



SUMMER 2014

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Trustees Host Community Meeting

In the wake of the narrow defeat of a fire and emergency medical services levy on the May ballot, the Brown Township Trustees held a community meeting on June 12 to explain the current situation and to solicit ideas from residents about how these services might be provided to Brown Township residents and properties.

Attended by more than 100 people, the meeting began with a presentation by Joe Martin, chair of the Brown Township Trustees, outlining the present service arrangement and some thoughts about alternative ideas. (The presentation is available at www.BrownTwp.org by clicking on "Community Meeting Presentation.")

Present to assist in answering questions from residents were State Fire Marshal Larry Flowers; Frank Conway, chief of the Fire Prevention Bureau of the State Fire Marshal's office; Norwich Township Trustees Tim Roberts, Larry Earman, and Chuck Buck; Norwich Township Fire Chief Jeff Warren; Prairie Township Fire Chief Chris Snyder; Brown Township Trustees Gary Dever and Pam Sayre; and Brown Township Fiscal Officer Greg Ruwe.

The majority of the meeting was focused on comments, questions, and suggestions from Brown Township residents.

Brown Township currently contracts

with Norwich Township for the provision of fire and emergency medical services. The contract, signed in 1998, stipulates that Norwich Township will provide EMS and fire services for Brown Township and Brown Township agrees that its property owners should pay the same effective tax rate as Norwich Township property owners. Brown Township built Station 82 on Walker Road in 1999 to improve response times to residents to about 4 minutes. Brown Township owns the building and property and Norwich Township staffs and equips the firehouse. Staffing includes 18 personnel, trained as both paramedics and firefighters, working three shifts of six staff members each for coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Norwich Township voters passed a levy in 2013. Because of contract requirements, Brown Township placed a levy on the ballot to bring the effective property tax rates into balance to support these services.

Brown Township levies failed in November, 2013 and May, 2014, prompting Norwich Township to notify Brown Township that the fire and emergency medical services contract will be terminated in May 2015 if a funding solution cannot be found. The Brown Township Trustees feel fire and emergency medical services are vital community services

and are committed to finding a way to provide them for its residents.

Norwich Township's effective millage rate for fire and emergency medical services is currently 11.5 mills. Brown Township's rate is currently 6.88 mills. The levy increase defeated in May would have brought Brown Township's effective rate to 12 mills which would allow Brown to pay Norwich back for revenue due in 2014 and provide equitable millage into the future.

Newsletter Reminder

This special communication takes the place of the regular Summer 2014 Brown Township newsletter. Regular newsletters will resume with the Fall 2014 issue.

Remember... the township newsletter is no longer routinely mailed to residents. If you wish to receive the newsletter by mail, please contact the Township Office at 876-2133. For electronic newsletter notifications, go to www.BrownTwp.org.

RESIDENTS COMMENT ON FIRE/EMS SERVICE

At the June 12 community meeting hosted by Brown Township Trustees, residents were asked to provide suggestions about the provision of fire and emergency medical services to township residents and properties.

The responses (at the meeting and from comment cards, postcard responses, email responses and conversations) fell into three categories: questions, comments, and suggestions.

Questions included:

- How much flexibility does Brown Township have under the existing contract with Norwich Township?
- What does it cost to operate Station 82?
- How much money is generated by the existing Brown Township fire and EMS levy?
- Is it possible to separate out Fire and EMS?
- What happens to revenue from the current levy if another levy is not passed?
- Is there a possibility of a flat tax instead of a property tax?
- What are the options?
- Is a temporary levy possible while Brown Township looks for other options?

Comments included:

- The perception is that Brown Township is not getting the same level of firefighting as Norwich Township because most of Brown Township lacks fire hydrants.
- Taxes are too high.
- Make all options and data public and discuss why a particular decision was made.
- We have excellent coverage. Put the issue back on the ballot.
- We are pleased with the service, but not happy with the increase.
- The cost of the levy per \$1000 of property valuation amounts to about a meal out each month.
- A volunteer department is a bad idea.
- We appreciate the immediacy of the response time.

