

Frequently asked questions about the proposed fire assessment

Q: We have a fire assessment already. Is this proposal in addition to the assessment that we already pay?

A: No, if authorized by voters, this assessment will replace the existing assessment.

Q: Will my taxes go up to this amount immediately?

A: No, this is to implement an improvement plan over the next 7-10 years. The assessment rate will gradually increase over time.

Q: Do we really need a second fire station and more firefighters?

A: Several studies have been performed indicating the need for a second station. Most recently the Township formed a committee to research the issue and made recommendations to build and staff a second station. This assessment request would put their recommendation in place. The objective is to bring the department up to national standards and prepare for future growth.

Q: What are some of the reasons this committee recommends a second fire station?

A: The Committee recommended a second fire station to improve response times, provide redundancy, meet MIOSHA requirements, improve the safety of the public and firefighters, and to potentially reduce homeowners' insurance rates (through a reduced ISO rating and locating a station closer to residents).

Q: Does Scio Township really need a ladder truck?

A: The ladders that we carry on our fire engine are only able to reach the roof of an older 1 story home. We are unable to reach the roof of most of the newer homes in the community and most commercial buildings. A ladder truck would remedy this issue and allow us the ability to apply water from above an elevated position.

Q: Can't we just use one of our neighbors' ladder trucks?

A: We do have mutual aid agreements with our neighbors; however, we are not able to reciprocate, making the relationship one where our neighbors are subsidizing us. That is not the intent of our mutual aid agreements, and is unsustainable as the Township continues to grow.

Q: Why doesn't the letter I got in the mail include any details about what this money will pay for?

A: The assessment notice of public hearing was written as required by Michigan Public Act 33, it could only be written to give everyone notice of the public hearing.

Q: How do we know that the Township won't use this money for something else?

A: Public Act 33 only allows for funds to be used for Fire or Police operations, and the questions on the ballot specifically and legally limit us to using funds for only fire protection.

Q: Why are there 2 questions and what do they mean?

A: Question 1 is to increase funding to operate the Fire Department. The costs for equipment, personnel, and supplies are difficult to estimate, which is the reason for a 10-year term. Question 2 is to build a building and put equipment in it, as well as to purchase property. These costs are easier to estimate and can be paid over time.

Q: Question 2 will allow the Township to purchase property, are you planning to build a third fire station?

A: There are currently no plans to build a third fire station. As the Township grows, there may be a need in the future for a third station. We want to purchase property to be prepared in case data in the future shows we need a third station. In addition, we want to plan for the replacement of the Zeeb station when it reaches the end of its life-which is decades away.

Q: Is the property purchased for a second fire station the best location for a second fire station?

A: No, a second fire station would be better located along Jackson near Wagner, however there is no available property in that area that is reasonably priced. We had to purchase property based what was available rather than what would be a better location for a station.

Q: Can't our neighbors help us so that we don't have pay for this ourselves?

A: Our neighbors do help us on major incidents. In fact, a regular building fire uses resources from Ann Arbor City (2 vehicles and personnel), Ann Arbor Township (1 vehicle and personnel), Dexter (1 vehicle and personnel), and often Chelsea (1 vehicle and personnel).