

Why a Tax and Why Now?

It is the Township's responsibility to provide fire and emergency medical services within their perspective townships. Volunteer fire companies (thankfully) have many fund raisers throughout the year to help assist with costs. Without their fund-raising efforts it would be hard to imagine how much it would cost the taxpayers to have coverage. We are very appreciative to all that they do in attempting to raise money.

It has become more and more difficult for organizations to successfully raise money. The economy has certainly played a large part in the difficulties. Volunteer fire companies statewide are turning to their townships and asking for additional help. This is a huge statewide problem with no easy answers. It is not isolated to our immediate area.

There really is no easy answer. Many townships have and many are currently working on implementing a fire tax to share the burden of the expense of the fire company. Some that are not implementing a dedicated fire tax are simply pulling funds from their general fund to assist their fire company.

Wayne Township has one of the lowest (if not the lowest) local real estate tax in the state. One mil has been Wayne Townships local real estate tax for many years. Adjustments were never made for inflation and the product price has increased in the last 25 years. Imagine trying to run your household now based off the income you had 25 years ago. It simply does not work. The cost of goods has risen drastically. The townships income from local real estate tax has not risen. We are left at a large disadvantage due to this. This leaves us in the position that there simply is not enough income for the township to supplement the fire and emergency medical services that we are required to have.

We deliberated for several months and reviewed all financial statements from the fire company to come up with the best solution. A dedicated fire tax is really the only good answer. We could have just raised the local real estate tax to accomplish the same thing, but we felt it would be more transparent to instill a dedicated tax to the help fund the fire company.

Should we do nothing, and the Wayne Newton fire company cease to exist the cost to the taxpayers would be astronomical. We would have to contract out services to either McVeytown or Mount Union and be at their mercy as to what it would cost the taxpayers. Response times would increase. Many residents' homeowners' insurance would increase significantly due to the distance from the fire company. We feel doing nothing is not an option. It would be negligent on our part.