

Lee Township
Special Meeting Minutes – Fire District
July 14th, 2025

The Special Meeting of the Lee Township Board was called to order at 7:00 pm at the Lee Township Hall, located at 877 56th Street, Pullman, Michigan.

Members Present: Supervisor Rawson, Clerk Blackburn, Trustee Hatfield, Treasurer Godlew, Trustee Lewis.

Members Absent: None.

Citizens Comment:

Doug Bale:

Doug voiced his concern over the special meeting being held.

Kim Morris:

Kim asked a question about why the township mills in Lee township are higher than other township mills.

Chief Chamberlain and Clerk Blackburn addressed the question by illustrating against Casco as an example. Based on data the clerk received from Casco and their supporting fire departments, Casco collects approximately 3 mills against its fire and first responder taxable value. Lee in FY 25 collected approximately 7.5 mills for both fire and first responder. Lee Township's total taxable value is approximately \$108 million compared to Casco's \$303 million. One mill generates \$1 in property tax for every \$1,000 of taxable value, this is represented with 1/1000. Using 3 mills as a baseline example of what that would generate:

Township: Taxable value x 1/1000 x millage = generated revenue

Casco: 303 million × 1/1,000 × 3 mills = \$909,000

Lee: 108 million × 1/1,000 × 3 mills = \$324,000

Millage rates are percentages of taxable value. Because Lee Township has one of the lowest taxable values in the region, higher millage rates are necessary to generate sufficient funding for essential services. On average, property values in Lee are significantly lower than in Casco. Therefore, a lower millage rate does not necessarily mean lower taxes overall—it must be considered together with the taxable value.

NEW BUSINESS:

Fire District Millage Rate Proposal

Chief Chamberlain laid out a plan to assess 5.5 mills in total for Fire and First Responders, providing a reduction in total Fire/FR millage by 2 mills. The Chief went over the 5 year capital plan including items such as major station maintenance, new or swapped vehicles, safety equipment for our staff and more.

The chief further went over the run and call volume including response times. Lee Fire/FR covers all of Lee and contracts out to assist Cheshire and Valley – including ancillary mutual aid assistance calls when needed. Cheshire and Valley do not have a Fire/FR unit and so rely on neighboring townships to support their residents. Chief

Chamberlain noted that Lee Township's average response time is under five minutes, which compares favorably to Life EMS services that average over 15 minutes.

An outline of the major capital plan was also discussed:

- First Responder grass rig combination project, note this was delayed from last fall due to supply chain issues and so the funds being dispersed for this project have also been delayed. Estimated total cost is \$450,000
- Extrication Tools (Jaws of Life), the current tools are over 20 years old and are degrading in performance. Estimated cost is \$65,000
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (Air packs) 10 packs need replacement and do not meet most up to date standards. Estimated cost is \$120,000
- Station #2 upgrades, the station is in need of a new roof, paint, doors, parking lot surfacing and more. Estimated cost is \$65,000
- Brush Truck upgrade, the proposed plan is to have this vehicle perform two functions and serve as a grass/brush fire truck and run medical calls on the south side of the township. This would involve purchasing a newer preowned piece of equipment and would provide savings in maintenance to the tax payers by reducing the overall pieces of equipment. Estimated cost is \$125,000-175,000
- Station #1 parking lot surfacing needs completed. Estimated cost \$5,000

These items total approximately \$880,000 in capital projects over the next 5 years. The board commended Chief chamberlain on his fiscal responsibility to save for our future needs in the department over the past 10 years in order to avoid expensive debt.

A motion was made by Godlew and seconded by Blackburn to propose a millage equaling 5.5 mills for the Fire District to be passed on to our assessor for a prepared roll to be approved at a future hearing. Motion carried. Roll call - Supervisor Rawson - yes, Clerk Blackburn - yes, Trustee Hatfield, - yes, Treasurer Godlew – yes, Trustee Lewis – abstained.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Rawson and seconded by Hatfield to adjourn the meeting. All voted "Aye." Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.

Minutes submitted by: Kathryn Blackburn, Clerk