



WINSLOW TOWNSHIP
25

FIRE DEPARTMENT

***FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the
State Imposed 2% Tax Cap***

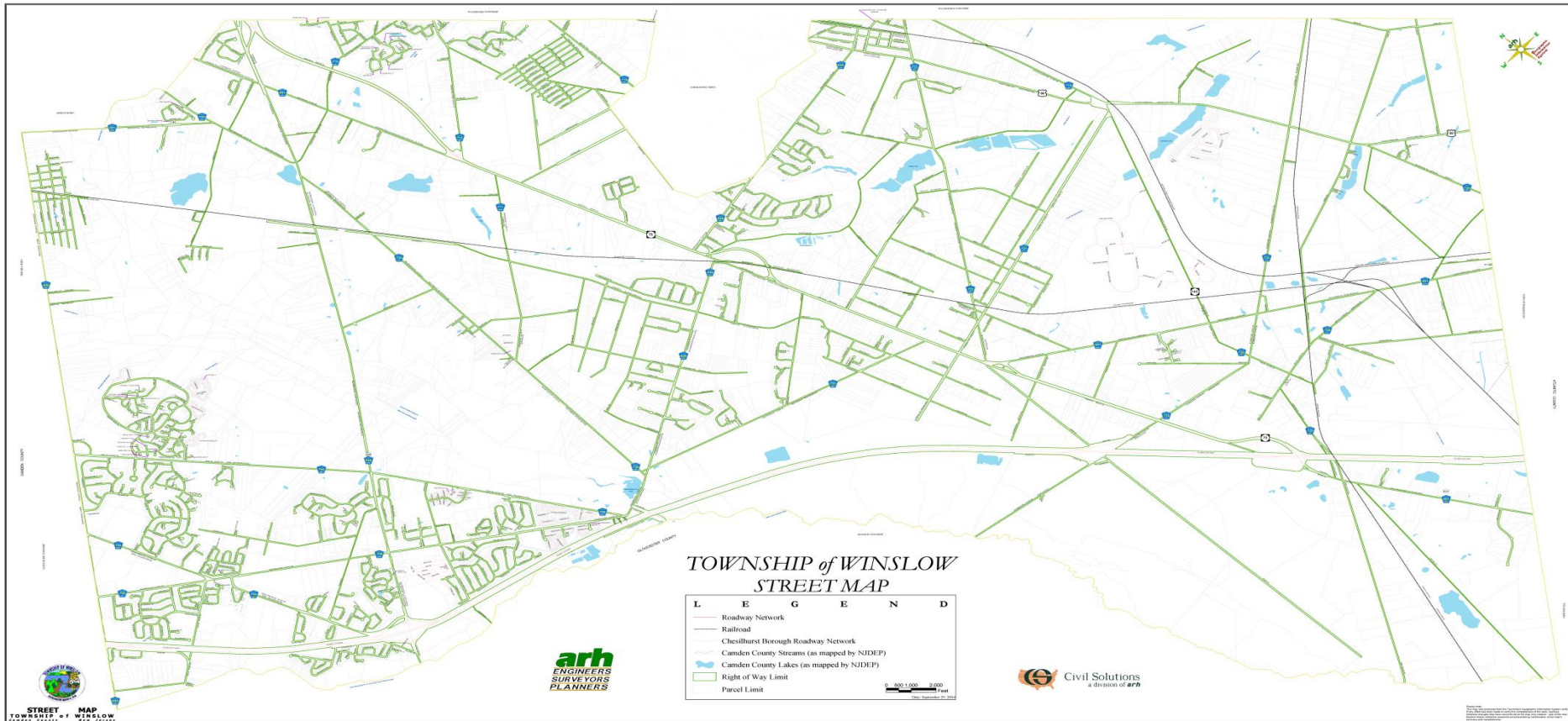


AREAS OF DISCUSSION

- *Explanation of Operating Budget and 2% CAP.*
- *Purpose of the Special Election and why it is in February.*
- *Financial impacts to the Fire District.*
- *Proposed requests.*
- *Growth of Winslow Township.*
- *Increase in call volume.*
- *Financial impact to the community.*
- *Open discussion and questions.*

WHO DO WE SERVE?

