



**March 2, 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, March 2, 2026, at 3:00 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 afternoon, 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 explained the distinction between a fire territory and a fire district, emphasizing that a territory is a voluntary agreement between two units that either may exit from year to year, whereas a district is created by county commissioners and is difficult to dissolve.

Mr. Bellamy stated that this was the second of three required public hearings. He noted that the final public hearing was scheduled for later that evening at Chandler Town Hall at 7:00 p.m., and that the final public meeting, at which the two bodies would vote on whether to proceed, was scheduled for March 16, 2026. He also noted that, if the territory is approved, a short public hearing on an equipment replacement fund would be held at that final meeting.

**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 reviewed National Volunteer Fire Council data showing a decline in volunteer firefighters since 1984 alongside a nearly threefold increase in call volume nationally. Chief Foreman discussed industry standards and the importance of having sufficient trained personnel available on scene in an appropriate timeframe, noting that NFPA 1720 requires 15 equipped and trained firefighters within nine minutes, 90% of the time, for urban populations. He reported that Ohio Township's overlapping call rate averages 27% and has been as high as 40%. Chief Foreman reviewed OSHA two-in/two-out requirements and shared a firsthand account of an OSHA investigation following an industrial double-fatality incident at a previous department to illustrate the importance of compliance.

Chief Foreman reviewed current and proposed staffing levels. Ohio Township currently staffs four firefighters and a battalion chief at the Libbert Road station, with zero career staff at the Chandler station. The average response time for Ohio Township in 2025 was five minutes and 19 seconds. The Chandler Volunteer Fire Department's average response time for 2025 was seven minutes and 26 seconds. Chief Foreman noted this was a correction from the 11-minute figure presented at the first hearing due to a calculation error. He reviewed NFPA staffing ratio data, noting that the combined area currently has a ratio of 0.13 career firefighters per 1,000 population compared to the NFPA standard of