is responsible for the hydrants on "their" lines in Brimfield and Ravenna townships.

I also object to water company officials asking consumers who benefit from good water and hydrants to come to our township

trustees' meetings and ask us to disregard the rights of those who live in our townships without good water or hydrants and to use their tax dollars to subsidize those who do.

Since I've been a township trustee for more than eight years, I've been confused over the township's responsibilities toward hydrants because it appears at times that both parties perform maintenance on hydrants. I've been further confused about our relationship with the water company due to very old records and no current legal contract.

The trustees tried repeatedly over many years, without success, to get a written agreement or any response from water company officials. As a last resort, and based on legal advice, we have asked a judge to become involved. A complaint for declarative judgment is a legal tool allowing a judge to rule if there is any legal contract between the township and the water company.

If the judge rules that the township has any legal responsibility for hydrants belonging to a privately owned water company, I would comply with a court decision.

If a legal document is written detailing the rights and responsibilities of each party in the contract, I would sign it.

As much as I have personally regretted this action, business done with a wink and a nod has never been legal.

David Armentrout
 Rootstown Township trustee