- All of Winslow Township and Chesilhurst Borough.
- Approximately 40,000 residents.
- Approximately 60 square miles (including Chesilhurst).
- Approximately 1,850 fire related calls for service per year and increasing.



WHO DO WE SERVE?

Our Mission Statement

The Winslow Township Fire Department is **DEDICATED** to the **PROTECTION** of life and property of the residents of Winslow Township from natural and man-made disasters **BY PROVIDING TIMELY** and **PROPER** mitigation at all emergencies. The men and women of the Department stand united in constant readiness **TO SERVE** with pride, courage and diligence to provide help to those in need.

Organization

The Winslow Township Fire District #1 is a separate organization from the Township of Winslow much like the School Board. We have five elected officials (Fire Commissioners) that broadly have responsibility relating to the prevention and extinguishment of fires and the regulation of fire hazards.

Organization

The Winslow Township Fire District (Department) #1 is a combination Fire Department with Career and Volunteer Firefighters operating currently from five (5) fire stations under a unified command structure.

Organization

Our Winslow Township Fire Department Stations:

Station 25-3 – Headquarters and Cedar Brook Fire Company (Administration and Training functions only at this time).

Station 25-4 – Tansboro Volunteer Fire Company.

Station 25-6 – Albion Volunteer Fire Company.

Station 25-7 – Career Staff 24/7/365 and Sicklerville Volunteer Fire Company (Winslow Township Emergency Medical Service also operates from here).

Station 25-8 – Career Staff Monday through Friday 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM, *Volunteer Duty Crew program Monday through Friday 6:00 PM – 12:00 Midnight and Saturday and Sunday 12:00 Noon – 12:00 Midnight as well as the Waterford Works Volunteer Fire Company (* when staffed).

Station 25-9 – Elm Volunteer Fire Company.

