Pike Lake Fire, Rescue, & EMS Department
N14885 Shady Knoll Road
Park Falls, WI 54552
Town of Fifield

Letter of Opposition

Date: November 7, 2026

To: Residents and Property Owners of the Pike Lake Community

From: Members of the Pike Lake Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department (Fifield Fire District No. 2)

Subject: Pike Lake Fire & Rescue's Position on Proposed Department Consolidation

Dear Neighbors and Community Members,

As the volunteer firefighters and first responders who serve and protect the Pike Lake community 24/7, we are writing to directly address the Town of Fifield's ongoing discussions regarding the proposed consolidation of Fire District No. 1 (Fifield Fire) and Fire District No. 2 (Pike Lake Fire & Rescue).

The members of Pike Lake Fire & Rescue stand firmly opposed to this consolidation proposal.

Our primary duty has always been—and will always be—the safety, security, and well-being of our community. Based on our operational experience in the Pike Lake area, we believe this consolidation poses significant risks to the level of emergency protection our residents expect and deserve.

In 1975, local residents recognized the need for a centrally located department in the Pike Lake Darea, and the seed was planted for what would become the Pike Lake Fire & Rescue. From these modest beginnings, the department expanded through dedicated volunteers and support from Pike Lake Chain Firefighters Inc., which helped outfit the crew with essential equipment.

In 1983, community leaders approached the Town of Fifield to formally establish Fifield Fire District 2 (Pike Lake Fire & Rescue). Under this agreement, District 2 would be jointly funded by the Town and Firefighters Inc., under the explicit condition that it remain led and staffed by local volunteers—and that all equipment purchased with Firefighters Inc. funds remain dedicated to serving the Pike Lake community.

This fall, the Town of Fifield Board initiated discussions to consolidate Fire Districts 1 and 2. However, they have provided very little detail regarding their rationale. While the Board has vaguely cited potential cost savings, no concrete figures or financial data have been shared to support these claims.

Why We Oppose Consolidation:

- **Response Times Save Lives**: Pike Lake's geographic location requires locally staged equipment and immediately available personnel. Centralizing operations or reducing equipment at the Shady Knoll Road department will inevitably increase emergency response times for fires, medical emergencies, and water rescues on the east side of town. In a structure fire or cardiac event, minutes matter.
- **Property & Insurance Impact**: A diminished local department presence risks altering our community's Insurance Services Office (ISO) fire rating. A lower rating translates directly to higher homeowners insurance premiums for Pike Lake property owners.
- **Protection of Pike Lake Tax Dollars & Fiscal Responsibility**: Historically, Pike Lake Fire & Rescue has managed the revenue generated by our separate mill rate with strict fiscal responsibility. Most of our equipment has been paid for in cash through disciplined budget management and generous contributions from Pike Lake Chain Firefighters Inc. Our current tax dollars are allocated based on a budget developed by our local chief specifically for our area's needs. Under consolidation, tax dollars collected from Pike Lake residents risk being diverted into a general fund managed by leadership disassociated from our community. Given District 1's existing debt from overspending on an oversized facility and expensive apparatus, funds intended for Pike Lake's protection could easily be siphoned off to subsidize mismanagement and cover costs for a department located over 20 miles away.

- **Historical Precedent & Conflict of Interest:** In 1975, a tragic fire at Musky Jack's resulted in the owner's death and the total loss of the business. At the time, Fifield was the only department in the township; their 45-minute response time was far too long for effective fire suppression. This tragedy prompted residents to question how their tax dollars were being spent, directly driving the creation of Pike Lake Chain Firefighters Inc. and our local department.
  Fast forward to today: Town Chairman Felch and the Board are threatening consolidation for the third time in recent history. History shows that centralized control leads to reduced service and diverted tax dollars. Although Pike Lake and the eastern half of the township generate the majority of Fifield's tax revenue, our department operates on a budget thousands of dollars lower than Fifield Fire. Furthermore, Fifield Fire has accumulated hundreds of thousands in accumulated debt due to nearly unchecked overspending on an oversized fire station and apparatus purchased at a premium, while Pike Lake Fire & Rescue remains 100% debt-free. Finally, because Chairman Felch serves simultaneously as Town Chairman and Chief of Fifield Fire, a clear conflict of interest exists when allocating tax dollars collected from Pike Lake's higher-valued properties.
- **Community-Funded Equipment**: Over the years, our department and community have dedicated countless hours fundraising for specialized equipment tailored specifically to our area. Our local investment must stay in Pike Lake to protect Pike Lake.
- **Volunteer Morale & Retention:** Rural departments rely entirely on dedicated local volunteers. Consolidation decisions made without crew and community input risk driving away the experienced firefighters and EMRs living in your neighborhood. Under local leadership, Pike Lake Fire & Rescue has thrived—fostering a supportive culture that actively attracts, retains, and grows our emergency service team.

How You Can Help Protect Our Department:

We need your voice at the town level to ensure our department remains fully operational and equipped. Here is how you can support your local fire department:

1. **Attend Town Board Meetings**: Join us at upcoming Fifield Town Board meetings. Your presence and comments during public input are vital to showing strong community backing for department No. 2.
    a. Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 9:00 am
    b. Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 6:00 pm
    c. Tuesday, December 1, 2026, 9:00 am
2. **Contact Town Supervisors**: Reach out to the Town Chairman and Supervisors to express your opposition to consolidation and demand that full service and equipment remain at Pike Lake.
    a. Town Chairman, William Felch: (715) 661-2432 | wfelch@plbb.us
    b. Supervisor, John Schroeder: (218) 340-5300 | schroederfifield@gmail.com
    c. Supervisor, David Ebert: (608) 577-6235 | ebertfifield@gmail.com
3. **Spread the Word**: Talk to your neighbors, lake association members, and local business owners to ensure everyone is aware of what is at stake.
4. **Attend a Community Listening Session:** Pike Lake Fire & Rescue is hosting a listening session to answer community questions, address concerns, and map out action items.
    - **Location:** Pike Lake Fire Hall
    - **Date & Time:** Saturday, November 14, 2026, at 10:00 AM
    - **Questions?** Contact Chief Les Nordrum at (715) 892-1811.

We are proud to serve the Pike Lake area, and we will continue to advocate for the safety and protection of every home and family in our district. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,

The Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Responders of Pike Lake Fire & Rescue

Fifield Fire Department No. 2