

February 9, 2026

Ohio Township and Town of Chandler Public Hearing - Fire Territory Proposal

A joint public hearing of Ohio Township and the Town of Chandler regarding the proposed Ohio Township / Town of Chandler Fire Territory was held on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Ohio Township Trustee Office, 3433 Libbert Rd, Newburgh, IN 47630.

Attorney Jeff Bellamy facilitated the hearing and confirmed that a quorum was present for both the Town of Chandler and Ohio Township.

Mr. Bellamy reviewed the statutory fire territory hearing process, the published hearing schedule, and the hearing procedure for the evening, including that questions would be held until the end of the presentations and that public comment would be taken from individuals who signed in. He noted that no vote would be taken at this public hearing.

Mr. Bellamy stated that additional public hearings on the proposed fire territory were scheduled for Monday, March 2, 2026 (an afternoon session and an evening session), and that the final public meeting on the proposal was scheduled for March 16, 2026.

Presentations

Chief Scott Foreman of Ohio Township Fire Department presented information regarding operational readiness, including national trends reflecting decreased volunteer availability and increased emergency call volumes. He discussed industry standards and the importance of having sufficient trained personnel available on-scene in an appropriate timeframe, noting that both departments are not consistently meeting the benchmark of 15 equipped firefighters within nine minutes, 90% of the time. Chief Foreman also reviewed equipment and capital needs discussed in the presentation, including radio replacement, turnout gear needs (including the national standard of two sets of gear per firefighter), and long-term replacement planning for SCBA equipment.

Chief Spencer Wester of the Chandler Volunteer Fire Department provided additional response-time context, including that the department's overall average arrival time was stated as 11 minutes and 23 seconds due to frequent mutual aid responses, while the stated average arrival time within the Chandler town limits was eight minutes and 25 seconds.

Susan Cowen of Baker Tilly presented the financial information, including the proposed fire territory tax rate phase-in and example impacts to taxpayers. Ms. Cowen reviewed the Indiana constitutional property tax caps (1% for homesteads, 2% for agricultural/other qualifying properties, and 3% for commercial/other), and explained that properties already at the caps would not see an increase in their total tax bill, but that revenue distributions among overlapping units would shift. The rate schedule

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presented for the proposed fire territory was described as a phase-in beginning at \$0.2875 per \$100 of assessed value in the first year, then \$0.3150, \$0.3450, \$0.3750, and ultimately \$0.4000, which was stated as the statutory maximum for newly formed fire territories.

Ms. Cowen provided example calculations, including that a homestead with a gross assessed value of \$200,000 within the Chandler/Ohio Township area would have an estimated first-year increase of approximately \$19.25 per month (approximately \$231 per year), while a higher-valued homestead example was shown with a smaller monthly increase due to reaching the tax cap. For Ohio Township, Ms. Cowen stated that the base rate remained below \$2.00 and a \$200,000 homestead example was described as approximately \$13 per month (approximately \$160 per year) in the first year.

Public Comment

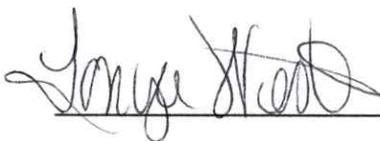
Terry Dayvolt, Oak Grove, stated he lives approximately halfway between the Ohio Township station and the "Lincoln/261" area. He referenced a recent incident at a church where multiple departments responded and asked what level of response a resident should expect when several stations are already committed. Mr. Alt stated he supported the proposed fire territory and preferred taking a proactive approach, stating he did not believe the tax increase outweighed the benefits.

Eric Eifert, a resident on Ferstal Road in Warrick County, stated he supported the proposed fire territory. He described his experiences with faster, larger responses in an urban setting, compared to rural coverage. He described fire service as an "insurance policy" and referenced incidents involving a neighbor's medical emergency and a house fire. Mr. Eric commented on local growth and stated the area is "playing catch up," and expressed interest in having service located closer to his area.

Mike Ewald, Framewood, Deputy Chief with the Evansville Fire Department and a resident in the area, stated he supported the proposed fire territory. He described beginning his career as a volunteer firefighter and contrasted the limited daytime volunteer response with the resources of a career department. He emphasized the importance of adequate staffing and response times for both fire suppression and medical calls, including CPR/defibrillation. Mr. Ewald stated he was willing to pay an additional \$150-\$250 per year for improved fire protection and stated he supported expanding the combined career/volunteer approach currently in use.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Bellamy reminded attendees that no vote would be taken at this public hearing, and encouraged residents to attend one of the March 2, 2026 public hearing sessions or submit questions and written comments to the Ohio Township Trustees and the Town of Chandler prior to the final public meeting scheduled for March 16, 2026. With no further public comment, the public hearing concluded.



Tonya Wester, Council President



Kayla Litton, Clerk-Treasurer

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