

Administration
(513) 722-3400

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Police
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Fire / E.M.S.
(513) 722-3500

October 3, 2023

To: Ohio House Finance Committee

Ref: House Bill 244

Good morning, Chair Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the Finance Committee. I am Lisa Allen, member of the Board of Trustees for Goshen Township. I am here to testify in support of House Bill 244. On July 6, 2022, our Fire Department Headquarters, Station 18, was struck by an EF2 tornado. You have heard the devastation that our township incurred and the details of what it will take to get us back to the excellent service our Fire Department has provided.

I am thankful there was no loss of life on the day of the tornado. Our staff took a direct hit and after ensuring that their families, brothers, and sisters in the township were safe, their priority quickly became our residents. The outpouring of support our township received has been overwhelming but there is still much to do.

Before becoming a trustee, I was elected as the Fiscal Officer at a time when we were nearly in Fiscal Watch. I worked closely with the Board of Trustees and Department Heads to manage our budget in a way to build our reserves. Prior to that, it was necessary to request advancements on revenue just to pay the bills and make payroll in the first quarter of each year. Today, we are financially solvent but still do not have surplus funds. Without the passage of House Bill 244, our fire department's financial security is jeopardized. Along with the many out of pocket tornado related expenses we have incurred, a few months ago we experienced yet another hardship to our fire department. An undocumented, uninsured motorist, ran a red light and totaled one of our ambulances injuring two of our paramedics. Our insurance premiums have increased as a result of the tornado and crash.

We are fortunate to have a professional fire department that receives frequent positive feedback from citizens who have had their day of need. They have earned countless accolades including the Medal of Valor for two of our firefighters in 2021 and our EMS was recently recognized as the Ohio EMS agency of the year for 2023. Our fire chief pursues as many grants as possible to assist us in meeting the needs of their department. We are proud of where we are and have worked hard to get here, but we also know we will be set back if we do not have your support on this important bill.

Thank you to Representative Schmidt and Senator Johnson for supporting House Bill 244. Thank you to all of you for giving me the opportunity to speak today to ask for your support to keep our firefighters, EMS, and residents of Goshen Township safe.

Sincerely,

Lisa Allen, Goshen Township Trustee