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *The Board of Fire Commissioners of Fire District No. 1, in consultation with the Chief of Department have identified the need to exceed the 2% tax cap for a multitude of reasons and have authorized a special election for same.*
- *This election will be held in February of 2023 during normal State-Wide Fire District elections with a date of Saturday 18Feb23 (this is established per State laws).*
- *In the last few years we have elected to move our elections to November for better exposure to our voters and have a higher turnout. Typically this covers those running for Board seats and capital requests (building, apparatus, etc.).*
- *For this purpose, after confirming many times, this type of referendum requires us to move it to February at the cost of the Fire District.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Why?*
 - *An operating budget is the total annual financial obligations needed to provide the residents of Winslow Township with Fire and Rescue services during an annual cycle. As with all areas these costs have been increasing significantly every year.*
 - *This is not the same as a request for capital referendums (bonds). Capital referendum support apparatus replacement, certain equipment and facility needs.*
 - *To provide relief to taxpayers, in 2010 Governor Christie signed into law requiring municipalities to not increase their operating budget by more than 2% from the previous year.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Why (cont'd)?*
 - *After nearly a decade of living within the 2% cap we are struggling to meet administrative and operational needs. Costs on ALL levels over this time period have sharply increased as well as experiencing the ongoing supply chain issues (more so since the pandemic).*
 - *We have utilized more and more of our restricted fund balance to maintain the required 2% cap threatening that emergency reserve.*
 - *We can only maintain the department size, scope and ability we currently have and deliver appropriate service to our community under these conditions for so long.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Examples:*
 - *Each set of structural turnout gear (coat and pants only) have increased nearly 18% per set with most increases in the last two years. We are advised to expect an 8% to 10% increase on our next order.*
 - *Obligatory costs such as healthcare, workmen's compensation, utilities, insurance, IT, fuel, contractual, L.O.S.A.P. (volunteer incentive program), and other required costs have increased each year.*
 - *Adjustments and significant cuts have been made through the years, but we are at the limit of that ability and still be able to deliver critical infrastructure life safety services.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Examples continued:*
 - *What does 2% mean to the Fire District?*
 - *Roughly \$95,000.00 to \$100,000.00.*
 - *While a significant number, this amount is not able to meet our obligations without utilizing large amounts of our restricted fund balance which may be depleted in just a few years.*
 - *In addition to the obligations discussed we are also talking about covering apparatus/equipment maintenance and repairs, equipment purchases, facility maintenance and repairs (not covered by capital expense), uniforms, stipends (volunteer incentive program) and all the funds that make us able to meet the mission needs to serve you.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What are we seeking?*
 - *We have reviewed various needs and determined many areas that need financial support. The purpose of this Referendum is to go out to the public one time for these items as opposed to doing it more often in a “nickel and dime” manner. We want to do it once.*
 - *We understand this is a heavy lift to ask, especially now.*
 - *However, we have made many budgetary adjustments and cuts, but for us to be successful and viable as one of your critical life safety services and meet your needs, this Referendum is now presented for your consideration.*
 - *We are seeking funding in the amount of \$1,863,378.61 exceeding our current cap limit (exact number required due to Department of Community Affairs/Local Finance Board requirements).*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What will this provide? Among many details key points are:*
 - *Bringing on a second fully staffed resource (Engine 25 located at Waterford Works) by hiring nine (9) firefighters to balance response coverage 24/7/365.*
 - *Ensure proper staffing levels are in place for administrative and operational functions (included in the above hiring).*
 - *Meet necessary financial obligations.*
 - *Training.*
 - *Uniforms and Personal Protective Equipment.*
 - *Increase to vehicle maintenance and fuel.*
 - *Operational Equipment.*
 - *Information Technology.*
 - *Duty Crew preservation/enhancement.*
 - *Continued certification of Winslow Township Mechanics (shared service with the Fire District) on emergency vehicles to save money.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What will this provide?*
 - *The hiring of the nine (9) firefighters will reasonably assure two units responding in this very large community. Balanced deployment of staffed resources to serve **ALL** of Winslow Township. These two (2) staffed resources can also supplement the very busy Winslow Township Emergency Medical Service. We can respond with N.J. State certified Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians to Life Threatening incidents to intervene with basic life support care.*
 - *Develop overall reasonable response times for this large community 24/7 (when two units are on we average eight (8) to nine (9) minutes or less. When only one unit is staffed, we can have twelve (12) to fifteen (15) minute responses dependent on where the incident is or if the staffed unit is committed).*
 - *Preserve our Volunteer Firefighter Duty Crew program and it's stipend base to support additional volunteer coverage and training.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What will this provide?*
 - *Maintain proper replacement cycle of mandated Personal Protective Equipment for all firefighters.*
 - *Continue to meet the needs and growth of training programs.*
 - *Meet the increase financial needs to ensure YOUR Firefighters have proper and safe equipment to operate with.*
 - *Meet the increase financial needs to ensure we can properly maintain our fleet to have safe and reliable equipment to operate with. This will also allow us to extend the operational life of these very expensive fire apparatus. We strive to maintain fire apparatus for twenty (20) or more years as the cost of replacement is significantly high. A fire engine as an example can cost \$650,000.00 or more and we want to ensure the longevity of its use.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Benefits*

