

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Waterville Township Trustees' Special Meeting

Held at: 7:00 p.m. at the Anthony Wayne High School Auditorium on April 3, 2019.

OFFICIALS:

Chairman – Brett Warner – present
Vice Chairman - Kyle J. Hertzfeld – present
Trustee – Duke Wheeler – absent
Fiscal Officer - Jennifer Bingham – present
Members of Whitehouse Village Council
Members of the City of Waterville Council
Members of the public

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE:

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. All those present were asked to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLE CALL:

Jennifer Bingham, Fiscal Officer called the Roll for Waterville Township Trustees. **Brett Warner** and **Kyle Hertzfeld** were recorded as present for the meeting.

JOINT MEETING

Mr. Warner made a motion to move into a joint session with the City of Waterville and the Village of Whitehouse to review a feasibility study on a Joint Fire District. **Mr. Hertzfeld** seconded. Motion carried.

Jim Bagdonas, of the City of Waterville, made an introduction to those in attendance and explained the purpose of the meeting. Initially, six local governments were approached about entering into a discussion on the formation of a joint fire district. Those entities included: The City of Waterville, Village of Whitehouse, Waterville Township, Monclova Township, Providence Township and Swanton Township. The entities of the City of Waterville, Village of Whitehouse and Waterville Township agreed to continue discussion and the completion of a feasibility study on the formation of a joint fire district. The Ohio Fire Chiefs Association was engaged to assist in the completion of the feasibility study. **Mr. Bagdonas** explained that a feasibility study is done to determine if a joint fire district is possible. There are many possible variations for forming a joint fire district, but for purposes of discussion, only two scenarios will be shared.

Chief Stan Crosley and **Chief Ted Hecht** from the OFCA were then introduced to provide information from the feasibility. They again reminded those in attendance that the feasibility study should serve as a guidance document. They stated there are several fire districts around the state. Advantages of a joint fire district are: equal tax base for those who benefit from the services, equal representation of each government entity on the joint fire district board, long-term cost savings from shared equipment and resources and the long-term goal of reducing duplication. Joint fire districts are regulated under Ohio Revised Code. Disadvantages of joint fire districts are: perception of lost identity, local of control by local elected officials and increase operating costs.

Many communities consider a joint fire district because they are experience problems with maintaining staffing. In conducting the feasibility study, the OFCA evaluated long-term sustainability of a joint fire district, future service demands, future staffing trends and needs and where can duplication of services be reduced. The feasibility reviewed the following information for each Waterville and Whitehouse Fire Department: Service areas including contractual arrangements, staffing, increase in demand for services between 2013 and 2017 and budgets. Annual budgets for Waterville was reported at \$873,000 and for Whitehouse \$1,600,000 or a combined total of \$2,473,000. Since Whitehouse also has a contractual arrangement to provide EMS services in the Western part of Lucas County, they also met with Lucas County officials. Upon review of this information, they were able to prepare two possible scenarios for a joint fire district including funding needs. Funding can come from property taxes, which is the most common method, payment from each participating entities (can be derived from general fund, levies or income tax), service contracts and EMS billing.

Scenario A

Joint Fire District Administrative Staff:	Chief (FT), Assistant Chief (FT), Fire Inspector (PT) and Administrative Assistant (FT)
Waterville Fire Station	Captain (FT) Firefighter/EMT/Paramedics (FT) and Paid Volunteer Firefighters
Whitehouse Fire Station	Captain (FT), 2 Firefighter/Paramedic (FT), 2 Firefighter/Paramedics (PT) and Paid Volunteer Firefighters
Budget Needed:	\$3,358,421

Scenario B

Joint Fire District Administrative Staff:	Chief (FT), Assistant Chief (FT), Fire Inspector (PT) <u>Shift Commander (FT)</u> and Administrative Assistant (FT)
Waterville Fire Station	Captain (FT) Firefighter/EMT/Paramedics (FT) and Paid Volunteer Firefighters
Whitehouse Fire Station	Captain (FT), 2 Firefighter/Paramedic (FT), 2 Firefighter/Paramedics (PT) and Paid Volunteer Firefighters
Budget Needed:	\$3,686,420

Based on the feasibility study a conservative estimate for funding would be either a 5.5 mil or a 6.5 mils. Funding could be split based on usage by each entity or some other arrangement agreed upon by the entities. The conclusion of OCFA is a joint fire district is feasible. The steps to forming a joint fire district do take time. Steps in the process include each entity adopting resolutions to form a joint fire district, selecting representation from each entity, meeting to set deadlines, appoint staff, determine budget and funding methods, voter approval if levies will be placed to fund, transfer of assets to the joint fire district all before operations begin. **Chief Crosley** stated that entities should

review the feasibility and continue discussions. He reminded those in attendance that the goal is to continue to provide quality services, that are cost effective and provide long-term stability

Elected officials and Members of the audience were then permitted to ask questions regarding the feasibility study: Questions asked and answered are summarized below:

Can you provide examples of successful fire districts and what made them successful?

One example is South Side Dayton, which took 10-12 years to implement (he noted OFCA was not involved). The joint district combined for station, reduced expenses related to equipment and the funding was split based on call volume.

Can you provide examples of unsuccessful fire districts and what made them unsuccessful?

One example of an attempted fire district that fell apart due to lack of funds and momentum to move forward.

How long does the process take and what has been the reception of forming a joint fire district from the voters?

There is no definitive timeline for implementing a joint fire district. He recommended that a plan with the staffing model be chosen before presenting to the voters. He felt this could take anywhere between two and four years. Reception by the voters is an unknown as it varies by each community.

How does a joint fire district affect mutual aid agreements?

There would be no impact on mutual aid agreements, as they exist depending on the call and need (i.e. multiple calls that one department cannot handle)

Can one entity choose to fund from its general fund, or income tax funds and another entity fund from a levy?

Yes, each entity chose how to fund its portion of the budget. Any millage is collected district wide and each entity would need to contribute that amount

What is the oversight of a joint fire district?

Each participating entity would have a representative on the joint fire district board

Is legal counsel needed?

The Ohio Revised Code states that the county prosecutor can serve as legal counsel if needed.

If EMS services are the primary driver of demand, why not just form an EMS district?

Yes, you can form just an EMS district under Ohio Revised Code

So only 1 mil would be needed to form the joint fire district?

No millage is currently in place with the exception of Waterville Township. The proposal reflects an estimated need of 5.5 to 6.5 mils.

Slides showed the number of missed calls for Waterville, but not Whitehouse, what number of calls were missed in Whitehouse?

Whitehouse reported there were no missed calls due to staffing.

At what point in meeting to goal of staffing will volunteer fire fighters no longer meet the need.
That is dependent on each community and cannot be predicted.

Mr. Bagdonas, stated that at this point each entity should discuss whether or not to explore a joint fire district further and arrive at their decisions. He recommended another joint meeting be held at the end of April. **Mr. Bagdonas** thanked all of those who attended the meeting

Mr. Hertzfeld made a motion to end the joint meeting. **Mr. Warner** seconded. Motion carried.

There being no further business to be brought before this Board **Mr. Hertzfeld** made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by **Mr. Warner**. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Attest: /s/ Jennifer Bingham

Trustees: Brett Warner
Kyle Hertzfeld
Duke Wheeler