

Special Meeting
UNION TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
August 27, 2018

Present: Charlie Prince, Trustee Randy Weekly, Trustee
John Slater, Trustee Paula Greene, Administrator

Guests Hebron Fire Chief Cliff Mason, Granville Twp. Fire Chief Casey Curtis, Karen Boyd, Amy Treciak, William Treciak, Julie Hall, Phil Biggs, Michael Bishop, Charles Bickley, Bryce McKinney and Dan Cross

The Union Township Trustees met in special session at 6:30 pm on August 27, 2018, at the Union Township Complex. Roll call showed the following trustees present: Trustee Charles Prince, Trustee John Slater, and Trustee Randy Weekly. Paula Greene was present to take minutes. Mr. Prince led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The purpose tonight's special meeting is to give the Hebron Fire Chief an opportunity to speak on the fire contract renewal and forming a fire district.

Chief Mason began by reviewing levy information for Hebron and Union Township, adding he feels there needs to be a greater consideration where there is a greater demand for services. Chief Mason said he lives in the Village of Hebron and pays twice what the residents of the non-incorporated area of the Township for the same services. Chief Mason is unsure how much longer the Village can operate their department on this tax base. Hebron Fire revenue comes from Village and Township levy revenue and EMS billing.

Chief Mason referred to the 1998 Union Township Comprehensive plan during his research. The Plan takes into consideration the location of Fire and EMS and for new industry and he believes the founders of the Newark Industrial Park considered the Fire Department's location when deciding to develop the Park.

Chief Mason gave the history of Hebron Fire Department was a volunteer Fire Department until the early 1980's when the Newark Industrial Park was developed. Then the Department began operating full time, Monday through Friday. The Department began operating twenty-four seven in 1994. According to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan the township contracted with Hebron and Buckeye Lake Fire Departments. Part of the reason for contracting with Buckeye Lake Fire Department was to relieve the pressure to the Hebron Fire Department.

Chief Mason agrees that Granville Twp. Fire Department needs to be compensated for relieving the pressure from Hebron Fire Department by making runs into the township, such as the Buckeye Lake Fire Department did in the 1980's for them. Hebron Fire Department protects Interstate 70, between State Routes 79 and 37.

According to the Ohio Department of Transportation approximately 45,000 vehicles travel through this area a day. With the Newark Industrial Park, MPW and other businesses, Chief Mason figures their department provides coverage to the department protects 7.5 million square feet of manufacturing and commercial businesses in Union Township.

The daytime population in the township increases to 5,000 persons. There are three hotels in the service area. Hebron Fire Department is equip with a refurbished 1990 fire apparatus and first out the engine is a 2001 fire truck.

Chief Mason says additional funds are needed to protect the community and businesses as well as to replace equipment. When Buckeye Lake conformed their boundaries, he learned the north half of Buckeye Lake was in Union Township. Hebron Fire Department has a boat to provide service. The Village of Hebron is the primary response unit to the Northshore of Buckeye Lake.

Chief Mason asked Chief Curtis to correct him if needed on the following calls for service numbers he received from the Licking County Regional Communications Center. Last year Hebron responded to 1104 and Granville responded to 85 runs. Chief Curtis said they answered 97 calls. Chief Curtis agreed they responded to less than 100 runs.

Runs this year to date are 667 runs for Hebron and less than 50 from Granville. Chief Curtis asked for clarification on the Village's run numbers asking if the Hebron Village runs were included. Chief Mason said he looks at the numbers as one.

Chief Mason referred a study in 1996 by Dr. Jim Leonard (Leonard Research and Planning) where he determined the cost per run does not include fixed costs, such as maintaining equipment and the fire station. Chief Mason said when Buckeye Lake conformed their boundaries, Hebron Fire acquired a boat from the City of Newark which needs approximately \$2,000 worth of repairs.

The study also said all residents of Union Township should pay the same for fire/ems services. Chief Mason believes the Village of Hebron and Union Township requested and paid for the study.

Chief Mason referred again to the 1998 Union Township Comprehensive Plan which outlined the need for Fire and Ems services as well as water and sewer. In Doctor Kramer's study, 2006, he recommended a station in the northern area of the township within five years

Chief Mason recommended a three year contract which includes by the end of 2020 a fire district should be considered and placed on the ballot for voters in late 2020 or early 2021.

