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**SHELBY TOWNSHIP**

# Trustees OK construction of new fire station

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The Board of Trustees on July 19 unanimously approved plans for the construction and outfitting of Fire Station No. 5, a new 7,400-square-foot facility that will be located on a 4-acre site adjacent to King of Kings Lutheran Church on Schoenherr Road, north of 21 Mile Road.

"This is great news for the Fire Department," Township Supervisor Richard Stathakis said. "Many have contributed to this process of construction of a new fire station, and I'm happy to report that the cost is lower than we first thought it would be."

According to Fire Chief Jim Swinkowski, it will cost approximately \$1.9 million to build the new station, and approximately \$215,327 to outfit the facility with the necessary equipment, including a fiber optic connection, air compressor, laptops, mobile radios, alert system, and gear lockers.

Those costs, plus approximately \$90,720 in permit fees and other miscellaneous expenditures, will result in a final cost of approximately \$2.2 million, which is approximately \$1 million less than the project's initial estimated cost of \$3.5 million in 2013.

"Over the years, we've worked very hard to try to streamline the process and anticipate all the costs necessary for a station in

the (southeastern portion) of the township," Swinkowski said.

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

"If you go back to our Master Plan in the late 1980s or early 1990s, it did account for five stations," he said. "I can't say why they sold the two properties and built Fire Station No. 4 where they did, but we're working to correct that and get these services where they need to be."

The 4-acre site where the new fire station will be located was purchased by the township in 2012. Funds for purchase of the property, as well as the funds for the design phase and construction, come from the Fire Department's capital improvement fund.

"Because of the financial foresight and expertise of Fire Chief Swinkowski, we are on our way to a new, fully equipped and staffed fire station with no impact on the Fire Department's annual budget and with no need for more taxes," Stathakis said. "There are no loans. There is no borrowing. It's all cash. And it's all because of the leadership of Chief Swinkowski and the good work of our firefighters."

When asked about the need for a fifth fire station in the southeast portion of the township, Swinkowski said the area from 22 Mile Road to Hall Road and M-53 to Hayes Road is actually the busi-



IMAGE COURTESY OF SHELBY TOWNSHIP

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est in Shelby Township in terms of fire and EMS runs.

"It accounts for approximately 42 percent of our overall run volume," he said.

Fire Department officials say that adding a new station will improve response times for residents during an emergency and reduce the stress on other stations currently servicing the southeast portion of the township.

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

day we would need it," he said.

In anticipation of that day, the department also worked 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."

According to Swinkowski, preliminary work at the site has already begun.

"Some trees had to be removed, and they will probably start prepping the site today or tomorrow," Swinkowski said in an email on July 27. "The footings won't go in for another week or two, so it's just ground work for now."

Swinkowski said he hopes the station will be operational by the end of 2016.