Replace and Decrease Fire Levy

Plain Township currently has the lowest effective fire levy millage in Franklin County, at 6.74 mills. Issue #4 seeks to replace and decrease a 3.0 mill 1990 fire levy to 2.9 mills. This levy is currently collected at 1.06 mills, for a net increase of 1.84 mills on residential property. The rate on commercial property would increase from 0.52 mills to 2.9 mills, a net increase of 2.38 mills.

The Replace and Decrease levy would result in an additional cost to taxpayers of $68.96 per $100,000 of valuation, or $5.75 per month. This levy would produce an estimated $1,177,249 in additional fire levy tax collection. This levy will restore staffing reductions and maintain restored service levels through 2020.

In 2014, Plain Township collected tax receipts of $4,166,302 on the existing fire levies. The last levy increase was approved in 2008. Since 2009, Plain Township’s tax receipts have decreased by 1%. Since 2008, emergency runs increased by 33% from 1,702 to 2,263 in 2014, and the population increased by 28% from 6,873 to a current estimate of 11,071. While service demands have increased and funding has remained flat, Plain Township has used a carryover balance to meet the increased emergency demands of a growing community.

Additional support is needed to maintain staffing levels, maintain service levels, and replace ambulances. On December 16, 2014, the Plain Township Board of Trustees approved cost containment measures for 2015 totaling $455,000 in capital expenses and $347,000 in operating expenses. These represent 8.5% and 6.5%, respectively, of the total 2014 budget. Even with these reductions, Plain Township will face an operating deficit of $433,000 in 2015. Without additional community support, more significant reductions will be required to balance the budget beyond 2015.

Early-Bird Pool Membership Ends April 30

Daily admission rates have increased to $9 for adults and $7 for children. Buy your discounted membership before the early-bird rate expires. Pool membership applications with payment must be received in the township office by April 30 to receive the early bird discount and a free guest card of 10 visits (15 visits for renewing members). The membership form is available on our website at www.plaintownship.org/pool-membership and at the township offices located at 45 Second Street. Those who pay Plain Township property taxes receive a resident membership rate. All others pay the non-resident rate.

Rose Run Cleanup

Plain Township is partnering with the City of New Albany and the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District on a stream cleanup day for Rose Run. This event will focus on clearing Honeysuckle from Rose Run in the village center and removing litter within the area.

The stream cleanup day is Saturday April 25, from 9-12. Reserve a place by contacting Plain Township or New Albany. Registration will begin onsite at 9:00 am. This event will be held rain or shine.

Pool Member Benefits

Pool members receive free admission to movie nights at the pool on June 17 and July 19. Members receive free admission for Float and Fireworks for the 4th of July celebration. Members receive priority registration for swim lessons and swim team is only open to members. We have continued member only hours on Saturdays in June from 11 -12. On member appreciation days, each member may bring a guest free on Tuesdays June 23, July 21 and August 11. Members may also purchase a discounted guest card for 12 visits for only $50, that’s $4 a visit. Not sure if a membership is in your budget this year? Patron guest passes are only $70 for 12 visits. That’s less than $6 a visit. Call our office at 855-7770 to learn about options to get the most pool visits for your family this summer. We want to see you at the pool!
Storm Water Conservation

Backyard conservation can really reduce storm water problems. When rain falls on roadways and rooftops, it can’t soak into the ground as it once did. Instead, it flows down gutters and into storm sewers, picking up pollutants as it goes. Besides affecting the quality of water in streams and rivers, this runoff can cause flooding more quickly.

While you can’t eliminate runoff entirely, you can do your part to protect water quality and minimize the runoff from your property. Here are some suggestions:

• Install rain barrels to catch water from downspouts instead of running it into storm sewers. This water is ideal for watering lawns, gardens, or indoor plants because it isn’t chlorinated.
• Grow a rain garden in a natural depression or dig a spot for one. Plant water-tolerant plants to filter runoff as it soaks into the soil. Be sure the spot will drain within three days to interrupt the mosquito life cycle.
• Terrace steep slopes to slow runoff, allowing more to soak in and reducing erosion.
• Wash your car at a commercial car wash that treats and recycles wash water, or wash it at home over a grassy area or gravel using biodegradable, phosphorus-free soap.
• Clean up pet waste and properly dispose of it in the garbage. It’s a source of bacterial contamination in water runoff.
• Minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers on your lawn and follow label instructions. Careful lawn management can reduce the need for these products.

What is a rain garden?

An attractive landscaped area planted with perennial native plants that don’t mind getting “wet feet.” Built in a bowl shape, a rain garden is designed to increase infiltration allowing rain and snowmelt to seep naturally into the ground.

Rain gardens can recharge groundwater supply, improve water quality, provide habitat for birds and butterflies, and are great looking landscape features.

Planting a rain garden may seem like a small thing, but if you calculate the amount of rain that runs off your property, you might be surprised. Every drop counts! Rain gardens capture rain that usually runs off your property and allows it time to soak into the ground. This helps minimize run-off and helps reduce the amount of non-point source pollution (soil, fertilizers, pesticides, pet wastes, grass clippings, yard debris, etc.) that enters our waterways.

The Geauga SWCD Rain Garden Manual for Homeowners is an excellent publication that can help you design and choose a location for your rain garden. The manual outlines instructions for planning, site preparation, digging, and planting native species.

