



**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**  
**Tracy Winkler**  
**Future of Police and Fire/EMS Services**

The Green Township Trustees have long held the belief that the key factor in maintaining high standards lies in the Township's ability to provide quality Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in a cost effective manner. Your Trustees strive to provide the same level of services as compared to those enjoyed in neighboring communities at a lower cost. Over the years, the Trustees have aggressively sought alternative revenue sources, held down expenses and delayed placing levies on the ballot to ensure our residents get the most for their investment in our community.

Unfortunately, Police and Fire personnel are now stretched too thin to properly respond to Green Township residents. Fire & EMS Chief Doug Witsken reports a 55% increase in fire and emergency medical runs since 1997. Our Police Officers in the Township responded to over 35,000 calls for service in 2007. The Township's ability to keep up with this steady increase in "calls for service" is being strained by staffing levels that have remained virtually unchanged for almost a decade. Police Chief Bart West notes that the Township operates the same number of police patrolling districts (beats) as it did 25 years ago. Green Township has the lowest (worst) police officer to population ratio of any Police Department in Hamilton County. The continued growth in calls for service, the deterioration of surrounding communities and the gradual increase in population necessitates more Township Police Officers.

On August 3, 2008, the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER published an extensive study of fire departments in Southwestern Ohio. Unfortunately, that study showed that the response times to fires in Green Township does not meet the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) standards. Due to the lower number of Fire/EMS staff, Green Township fire run response times are some of the longest of any professional fire department in Hamilton County (25<sup>th</sup> out of 28 departments). We are gravely concerned about this because it represents a very real threat to our citizens. Since a house fire will double in size every 60 seconds, our firefighters must arrive on the scene within 6 minutes after dispatch in order to effectively fight a fire. Currently this does not occur in 25% of our fire runs.

While the ENQUIRER study did not examine EMS runs, our Fire Chief is also very concerned about the Township's ability to respond quickly to emergency medical calls. When a person stops breathing or their heart stops beating, they must receive emergency medical care within 5 minutes or less to prevent permanent brain damage. Our Firefighter/Paramedics are well trained, but the increasing volume of calls and the lack of a second crew at half of our fire stations has reduced the ability of our Firefighter/Paramedics to quickly reach our residents. Our ability to respond quickly to emergencies will continue to decline unless we add additional safety services personnel.

With our current budget, it would be irresponsible to increase minimum staffing levels without a new source of revenue that would allow us to maintain the additional personnel. Over the past four years, we have cut budgets wherever possible and squeezed out new revenue through increased EMS fees and grants. Now the State of Ohio is threatening possible changes to laws that affect estate tax revenues, the Local Government Fund, and Cable Franchise Fees, which account for over 50% of Green Township's General Fund Revenues. In addition, the Hamilton County Commissioners are pressuring Green Township officials to pay more for the Sheriff's Deputies who assist in patrolling our Township.

A 2008 comparison of the eight largest townships in Southwestern Ohio shows that Green Township has the lowest per capita spending and the lowest residential effective millage tax rate.

A 1.9 mill Safety Services Levy will be on the ballot in November. If this is approved by the voters, we will add Police and Fire/EMS personnel at a sustainable level over the next five years. This 1.9 mill Safety Service Levy will cost a homeowner \$56.19 per \$100,000 of market valuation. **Even with this Safety Service Levy, Green Township residents will still have the lowest property tax rates of the eight largest townships in Southwestern Ohio.** Now is the time for you to decide the future of Green Township's Fire, EMS and Police services.

Thanks for your support of our Firefighter/Paramedics and our Police Officers.

Sincerely,

Tracy Winkler, Chairman  
Green Township Board of Trustees