- *Fiscal stability and assist with significant rising costs of goods and services.*
- *Meet the needs of Winslow Township's fast growth.*
- *Improved emergency response of fire and rescue operations.*
- *Reduce response times.*
- *Maintain the exceptional level of service the public has come to expect and deserve from of our Volunteer and Career Firefighters.*
- *Meet the needs of the increasing costs related to the annual maintenance and upkeep of our fire stations.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Decision:*
 - *We have not taken the impacts to the community lightly and have had many meetings on this matter. We have taken internal and external information in to formulate this plan.*
 - *We have also looked at the unfortunate decline in Volunteer Firefighters (for a variety of reasons). This is not to diminish the incredible and dedicated Volunteers we have now or their heritage. We have never been lower in these numbers in our history and this is a significant national problem as our Volunteer staffing continues to rapidly decrease. Simply put, there is not enough of them.*
 - *At times we struggle to fully staff responding units, staff our Duty Crew program and have sadly recently shuttered one of our stations due to lack of Volunteer Firefighters. This is also threatening the ability to keep Volunteer Fire Houses operational and opened.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What is the impact:*
 - *This will no doubt have a tax increase impact at a very difficult time. However, we as an agency find ourselves in a challenging time to provide services that you deserve and require.*
 - *We cannot escape the requirement to provide a reasonable level of service in a field where there are measurable laws, standards and practices of which we are held to and liable for. Without proposing needs to you, we would be negligent.*
 - *This Town is growing in both commercial and residential aspects at a rapid pace and will only continue to do so placing more of a demand on our capabilities.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Township Growth:*
 - *There currently are large projects approved and in development in the Albion, Sicklerville, Tansboro and Cedar Brook areas. There are other potential projects identified in the Sicklerville and Winslow Section. This will add hundreds of homes, apartments and thousands of residents to our community.*
 - *Commercial projects will range from multiple small business opportunities to large warehouse facilities.*
 - *Whether anyone is for or against these projects we have a duty bound obligation to provide our service to each and everyone of these. These are what are known. There will be many other projects to follow.*
 - *Our call volume will not decline and we forecast a sharp increase in the next few years. We have seen a steady increase over the last few years.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What is the impact continued:*
 - *Average home valuation in Winslow Township as of information obtained in April 2022 is valued at \$176,500.00 with an annual Fire District tax levy of \$342.45.*

<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>2022 Budgeted</u>	<u>2022 Budgeted Add \$1,863,378.61</u>	<u>Proposed Annual Increase</u>
\$ 150,000.00	\$ 291.04	\$ 394.65	Increase of \$103.61
\$ 176,500.00	\$ 342.45	\$ 464.38	Increase of \$121.93
\$ 200,000.00	\$ 388.05	\$ 526.21	Increase of \$138.16
\$ 250,000.00	\$ 485.06	\$ 657.76	Increase of \$172.70
\$ 300,000.00	\$ 582.07	\$ 789.31	Increase of \$207.24
\$ 350,000.00	\$ 679.08	\$ 920.86	Increase of \$241.78
\$ 400,000.00	\$ 776.10	\$ 1,052.41	Increase of \$276.31
\$ 450,000.00	\$ 873.11	\$ 1,183.96	Increase of \$310.85

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *What are the potential issues of not having this funding:*
 - *May see adjustments in the overall amount of stations we have with consolidations/closures.*
 - *May see reduction of apparatus we have due to the increasing costs to support them and maintain the equipment needed.*
 - *May see various community outreach programs end or be downsized. May see deferred maintenance and equipment replacement resulting in reliability issues.*
 - *May need to function with short staffing for Career and Volunteer staffed units (certainly not desired). This can pose safety issues as well as diminishes operational abilities.*
 - *Continue with longer response times at certain hours.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *Again, we truly realize the impact of what we are asking.*
- *However, the success of this Referendum will allow the Fire District to provide a proper level of service to the growing community so that we have the ability to perform our mission correctly for you and your families.*
- *This Referendum will also continue to provide for the proper equipping, training and operational survivability of our personnel on the incident scenes that often are extremely hazardous.*

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

- *We are engaged in many non-emergency community moments as well such as festivals, fire prevention education, free smoke alarm program, residential smoke alarm inspections, Operation Santa, Holiday tree lighting ceremony parade, National Night Out, Fall Festival/Fire Prevention Day, Winslow Township Day, Juneteenth, various school programs, block parties and station tours to name a few.*
- *Regardless of this referendums outcome, we will **ALWAYS** do our very best to meet the needs of the community.*

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*The Winslow Township Fire
Department is a significant part of the
emergency infrastructure network
and must remain in position for
continued growth of needs to protect
life and property.*

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ELECTION DATE

Saturday, 18Feb23

2:00 PM to 9:00 PM

At

Cedar Brook Fire Company

9 Cedar Brook Road, Sicklerville, N.J. 08081

FY2023 Referendum to Exceed the State Imposed 2% Tax Cap

DISCUSSION and QUESTIONS??????

THANK YOU!