FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Fire Special Assessment District (SAD)?

PA33 of 1951 is a state law that allows municipalities to fund fire protections through a Special Assessment District (SAD)

How does Milton Township currently fund their Fire Department?

Milton Township created a Fire SAD in 1978. The ballot language included 1.0 Mill limit. This has been the funding mechanism for operating budgets for the past 48 years.

Why is the Township holding a public hearing?

The public hearing provides residents and property owners an opportunity to:

- Learn about the current and projected costs of providing fire and emergency services
- Review the Township's proposed funding needs
- Ask questions of the Township Board
- Provide comments or concerns regarding the proposed assessment; and
- Place objections or comments on public record.

No member of the public is required to support or oppose the proposal to participate in the hearing.

Why does the Notice of Public Hearing state up to 10 mills?

Up to 10 mills is the language used in PA33 of 1951. Milton Township is looking at .50 to 1 mill increase, therefore, our total millage rate would be 1.5 to 2 mills to meet the community's needs.

How much would an increase cost a property owner?

One mil equals $1 for every $1000 of Taxable Value

Taxable Value	Current 1.0 Mill	1.5 Mills	2.0 Mills
$50,000	$50	$75	$100
$100,000	$100	$150	$200
$150,000	$150	$225	$300
$200,000	$200	$300	$400
$250,000	$250	$375	$500

For example, a property with a Taxable Value of $100,000 currently pays approximately $100 at 1 mill. At 2 mills, the assessment would be approximately $200, an increase of $100 per year.

What are the controls and oversight of adjusting the annual millage rate?

The Annual Meeting of Electors and Budget Hearing held annually in March is an opportunity for residents to participate in the millage determination. Milton Township also holds an annual budget workshop in January to address the upcoming April 1st - March 31st fiscal year.

Why is additional fire funding being considered?

The Township has been evaluating several long-term challenges affecting the delivery of fire and emergency services.

Historically, Milton Township relied heavily on volunteer firefighters. Township records indicate that the department averaged approximately 23 volunteer firefighters in the 1990s compared with approximately 9 today. The Township is also evaluating increased training requirements, equipment and apparatus costs, the operation of two fire stations, future staffing needs, and the ability to provide appropriate emergency response throughout the Township.

Station I was constructed in 1982 and is centrally located within the Township. Station II was constructed in 2002 to provide service to the southern portion of the Township. The Township reviewed the future use of both stations, including available staffing, equipment needs, response coverage, ISO considerations, and potential duplication of equipment.

What steps has the Township taken that has led to this Public Hearing?

Many public meetings were held to discuss future options of the Fire Department. Below is a synopsis of pertinent meetings:

- March 2024 – Fire Advisory Board was formed (see attached report)
    - Conducting a feasibility study
    - ISO review of Station II
    - Understanding Milton Township operation and call volume
    - Contact neighboring Elk Rapids & Torch Lake Townships to understand structure of their departments. and seek level of interest in forming a Fire District.
    - Potential expansion of Station I as primary station
    - Capital Equipment Planning
    - Overall future direction of Milton Township Fire Department
- August 2025 - Initial meeting with Architect to discuss design & costs of potential Station I expansion.
- November 2025 – Meeting with Municipal Advisors to discuss possible bond options
- August 2026 – Legal advice from Township Attorney of funding options.

Why not place this question on the ballot?

The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public input on this topic. Part of the discussions will include the process of how to proceed; entirely by board resolution or by referendum.