- We need to think about what is good for the whole community.
- We should expect that the cost of this service would go up, just as everything else does.
- The existing contract represents taxation without representation.
- We applaud Norwich EMS.
- We are opposed to the administration of Norwich Fire, because of inequities.
- We are paying more for homeowners' insurance as well as higher taxes.
- Mutual aid is critical. Big fires need response from many departments.

Suggestions included:

- We need to be pragmatic and put the levy back on the ballot.
- Establish a volunteer department. Can provide training for future employment.
- Explore getting service from Columbus.
- Explore getting service from Prairie Township.
- Get service from a private company.
- Explore the creation of a fire district.

As promised, the Brown Township Trustees will conduct research on the suggested solutions. The results of that research will be presented at a special Board of Trustees meeting on July 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room at the Walker Rd. firehouse. Any additional resident comments are welcome via email at Fire@BrownTwp.org.



Minimum Level of Emergency Service Established

At its June 16 meeting, the Brown Township Board of Trustees passed a motion establishing a minimum acceptable level of fire and emergency medical service for the township.

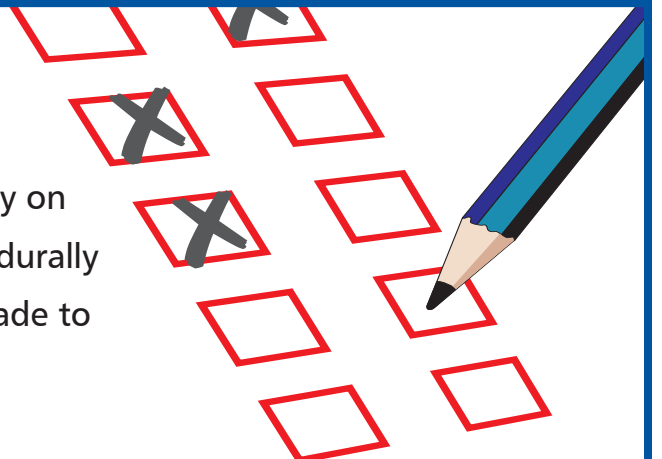
The minimum level of service requires:

- Two pieces of safety equipment (a fire truck and an EMS vehicle) based at Station 82, 2491 Walker Road. The fire truck must be able to carry a minimum of 1,000 gallons of water and have necessary equipment, drugs, and supplies to respond to EMS runs. The EMS vehicle must be staffed with the requisite number of paramedics; have necessary equipment, drugs, and medical supplies; and have an arrangement with a medical provider that allows for the administration of drugs and/or medical treatment by paramedics as specified by said medical professional.
- Needed staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to operate the two vehicles independently and simultaneously according to required regulations.
- All persons responding to EMS calls be certified paramedics and all persons responding to fire calls be Level II trained.
- Availability of additional equipment, vehicles, and manpower that can be sent in support of emergency calls in Brown Township when needed.
- Mutual Aid agreement in place.



Ballot Resolutions

The Brown Township Board of Trustees will consider resolutions during the summer months that will preserve the possibility of a placing a levy on the November ballot. These resolutions are procedurally necessary and can be rescinded if a decision is made to pursue a different course of action.



Brown Township
2491 Walker Road
Hilliard, Ohio 43026

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Please Join Us For A

Special Trustees Meeting

**Monday, July 28
6:30 p.m.**

**Firehouse
Upstairs Meeting Room
2491 Walker Road**

INSIDE: Results of Community Feedback on Fire Levy



*Trustees L-R: Greg Ruwe, Gary Dever,
Pam Sayre and Joe Martin*

Brown Township Administration Office

2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 876-2133

Website

www.BrownTwp.org

Fiscal Officer

Greg Ruwe 876-2133

Trustees

Mr. Gary Dever 876-4768

Mrs. Pamela Sayre 878-0199

Mr. Joseph Martin 870-9601

Norwich Fire Department

Jeff Warren, Chief 876-7694

Brown Township Board of Trustees Meeting

When: 3rd Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

Where: 2491 Walker Road, Hilliard, Ohio

For Police, Fire and Medical Emergencies, Dial 911