Mr. Slater asked if this was Mayor McFarland's plan. Chief Mason said there was a discussion earlier this date, with himself, Mayor McFarland and a member of the

Council's Fire Committee which resulted in this plan. Mayor McFarland is concerned a renewal levy in 2020 will not pass.

Mr. Prince explained the process of beginning a Fire District, as parties involved agree to start a fire district. The millage levy, to fund the district is voted on by the residents, however if the levy fails there would not be a fire district.

Chief Mason said Central Ohio Fire District was formed on paper with three townships and two villages who combined their revenue to support the District. Basil Joint Fire District's Fiscal Officer advised Chief Mason that a district could not be formed in the manner of Central Ohio Fire District. A fire district could be formed on paper, but the operating levy would be voted on by the residents before the district could receive any revenue.

Paula asked if the legal advisors for the Village or the Township have been consulted on how to begin the process of forming a fire district. Chief Mason said he has not; he is starting the process by proposing to be add the language to the new fire contract. Mr. Prince said a fire district does not have to include the entire township. Granville Twp. Fire Department could continue to serve a portion of the township not serviced by a fire district.

Jim Layton, Hebron Council arrived at approximately 7:00 pm.

Chief Mason explained the Fire Board would consist of the same number of council members as township trustees, those persons choose the non-elected members from the service area. The district would also hire a fiscal officer.

Mr. Prince wants fire/ems to reach every resident in the township within six minutes which he feels can only happen with a satellite station.

William Treciak said additional funding would help replace the trucks, but wanted to know Chief Mason's thoughts on a satellite station. Chief Mason said he was here to explain his reasons to increase funds for their service. Chief Mason feels funding for a fire district is a separate subject.

Mr. Treciak asked to clarify that Chief Mason does not have plans for an additional fire house. Chief Mason the Village of Hebron is not in the position to add a fire station that is not in the village. Mr. Treciak commented changing the funding is not improving the response time.

Earlier this year, while serving as Council Chair for the Fire Committee Chief Mason met with Brad Cottrell of the Licking County Auditor's Offices where he learned that a 5 mill levy (township-wide) would generate close to the combined 4.8 and 11 millage received today. A 6 mill levy would have generated roughly \$200,000 more and seven mills would generate an additional \$700,000.

According to Chief Mason, Mayor McFarland questioned why should the village pay 11 mills when the township pays 4.8 mills for the same service when a seven mills levy between the township and the village could have revenue of two million. The Hebron Fire Department funds are currently \$1.2 million. Chief Mason said additional funding is needed to operate under the current circumstances.

Mr. Slater asked if the argument could be made that the services are not the same due to the response time. We can all agree the people and the equipment are the same but the response time is not. Chief Mason said he would not argue that the service/response time is different.

Mr. Slater asked if this could be the reasoning for the difference in millage. An audience member said yes and Chief Mason said it could. Mr. Slater said he believes it is. Mr. Slater said we need to be careful with the information as people see it with different prospective. The studies discussed had different viewpoints than what we have now. Mr. Slater said to Chief Mason he is looking at the village and township as one unit, but the studies were made as two separate entities. We should be careful how we look at this information especially when talking about terms of service.

Chief Mason said if the township (including Hebron) goes to six mills that would generate more revenue than we have now. Mr. Slater this goes back to his original point regardless if the millage is the same across the board the service is not the same across the board. Chief Mason said with increased revenue there is a potential to build a satellite station in the township. Mr. Prince wouldn't support Union Township residents paying more unless the plan improves service.

Mrs. Hall asked Chief Mason and Chief Curtis for their service area population, not to include the Villages of Hebron and Granville and if there were any tax abatements in the Newark Industrial Park. Chief Mason does not believe there are any abatements in the Industrial Park and MPW has two.

Chief Curtis asked the amount of revenue Hebron Fire has received from the township in 2017, to date and projected. Chief Mason gave the following information: 2017 - \$672,580.51, to date \$413,792.67 and no estimate for 2019.

Chief Curtis spoke with Brad Cottrell (Licking County Auditor's Office) reporting the estimated revenue from Union Township's contracted area for Hebron's service area in 2019 would be \$883,143. Mr. Prince said he had the same number. January 2019 the Hebron Village taxpayers begin paying the last of all three township fire levies which increases their revenue by approximately \$200,000.

Karen Boyd asked when the tax abatements would end. One abatement should end in a few years while the second is about two years old.

