

Police, firefighters address complaints in campaign literature

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Middletown

The Middletown supervisors meeting was packed Tuesday night with dozens of firefighters and cops trying to make sense of all the campaign literature being printed leading up to next week's election.

Three seats are up for grabs on the township's board of supervisors.

The Democratic candidates - Julie Sauerby-Smith, Harry Arnold and sitting supervisor Chuck Thompson - have questioned the use of taxpayer money and emergency services, angering the township's police and firefighters.

During public comment Tuesday night, several firefighters and one police officer addressed the board and sought to set the record straight.

In campaign literature, the Democrats said police officers are paid time-and-a-half on Flag Day. Police Officer Michael Russo, a police union representative, said that simply wasn't true, saying police don't get paid anything extra for working on Flag Day.

Another issue was whether Middletown police routinely send five cops to each DUI car stop. Russo denied that as well, saying DUI stops were dealt with on a case-by-case basis with the number of police responding accordingly.

The Democratic literature said fire trucks that should cost \$600,000 ended up costing \$1.2 million to make them "parade floats." Several fire company chiefs and representatives denied the claim, arguing over figures in financial documents.

Robert McMonagle, a Democratic supervisor who is not running for re-election, said one truck cost \$900,000, while fire chiefs said that figure was for two trucks. The fire chiefs were backed up by Bill Appleton of the township's financial advisory committee.

Appleton also criticized Republican candidate Pat Mallon's campaign statements touting his citizen participation on the township's financial advisory committee. Appleton said Mallon rarely attended the meetings and had little impact on them. Mallon did not respond to the statement.

During continued public comment, Mallon and Republican running mate Drew Kreiling accused McMonagle of referring to police officers' wives disparagingly in reference to their fundraising efforts for the Republicans. McMonagle denied making any disparaging remark.

Russo, the police union representative, brought up another issue, asking supervisor Thompson why he photographed a Middletown police officer earlier on Tuesday morning. Thompson said he was just out taking pictures, adding that the officer was very professional when he asked what Thompson was doing.

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