

## **Fire Department**

A draft copy of a review of the Sylvania Township Fire Department has been prepared and is being made available to entities and individuals in the Sylvania community.

The full report is available at Hot Topics.

John Zeitler, township administrator, said the report, provides a statistical overview of the fire department from which a consensus can be found concerning its future needs. He said the comments and concerns of those who read the draft report will be considered in the preparation of the final report.

Budget projections show a need for additional revenue in the calendar year 2016 and beyond.

The last fire levy was 1.25 mills approved by voters in 2008. It was anticipated to produce \$1.86 million per year, but fell short of that amount. It generated approximately \$1.525 annually due to a lowering of tax valuations of both personal and commercial property.

Despite that, the levy, which was anticipated to last five years, has achieved its main purposes and will help carry the department almost through 2015, a seven year period. Most of the immediate capital needs of the department were met through that levy, with the construction of three new fire stations and updates to the station which also acts as headquarters for the department. Four major pieces of firefighting/rescue apparatus were purchased and staffing levels have been restored.

The draft report recommends a reduction to 18 vehicles from current 22, and an expansion in the use of part-time firefighters. More part-time firefighters will reduce overtime costs and meet the increase in the continued growth of fire and emergency medical calls each year.

The department is called on to continue its public education and fire inspection services to reduce fire calls. Also to continue its mutual-aid programs with surrounding department and its current training programs for firefighters.

An exhibit in the report notes that fire calls have steadily risen by about 20 percent and emergency/medical runs by about 27 percent. Rescue/medical calls represent 78 percent of the alarms responded to by the department.

Since 2003, total calls have increased from 3,517 to last year's total of 5,431.

In 2003, the department had a total of 70 personnel. It currently has a total of 64.5.

The report notes that the issue of staffing is something which needs to be considered when looking ahead to needs of the department over the next 5 to 7 years. It is projected that the department will likely be responding to over 6,000 calls.

The report also asks the fire chief to give consideration to restoring patient transport services. Currently, Sylvania Township is the only department in the county which does not provide that. The report asks for the estimated cost of such a service and for way to implement the use of a combination public/private service.

Mr. Zeitler, Fire Chief Jeff Kowalski, and Trustee John Crandall worked to put the draft report together.

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