Ms. Boyd feels since the studies in 1994 the tax has substantially increase in the township. She also agrees with Mr. Slater that the service is not the same for the people

outside of the village. Boyd feels trustees should be discussing the contracts and not the satellite station adding-Hebron will be receiving a \$200,000 increase in 2019.

Ms. Boyd then discussed a Fire District Board and Funding adding she feels the community's input will not be taken into consideration until the millage for a fire district is placed on the ballot.

Mr. Prince explained the Licking County Board of Revision found Buckeye Lake Village and Hebron should have been paying on Union Township's levies. Both villages had been voting for trustees. Together the entities learned their villages taxpayers would start paying on Union Township levies when they came up for renewal. Buckeye Lake did not want their residents to pay additional taxes and conformed their boundaries and Hebron chose to stay in the Township.

Mr. Prince thinks it makes sense for Hebron to be part of the township as there is less duplication of services, work cooperatively on some roadwork projects and share equipment. Hebron has the option to leave the township. Mr. Prince reviewed response time in the township.

Phil Biggs, recommends a study to determine the best possible service, noting consideration should be made for the different populations in the township. Mr. Biggs said Chief Mason is concerned the village residents are paying 11 mills and Mr. Prince's concern is a satellite station. It was asked if Hebron would remove one of their levies. Mr. Prince has suggested Hebron remove a levy. Hebron wants a fire district. Mr. Treciak said an updated study must be done to determine where the needs are and to include future industry growth and a tax payer would want the information before voting on a fire district. He doesn't want his service to suffer because there is not a plan.

Chief Curtis asked if Chief Mason had considered the cost to staff and operate a satellite station since Chief Mason said there was a potential for a satellite station if the revenue increased. Chief Curtis feels we need to know these costs now. Chief Mason said he reports to the Village of Hebron and now a satellite station is not an issue for him. Mike Bishop reminded Chief Mason he is accountable to everyone. Chief Mason agreed but was speaking as an appointed fire chief that goes to the Mayor and Council when the department needs something.

Mike Bishop said Hebron does receive added benefits as they appoint the Fire Chief and decide how the money is spent. Mr. Bishop asked if Hebron could conform the boundaries so they would not pay on the township levies. Mr. Prince said at any time a majority of the council could vote to conform the boundaries but believes the government should work together and share heavy equipment, noting we have a mower that is used in the Village and the township receives assistance from the village for some projects.

Mrs. Hall asked Mr. Weekly if the township still owned fire equipment. The township owned equipment was sold to the Village with the last fire contract.


Mr. Bishop recommends the service area boundaries be reviewed as he feels he is closer to Granville's station. He added that Granville arrived first on a chimney fire at his house even though he is in the Hebron service area. Mr. Bishop agreed he did not know if Hebron was on a call at the time, but believed boundaries needed to be reviewed. Mr. Bishop asked when the contracts were to end and what happens if we do not reach an agreement by the end of the contract. The contracts end on December 31, but service will continue with an extension.

Mr. Ginse does not agree with Mr. Prince's plan, which includes sending some Granville service area's revenue to Hebron and ask what would happen to service if the fire departments do not agree to an extension. Mr. Prince again said he has an obligation to all residents and some residents need better service than an eight to ten response time.

Mr. Prince explained his plan for building a satellite station by earmarking \$100,000 per year towards the building and securing a loan. Adding he proposes utilizing part-time employees who would significantly lower the overall employee cost. A discussion was held on the pros and cons of operating a department with part-time ems/fire employees. Chief Mason reviewed his daytime population numbers and the growth over the years. Mr. Prince reminded the audience, the Township Trustees meet on the first and third Monday's of the month at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Slater announced he would not be available for the next scheduled township meeting. A special meeting will be held September 6 at 9:00 am with the following topics: payment of bills, OPWC grant applications for Canal and Beaver Run Roads, closure of the OPWC grant Canyon Road Culvert project, Solid Waste District Resolution and Road & Bridge.

Mr. Slater made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Weekly seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.



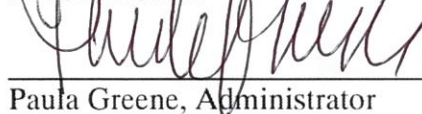
Mr. Charlie Prince



Mr. Randy Weekly



Mr. John Slater



Paula Greene, Administrator