



**CITY OF HARRISONBURG**  
**FIRE**  
**DEPARTMENT**

101 NORTH MAIN STREET  
HARRISONBURG, VA 22802  
OFFICE (540) 432-7703

March 24, 2023

Libby Clark, President  
Hose Company #4, Inc.  
2654 Port Republic Road  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Dear President Clark,

On behalf of the City of Harrisonburg and the Harrisonburg Fire Department, I want to thank you for the cordial relationship we have enjoyed with Hose Company #4 for over one hundred years. Hose Company #4 has a rich history woven into the fabric of the City's past. In this moment, it is incredibly important to be respectful of our history, without being bound by it.

As you know, the City and Hose Company #4 entered into an agreement (Attachment A) on December 14, 1973, which granted Hose Company #4 the right to use the City's Rock Street Fire Station (along with HFD) subject to certain conditions, including that the City may assume exclusive control and occupancy of the Rock Street Fire Station if, among other things, Hose Company #4 "should cease to provide adequate fire protection for the City of Harrisonburg." The roles and responsibilities of HFD and Hose Company #4 have changed significantly since 1973. Some of those changes are detailed below.

In 1979, Rockingham County firefighters began supplementing Hose Company #4 volunteers at the City-owned Rock Street Fire Station in order to serve primarily County residents. Around that time Hose Company #4 officially became affiliated with Rockingham County Fire and Rescue. In 2017, Rockingham County Fire and Rescue began providing 24-hour career staffing (on behalf of Hose Company #4, Inc.) at the Rock Street Fire Station, bringing to conclusion the fire company's reliance on volunteer personnel to staff fire apparatus at that station. In November of 2022, Rockingham County completed its new fire station just north of the City and removed its paid firefighters from the Rock Street Fire Station. The County has indicated it no longer needs access to the Rock Street Fire Station to provide service to county residents.

Since 1973, the City Fire Department has grown substantially and is now operating as a fully municipal career agency while the affiliation between Hose Company #4, Inc. and the County of Rockingham has become demonstrably closer. In 2020, the County constructed and opened a new 30,000 ft<sup>2</sup> headquarters fire station and social hall for Hose Company #4 on Port Republic Road.

That new state-of-the-art facility (located on property owned by Hose Company #4, Inc.) includes dedicated offices for volunteer operational and administrative personnel, bunkrooms, and ample space for apparatus. It also has a dedicated commercial kitchen and social hall for fundraising activities. Hose Company #4's primary response areas are in the County, making it a natural fit to be affiliated with Rockingham County Fire and Rescue. By contrast, Hose Company #4, Inc. does not have a geographic response area in the City.

As a result of these changes, Hose Company #4 no longer provides fire protection to the City beyond what is provided under mutual aid similar to other County volunteer departments, and certainly not "adequate fire protection" as set forth in the 1973 Agreement. Therefore, the City of Harrisonburg is hereby notifying Hose Company #4 that the City is exercising its right to assume exclusive control and occupancy of the Rock Street Fire Station, effective July 1, 2023.

The City respectfully requests that Hose Company #4 remove all of its personal property from the Fire Station located at 210 E. Rock Street no later than close of business on June 30, 2023. The City of Harrisonburg also requests that Hose Company #4 immediately cease current and future fundraising efforts directed to City residents. Notwithstanding this difficult but necessary action, it is my intent to continue working cooperatively with Hose Company #4, Inc. as we do with any other similarly situated mutual aid fire service entity.

The relationship between Hose Company #4, Inc. and the City of Harrisonburg will long be memorialized in our Fire Museum and will be forever preserved in our history.

Very Respectfully,

**Matthew Tobia**

Digitally signed by Matthew

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Date: 2023.03.24 15:59:51 -04'00'

Matthew Tobia  
Fire Chief

cc: Mr. Alexander Banks IV, City Manager  
Mr. Chris Brown, City Attorney  
File.

Attachment