

# WESTFIELD TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

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Work Session with Westfield Fire Association/Fire Advisory Board

March 28, 2011

6:30 pm

Trustee Oiler called the meeting order with the Westfield Fire Association and Fire Advisory Board at 6:30 pm.

Trustees present: Likley, Oiler, and Harris.

Trustee Oiler announced if there are questions that the board cannot answer, Mr. Thorne will be here at 6:30 pm tomorrow evening if needed.

Westfield Fire Association representative Russ Zupanic had the following questions:

- ✓ How was the name of the Fire District decided?
  - *Answer: Last spring in the post we asked for suggested names as well as the trustees submitted names. The reason for South Central Fire District is according to the law we could not use the name WESTFIELD in the name. If the district is formed the name of the Fire Department will still be WESTFIELD FIRE AND RESCUE. The name of the district is the unincorporated area of Westfield Township is only in the management of the township's fire levy funds.*
- ✓ In the future if there are other fire departments combining can the name be changed?
  - Yes, the name can be changed according to Bill we have to do a lot of paper work and it would be dba (doing business as) whatever the new name might be.
- ✓ What happens if this fire department goes to another district?
  - Right now we have contract with the Village of Westfield Center and a partnership for funding of the Westfield Fire Department. All legalities would have to be followed per the contract.
- ✓ This question comes from Mark Williams. The contract that was signed between the Village and the Township is that also binding between the Village and newly formed fire district?
  - Yes, it is mentioned in the contract. This fire district is just a name for the township's fire levy funds. Right now the township has a fire levy for the unincorporated area BUT when the township needs to increase the amount of the levy to support their share of the fire department it had to be given a name. After negotiations between the two villages within the township (Gloria Glens and Westfield Center) it was decided that the two villages did not want to be part of the levy because Gloria Glens already has a fire levy and Westfield Center wants to use their income tax funds to support the fire department. The village and township both have an interest in the building and equipment as is spelled out in the contract. The township pays 59% Village pays 41% of the operation of the fire department. When a 30 year old error was discovered in 2009 the township was advised by legal counsel IF the two villages did not want to support a fire levy then a fire district must be formed to increase the townships fire levy.

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- ✓ If Chatham would want to join this fire district by contract (I would imagine?)
  - According to Bill if Chatham would want to join the district, the township would have to create a resolution and contract to have them join the district and they would be subject to the same levy. If a new levy was offered, Chatham would also have a voice or vote.
- ✓ If others would join the district how would officers be appointed?
  - All participants would have a representative and it would have to be established if and when that would occur. You would have a 3 or 5 member board.
  - If the district is formed all three trustees would be fire district board because this is just another fund of the township, there are no other participants. The contract between the village and township is binding and that is why there is a fire advisory board with representation from the village and township.
- ✓ Russ made a request that members of the fire fighters association be on the fire district board if other entities were to participate because he knows that it is done elsewhere.

Today the township pays the bills, takes recommendations from the fire chief, fire advisory board which has 2 village council members and 1 trustee and 1 township resident. The fire district will not be any different except it will be a separate entity with separate books.

- Russ's concern is that there is a tight budget with no funds set aside for capital expenditures and if a fire district is formed then the township cannot use general fund money.
- That is true but you must realize that the general fund is slowly being depleted with the state cutting local government funding and estate tax is almost extinct. Right now the township's general fund will soon be gone in a few years making it necessary to ask for additional funds to support the fire department
- The new levy would produce \$170,300 tax dollars and the budget would be \$288,644 without any EMS collections or Gloria Glens contract. If estimated EMS collections and Gloria Glens contract was added the budget would be an estimated in excess of \$300,000 leaving room to save funds for needed equipment and vehicles.
- It was also noted that we cannot pay for any advertisement for the fire levy but as the trustees stated they can go out and canvas an area to let the residents know.

Work session adjourned.

Approved 4-18-2011