

FIRE HEADQUARTERS BOND REQUEST INFORMATION

Green Oak Charter Township is seeking the approval of the electorate for a 20 year capital bond for construction of a new fire headquarters building and purchase of a new aerial ladder truck. The bond amount requested is \$12.5 million spread over 20 years, which comes out to a millage rate of approximately 0.5905 per year for the first year. This letter is being included with your tax bill to explain this proposal and offer information about it.

The Current Station

The current main fire station, Station 81, was built in 1992. At that time the Fire Department had 1 full time employee (the chief), an administrative assistant and approximately 34 paid on call firefighters. The Department was responding to approximately 300 calls for service per year during this time period and, at that time, the growth that Green Oak Charter Township would experience in the late 1990s-2000s was not accurately forecast. The Department operated a 1960s ladder truck, an engine, a tanker, and a pickup truck out of Station 81 during this period.

The Current Ladder Truck

The Department currently operates a 1995 E-One aerial ladder truck, which was purchased in 1997 after it was used by the manufacturer as a demonstration truck. This vehicle, now 27 years old, has aged beyond its expected 20-25 year life span and is the currently the most expensive truck in the Fire Department's fleet to maintain due to its age and the lack of parts availability. During its service life, this ladder truck has been used on many commercial, and some residential, fires, and has also been used in rescue situations, saving the life of a person who suffered a medical emergency on the roof of a four story building and a person who was struck by a railroad vehicle on an elevated railroad bridge.

The Department's Current Operations

Today, 30 years after the current main station was built, the Department responds to some 1900 calls per year, operating out of three stations, with an engine, ladder, heavy rescue, brush truck and mechanic's utility truck being assigned to the main station. The Department employees a full time chief and deputy chief, as well as a fire inspector and an administrative assistant as its administrative staff. The Department also employees three career duty captains (working rotating 24 hour shifts) and a full time certified mechanic. The Department, beginning in 2008, started operating a first due, 24/7/365 on duty engine, staffed with one duty captain and one paid on call firefighter (on rotating shifts), to respond immediately to emergency situations at any time. The Department also employs 38 paid on call firefighters.

Because there are no crew quarters at the current main station, while the on duty crew stays there during the day, at night the crew returns to Station 83 (on Rushton Road at Ten Mile), and works out of there at night. This is obviously not ideal in that having a crew in the center of the Township at the main station would be most advantageous from a response time point of view. Additionally, during the days when the crew is at the main station, one apparatus must be parked outside (even in the winter), as there is no room at the current station for the on-duty engine.

In the current station, the Department's chief and deputy chief share an office, the fire inspector operates out of a converted closet, and the duty captains share a desk area, while the

mechanic has a small workbench with no office and uses a computer sitting on top of his toolbox.

The Rationale for this Request

While the administrative staff at the main station have far outgrown the current station's capacity, and the new Fire Headquarters would address that, and even more important need is the operational one. Having crew quarters at the Fire Headquarters would allow an on duty crew to be stationed there, in roughly the center of the Township, 24/7/365, something that is not currently possible. While the Department's paid on call staff, spread out amongst the Department's current three stations (the main station, Station 83 at Rushton and Ten Mile and Station 82 on Grand River west of Pleasant Valley) supplements (and will continue to supplement) Departmental responses, having an on duty crew in the center of the Township would save valuable minutes off response times to many locations in the Township. This matters a great deal in both medical emergencies (which the Department, being reliably faster than the county ambulance service, which has no station in Green Oak, always responds to) and fire incidents. Additionally, the Department's rescue boat, currently housed at the Rushton and Ten Mile station, would be able to be stationed in the center of the Township, closer to most of the Township's lakes and the Huron River. Finally, the Department's mechanic would have a dedicated maintenance bay with increased equipment and parts storage, allowing the Department to perform even more apparatus maintenance and repair in-house, at a dramatic cost savings when compared to sending the work to outside repair companies.

As to the aerial ladder truck, the Department needs to replace its current aerial ladder truck and has ordered a largely stock unit (without expensive additional options). This aerial ladder truck, in order to avoid an 11% price increase, has already been ordered, with the caveat that, if this bond request is not approved by the voters, the contract will be cancelled (it takes about a year to actually build this truck). This new apparatus would continue to respond to both commercial and larger residential fires, as well as elevated rescue incidents.

The Cost

As noted above, the bond request is for a total of \$12.5 million over 20 years (not \$12.5 million per year). That comes out to a millage rate of 0.5905 for the first year, which, for a \$300,000 home, would cost \$88.58 per year, or a quarter (25 cents) a day. Currently, the Fire Department's operational millage (1.7359 mils) amounts to, for a \$300,000 home, \$260.39 per year, or 71 cents a day. If this bond is approved, the Township's residents will see decreased emergency response times for fire and emergency medical services protection for less than \$1 a day for an average home.

Over the last few years, the Township, out of its general fund, has purchased land for the new police headquarters and proposed fire headquarters, built the new police station, and paid for the planning and architectural work for the new fire headquarters. The bond request represents the last step in this plan, where the residents are asked to spend a quarter a day to pay for improved fire and EMS protection and a new fire headquarters.

Anyone with questions regarding this proposal is welcome to contact the Fire Chief, Kevin Gentry, at 810-231-3663, kevin.gentry@greenoakfire.com, or Township Treasurer Susan Daugherty, susan.daugherty@greenoaktwp.com. Thank you.