Moving Forward to Reach a Fair Agreement

The Rhode Island General Assembly’s recent legislation that will allow the Town of Smithfield to charge Bryant University for the “actual cost of police, fire, and rescue services” provided to the school unless these costs are “otherwise reimbursed” takes effect in April 2014. Bryant wants to reach a fair agreement reflecting the actual costs.

In order that negotiations can begin, we have moved forward and hired an independent consultant – at our own expense – to develop a methodology and calculate the actual costs the town incurs to deliver public safety services to Bryant. Experienced professionals from a well-respected, nationally-recognized firm based in Boston will work with the town to conduct this complex analysis. We are grateful that the Town Council has appointed Dennis Finlay, the Town Manager, as their representative and we look forward to cooperating together on this study.

The role that Bryant plays in the Smithfield community is important to us and important to Smithfield. DID YOU KNOW:

- The University generates more than $17 million for the local economy each year, benefiting retailers, restaurants, hotels, and many other businesses in town.

- Smithfield already receives approximately $500,000 from the State of Rhode Island to pay for the public safety services required for Bryant University.

- Bryant already contributes more than $300,000 in voluntary services and benefits, including scholarships and the Town’s annual Independence Day celebration, in addition to the $600,000 that it pays for water and sewer costs (at a rate that subsidizes the individual household rate).

- Bryant has 700 employees, many of whom live and shop in Smithfield. The University employs thousands more through activities including construction and purchasing.

We encourage everyone to visit the Smithfield Friends and Neighbors section of our website, bryant.edu/Smithfield, to learn more about this issue. What is the actual cost of police and fire protection, and is it more than Bryant is already providing?