



As chief of the Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department and a longtime resident, I believe I owe to every taxpayer a response and explanation to Pat DeAngelis's distorted Jan. 25 letter, "Time for chairman, chief to let others assume command."

First, the department does not have at its disposal \$800,000, nor could it afford to buy fire apparatus.

Department budget has \$225,000 in the Fire Fighter Benevolent Fund; \$220,000 from a donation to Middlebury Voluntary Fire Department Ambulance Inc. for ambulance and rescue expenses; and \$180,000 in the ambulance-replacement fund. The department is completing specifications for a new \$160,000 ambulance that will cost taxpayers nothing.

In addition, the department has about \$110,000 amassed through fund-raisers. Most of this money will pay internal expenses. The rest will fund such things as scholarships for Region 15 students, Food Bank contributions, Little League sponsorships, a Halloween Party for children and senior center dinners.

A complete, independent financial audit is conducted yearly. Our financial records always have had full transparency.

In regard to the Westover School donation, this is an annual gift to the department that is spent on our building, equipment, and precious members and their families.

I take exception to Mr. DeAngelis' comments regarding the brass pole, which along with a plaque was purchased as a dedication to our physician, Dr. William Arnold. This \$2,000 was well spent on a resident who faithfully served his community for more than 50 years.

Mr. DeAngelis has a habit of thinking he knows the price of everything; unfortunately he knows the value of nothing. Financially speaking, he is not part of any solution but

more the problem, considering he has submitted more than 100 Freedom of Information requests that have cost taxpayers more than \$15,000.

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