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SHELBY TOWNSHIP

Plan for fire station moves forward

Board seeks bids for design of facility for south end

By Sean Delaney
Digital First Media

The Shelby Township Fire Department recently took another step toward building a new fire station to service the southeastern portion of the township.

On Dec. 15, the Board of Trustees approved a request from Fire Chief Jim Swinkowski to allow the township to seek qualifica-

tions from professionals to provide design, site engineering and construction documents aimed at completion of a new fire station on an empty parcel at 47460 Schoenherr Road, north of 21 Mile Road.

"This doesn't mean we're ready to move forward with construction," Swinkowski said. "We have the right to reject any of these bids, but until we get this infor-

mation we can't continue with the process. We want to move slowly, and this is just the next step."

Swinkowski said officials have been mulling over the idea of adding a fifth fire station for the approximately 36-square-mile township since 2005.

"This need was identified years ago, and we purchased the 4-acre parcel in preparation that some-

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SEAN DELANEY —
DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA

The Shelby Township Fire Department is seeking bids for work that could lead to a new fire station on an empty parcel on Schoenherr Road, north of 21 Mile Road.

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day we would need it," he said.

In anticipation of that day, the department has also been working steadily over the years to lower its operating expenses and cut unnecessary costs.

"We wanted to be able to do this without having a major impact on our residents," Swinkowski said.

"Our reduced costs and spending has really lowered our operational costs to the point where doing this (building the station) and adding additional manpower is not going to change our millage rate. Everything is going to stay the same."

When asked about the need for a fifth fire station in the southeastern portion of the township, Swinkowski said the area from 22 Mile Road to Hall Road and M-53 to Hayes Road is actually the busiest in Shelby Township in terms of fire and EMS runs.

"When you look at our run volumes, when you look at the 12 ½ square miles east of M-53, which is now covered by one station, 40 percent of our runs are being handled by that one station," he said. "Of that 40 percent, a vast majority of those runs are south of 22 Mile Road."

Fire department officials claim that adding a new station will improve response times for residents during an emer-

gency and reduce the stress on other stations currently servicing the southeastern portion of the township.

"What this is doing is changing our starting point," Swinkowski said. "So instead of coming from 23 Mile and Schoenherr roads, this will be our starting point."

While still in the preliminary discussion phase, a conceptual plan for the new station was included in the proposed 2016 budget.

"This is not indicative of any type of approval to build the station or hire any additional manpower," Swinkowski said.

"At this point, we've identified a need and the resources that would be needed to staff the station in order to meet the needs of the township. We've also received a very preliminary budgetary figure of what it would take to build the station. This (RFQ process) would just give us a better idea of what it would take for a general contractor who is doing the build and an architect to get plans in place and a firm price so that, as a team, we can sit down and weigh the options before we move forward."

According to Swinkowski, interested parties have until Jan. 11, 2016, to submit their qualifications.

"After these RFQ's are received and reviewed, we will have an opportunity to interview some of the lead candidates for the project," he said.