

Fire Department Funding

A committee should be formed to determine the need and the form a levy request might take in order to fund the Sylvania Township Fire Department.

During budget hearings, township officials said the department will reach a deficit at some point in 2015. In order to avoid a shortfall in that year, passage of a levy would be required in 2014.

John Zeitler, township administrator, told trustees that the department has been operating efficiently with a close eye on expenses, but that the problem is based primarily on revenue.

He noted that income from real estate taxes is \$400,000 less than in 2011. That revenue has dropped from about \$5.9 million to about \$5.5 million.

A draft budget which was presented to the trustees shows the department is projected to have a \$300,000 deficit in 2015, ballooning to \$1.2 million the next year.

Fire Chief Jeffrey Kowalski said the department wants to make clear to the citizens that they are not seeking anything frivolous, but that additional revenue is necessary to maintain the quality of service residents enjoy.

The last time residents passed a levy for the fire department was 2008 for 1.25 mills. At the time, supporters of the levy promised to not come back for revenue for 5 years. Mr. Zeitler noted that if there is a levy request next year, it will have been six years even in the face of declining revenue.

Timing for a levy request and what amount should be sought is undetermined, but would be the job of the committee to make the recommendation.

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