



SEAN DELANEY – ADVISOR & SOURCE

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Fire department fills vacancies, adds manpower

SEAN DELANEY

sean.delaney@advisorsource.com; @sdelaney81

The Shelby Township Fire Department is taking a proactive approach to filling three vacancies created by the resignation of a firefighter medic in October and the upcoming retirements of two battalion chiefs.

“This is one thing that has been an issue since I hired on,” Fire Chief Jim Swinkowski said. “We always waited until after the employee left before we started the hiring process. And by the time we get someone in the door, six or seven months have gone by. That’s six or seven months without bodies on the road who are able to respond to emergencies. So I think this is a step in the right direction.”

At the Jan. 19 Board of Trustees meeting, Swin-

kowski sought and received approval to hire six entry-level firefighter medics.

Three of the new hires will serve as replacement hires to fill the vacancy created by the resignation in October, as well as the upcoming vacancies that will be created by promotions associated with the retirements of the battalion chiefs in February and March.

The next three would serve as additional manpower to support emergency services and help staff Station No. 4 on the east side of the township, Swinkowski said.

“Each year we see an average increase in total run volume of at least 5 percent,” he said. “This overall increase is now stressing our resources.”

According to Swinkowski, the last time the fire

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department increased its overall manpower was in 2005.

“We’ve been at 61 firefighters since 2005,” he said. “Obviously, with our run volumes going up 5 percent to 8 percent a year, at a certain point we’re going to get behind. So in regard to where we are in terms of future

growth, this is the first step in trying to maintain the proper service levels, especially when it’s east of M-53.”

According to Swinkowski, the selection of the six individuals who have been hired was made in full compliance with all applicable regulations and procedures within the department.

“The hiring will be contingent upon the successful completion of a psychological evaluation, physical examination, physical agility, drug and alcohol testing,” he said.