

Honorable Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee

My name is Dan Hodges, Goshen Township Trustee Chairman representing my counterparts Trustee Lisa Allen, Trustee Bob Hausermann, and Fiscal Officer Laura Engled.

Imagine your hour of need---

My hour of need came on February 8th, 2009 at 5AM. I needed first responders to transport my dad to the hospital. My dad had suffered a brain stem bleed and needed immediate medical attention. My wife called 911 and I heard the sirens coming.

My father was immediately rushed to the hospital with the greatest care. A few hours and several doctors later, we would come to realize that the bleed was too big, and I lost my dad. I was so grateful to our Fire and EMS that I ran for trustee to support them more than the previous administration had. That day, it did not matter if the people coming through the door were Republican or Democrat, all that mattered to me was they could help my family.

On July 6th, 2022, after an EF2 tornado hit our town and Fire Station 18, Goshen Township met its hour of need. Our first responders ran to the streets to help, climbing over fallen trees, wading through water, working in the pouring rain, searching house after house for anyone hurt or needing attention all while having just lost their firehouse.

Through the mercy of God, we suffered no deaths and only minor injuries. As the first responders diligently searched homes, cars, and garages to aid those in need, they were not concerned with the personal beliefs or affiliations of our residents. Their sole purpose was to assist anyone in need.

The first responders of Goshen Township have worked and lived in a temporary trailer and garage for approaching two years and yet, we were still awarded the EMS star of Life Award presented by the Ohio Dept of Transportation for the EMS agency of the year 2023. This award is a tribute to those individuals and organizations that go beyond their basic duties and responsibilities and who represent the finest traditions in their profession.

Now to the reason why we are here---We have a financial shortfall to rebuild our firehouse. We simply cannot ask for more taxes from our residents who saw a nearly 40% increase in property taxes in 2023, as ordered by the Ohio Department of Taxation. As property taxes, interest rates, grocery and utility bills continue to skyrocket, our community is left without our Station 18 firehouse. Goshen Township cannot afford to build a new fire station on our own and with our current budget. We come to you and ask you to support our community, our first responders, and our many mutual aid partners whom we assist with emergencies.

No matter the party, no matter the danger, first responders are the rock in our time of need. We need you to be our rock in our time of need. THANK YOU!

Dan Hodges, Goshen Township Trustee