

## **TOWN OF BYRON SPECIAL FIRE MEETING**

September 17, 2025

The Town of Byron Special Meeting was called to order by Chief Hickey at the South Byron Fire Hall at 7:00 p.m.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Chief Dwane Weatherell presented the attached draft proposal of the merger between South Byron and Byron Fire Departments. The Fire Departments requested a meeting for community input.

The floor was opened to the public for a question and answer session

# **Proposal Draft for the Merger of the: Byron & South Byron Fire Departments, July 2025**

## **Executive Summary**

This proposal outlines a phased plan to merge the Byron Fire Department #1 Inc. and the South Byron Volunteer Fire Company into a single, unified agency, known as the **Black Creek Fire Company**. The primary goal of this merger is to enhance operational efficiency, improve service delivery, ensure sustainable staffing, and strengthen fire protection services across the Town of Byron.

The proposed timeline includes three key milestones and a final transition to complete the integration. The merger process will ensure continuity of service, community transparency, and the protection of both departments' investments and identities as they unify under a new shared mission.

## **Purpose and Rationale**

- **Operational Efficiency:** Regionalization of resources will reduce duplication and streamline command structures.
- **Improved Response Times:** Simultaneous dispatch from both departments ensures optimal response coverage.
- **Financial Sustainability:** A single entity reduces administrative overhead and increases eligibility for larger, more competitive grants.
- **Unified Training and Standards:** Merging enables consistent training, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and a shared vision.
- **Community Cohesion:** The formation of the Black Creek Fire Company reflects the unity of purpose and service to all residents of Byron.

## **Merger Timeline and Milestones (Proposed Dates)**

### **Phase 1: Joint Dispatch Implementation (By end of 2025)**

**Objective:** Begin collaborative operations by dispatching both the Byron and South Byron Fire Departments to all calls simultaneously.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Coordinate with the county dispatch center.
- Conduct joint response training.
- Establish a temporary joint operations board.
- Begin cross-familiarization of equipment and procedures.

### **Phase 2: Formalize Regionalization into Black Creek Fire Company (By end of 2027)**

**Objective:** Officially merge the two departments into a single legal entity.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Complete legal and administrative steps (nonprofit status, tax ID, incorporation).
- Draft and ratify new bylaws with input from both departments.
- Allow time for outstanding grants to be fulfilled under the current department names.
- Develop a unified budget and long-term financial plan.
- Publicly launch the new “Byron Joint Fire Company” name and branding.
- Establish a new leadership structure.
  - Fire Chief
  - Deputy Chief
  - Two Assistant Chiefs (one per station)
  - Two Fire Captains (one per station)
  - Two Fire Lieutenants (one per station)
  - EMS Captian

### **Phase 3: Unified Operations with Two Stations (2028–2031)**

**Objective:** Operate seamlessly as one department using two fire halls.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Standardize equipment, training, and administrative procedures.
- Establish shared rosters, shift assignments, and training calendars.
- Evaluate response data and station coverage needs.
- Continue community engagement and integration efforts.

### **Phase 4: Final Integration into Single Facility (By end of 2032)**

**Objective:** Complete full operational merger into a single, centralized department serving the Town of Byron.

#### **Key Actions:**

- Conduct feasibility studies for long-term infrastructure (new building, renovations, or consolidation).
- Plan the transition of all apparatus, personnel, and administrative functions to the central facility.
- Reassign or repurpose existing stations as needed (e.g., EMS satellite stations, training hubs).
- Host a public ceremony and open house to commemorate the complete integration of fire services.

**Governance and Oversight:**

During the transition period, a “Merger Oversight Committee” will be formed, comprised of:

- Two representatives from each department
- The Town Supervisor (or designee)
- One community member-at-large
- One representative from the Genesee County Emergency Management Office

This committee will meet quarterly to monitor progress, resolve challenges, and keep stakeholders informed.

**Conclusion:**

The merger of the Byron and South Byron Fire Departments represents a forward-looking approach to public safety, collaboration, and community stewardship. Through thoughtful planning, respect for tradition, and shared leadership, the Town of Byron can ensure that its fire protection services are well-positioned for the future.