Pool Bonds Refinanced

Plain Township recently refinanced its pool construction bonds issued in 2004 for the construction of the Plain Township Aquatic Center. The remaining debt of $1.5 Million was refinanced at 2.33%, resulting in savings of $193,000 over the remaining term of the debt. The Township Trustees, fiscal officer, administrator, and staff strive to take advantage of every opportunity to reduce expenses and conserve resources. For example, Plain Township has achieved significant savings on competitively bid electricity, natural gas, and fuel purchases.

Township leadership has worked diligently to identify opportunities to lower our costs at a time when property tax collections have fallen and the state budget has eliminated the local government fund and the tangible personal property tax. The trustees and fiscal officer sought an opportunity to refinance the pool construction bonds and lower the cost of the debt service. A favorable municipal bond market offered substantial savings at this time. We will continue to seek opportunities to conserve township resources and make the best use of taxpayer funds.

Hydrant Flushing

The Plain Township Fire Department will begin spring hydrant inspections on April 20. Firefighters will flush and pump out each of the 1000+ hydrants located in New Albany and Plain Township. Residents may notice a slight discoloration in their water during inspections, which run through the end of May. Any questions can be directed to Captain Myers at Plain Township Fire Department, (614) 855-7370.
Fire Department runs have increased at an average rate of 4.8% annually since 2000, while total resident population has increased by 4.7% annually since 2000. Total resident population has risen from 5,926 in the year 2000 to an estimate of 11,071 today. Emergency runs are closely tied to population, and total runs are projected to continue increasing at 4.8% and total nearly 3,000 runs by the year 2020. In order to maintain sufficient staffing to respond to the increasing demand for emergency services, additional funding is required. The proposed replace and decrease levy would fund emergency services through the year 2020 and restore 2014 staffing levels while maintaining service levels.

Community Preparedness

Plain Township is a community of approximately 11,000 residents with a daytime population of approximately 20,000. And we host a number of large community events throughout the year with up to 15,000 additional people. In 2013, Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security completed a Risk Assessment for Franklin County. Of the eighteen threats and hazards identified, the top four are: 1. Tornadoes, 2. Dam Failure, 3. Flooding and 4. Terrorist Incidents. A major event could leave individuals to survive by their own means. Individuals could be without food, water, bathrooms, medications, shelter, medical care, and unable to contact family members.

As a fire department, we prepare ourselves through education and daily trainings to meet the emergency service needs of our community. Our Firefighter/Paramedics are cross-trained in advanced cardiac life support, pediatric life support, CPR, and trauma life support. Further life-saving education and training are acquired to respond to motor vehicle crashes, water and ice rescue, natural disasters, hazardous materials and bomb threats.

Each person in our community can take steps to be better prepared in the event of an emergency. Start a conversation at your home, school, community group or work to review or make a plan. There are online resources such as Ready.gov and the American Red Cross that offer individual and business emergency planning tools. See the list to the right of basic emergency preparedness needs that should be kept on hand. If you have any question please contact the Fire Department at 855-7370.

Fire Extinguishers

Each home should have a working ABC rated fire extinguisher that is fully charged, not more than 15 years old and easily accessible. A 2 ½ pound extinguisher is a good size. **But if you need to use a fire extinguisher, call 911 first.** Even if you think you can put the fire out, call for help first. A 2.5 pound ABC extinguisher will only discharge for 7-9 seconds. Be sure to read the instructions and understand how to activate the extinguisher. Check the pressure gauge regularly and make sure you can easily reach the fire extinguisher.

Emergency Preparedness

Are you prepared to care for your family for 72 hours after a disaster?

Water, food, and clean air are needed if an emergency happens. Each family or individual kit should be customized to meet specific needs such as medications and infant formula. It should also be customized to include important family documents.

Recommended emergency supplies:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Any needed medications
- Battery-powered radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert, and extra batteries for both.
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First Aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Infant formula and diapers, if you have an infant
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Can opener for food

Fire Department Services

The Plain Township Fire Department is committed to serving our community. Plain Township provides emergency medical services, rescue and extraction, fire suppression and water rescue. We are there when you need us the most. We also teach fire safety to students, install car seats, service fire hydrants, provide home safety inspections, provide CPR training and conduct commercial fire inspections. We do more than you know.

The fire department currently holds an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 4 in all hydrant covered areas, which is considered a premium rate by most insurance companies. Staffing levels must be restored to maintain that rating, which depends on response capacity and available staff.
Plain Township Office
45 Second Street
P.O. Box 273
New Albany, Ohio 43054

Hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Phone: (614) 855-2085
Fax: (614) 855-2087

www.plaintownship.org

To receive news and updates by email, please send a request to:
e-news@plaintownship.org

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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**PLAIN TOWNSHIP FIRE LEVY ISSUE #4**

**Replace and Decrease 3.0 Mill Levy to 2.9 Mills**

Effective rate of 3.0 Mill 1990 levy is currently 1.06 Mills on Residential property. Replacement Levy would collect an additional 1.84 Mills on Residential property.

**Replacement Levy would generate an additional estimated $1,177,249**

Since 2008, emergency runs are up by 33% (561 more runs)
Since 2008, resident population is up 28% (2,398 more residents)

**Additional Taxpayer cost on Replace and Decrease Fire Levy**

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**Current Taxpayer cost on existing Fire Levies**

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