

Versailles and Wayne Township Voters to Consider New Fire and EMS Levies on November 4th

By Cory Griesdorn, Versailles Council Member & EMS Services Committee Chair

On Tuesday, November 4, 2025, residents of both the Village of Versailles and Wayne Township will be asked to vote on two separate levy proposals that directly affect the Fire and EMS services. These levies are critical to sustaining and improving the public safety services that protect the community every day. To help voters make an informed decision and to answer some frequently asked questions, here's what you need to know:

Two Separate Levies, One Common Goal: Public Safety

Voters will see two separate levies on their ballots:

- One for Fire Protection
- One for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

These levies are additional, not replacements of existing ones, due to changes in state law that now prohibit the use of replacement levies in Ohio.

Why Separate Levies for the Village and Wayne Township?

Although the Village of Versailles owns and operates the Fire and EMS Departments, it provides coverage for both the Village and Wayne Township. However, each jurisdiction must vote separately on levy proposals due to legal boundaries. Funds collected by Wayne Township are paid to the Village and used exclusively for Fire and EMS operations.

What Will It Cost?

For Village of Versailles residents:

- Fire Levy: 0.5 mills = \$18/year per \$100,000 of home value
 - Estimated to raise \$49,000 annually
- EMS Levy: 1.2 mills = \$42/year per \$100,000
 - Estimated to raise \$117,830 annually

For Wayne Township residents:

- Fire Levy: 0.5 mills = \$18/year per \$100,000 of home value
 - Estimated to raise \$41,880 annually
- EMS Levy: 1.2 mills = \$42/year per \$100,000
 - Estimated to raise \$100,530 annually

These are continuous levies, meaning they will provide stable, ongoing support and will not require renewal.

Why Are Additional Funds Needed Now?

For Fire Services:

- **Rising Costs:** Equipment, fuel, parts, and vehicle maintenance have all increased dramatically.
- **Regulatory Changes:** State and industry regulations require the replacement of certain equipment based on lifespan, regardless of condition or usage. For example, all fire hoses must be replaced every 10 years, even if they show no signs of wear. Other mandated replacements include firefighter turnout gear, air packs, and masks.
- **Apparatus costs:** A fire engine that cost \$500,000 a decade ago now costs well over \$1 million.

For EMS Services:

- **Staffing demands:** The department now requires full-time EMT's and Paramedics to maintain 24/7 coverage, due to a shortage of part-time availability.
- **Increased personnel:** Since the last levy, two EMS Captains and two full-time staff have been added.
- **Operational costs:** Fuel, medical supplies, equipment service contracts, and benefit packages all add to the department's financial needs.
- **Volunteer phase-out:** All EMS personnel are now paid. Volunteer staffing ended year ago due to high training demands.

My Property Taxes Went Up – Aren't You Getting More Revenue Already?

No, Fire and EMS Levy revenues are frozen at the amount collected when the levy was first approved. Even if your home's value increases, these departments do not receive additional revenue unless a new levy is passed.

What Is the Current Funding/Millage?

Village of Versailles:

- Fire Levy (2022): 2.0 mills = \$158,310
- EMS Levy (2015): 3.5 mills = \$223,520

Wayne Township:

- Fire Levy (2022): 2.0 mills = \$130,330
- EMS Levies (2013 & 2023): Combines 2.75 mills = \$168,950

What Are the Service Territories?

- **Versailles Fire Department:** Serves the Village of Versailles, Wayne Township, 25% of Richland Township, and 25% of York Township.
 - Contracts are in place for Richland & York Townships to pay the Village of Versailles 25% of the total amount of monies collected from their fire mill levies.
- **Versailles EMS:** Serves the Village of Versailles, Wayne Township, and the Village of Russia.
 - Russia pays the Village \$44,000 per year by way of a Levy and General funds.

The Demand is Growing

Versailles Fire Department Dispatches (2024):

- Total: 137
 - 62 in the Village
 - 106 in Wayne Township
 - Additional mutual aid to other areas
 - As of October 1, 2025 – the department is over 125 calls for the year

Versailles EMS Calls for Service:

- 2022: 317
- 2023: 343
- 2024: 388 (286 inside the Village of Versailles, 84 in Wayne Township, and 18 in the Village of Russia)

Why Your YES Vote Matters

These levies directly fund the equipment, personnel, and training required to respond when emergencies strike – whether it's a house fire, medical emergency, or auto accident. Without additional funding, the departments will struggle to maintain service levels and response times. Please note that levy dollars were not used for the construction of the current Fire/EMS Station at 320 Baker Rd. as that was funded by the Village of Versailles General Fund. Levy funds are not used either for maintenance of the facility nor utilities as those are funded by the Village of Versailles General Fund and utility enterprise funds.

The safety and well-being of our families, neighbors, and businesses depend on well-funded and well-staffed Fire and EMS departments. These levies are not about extravagance – they're about meeting growing demands, replacing aging equipment, and ensuring a timely, professional emergency response when it matters most.

Please vote YES on November 4th to support the Fire and EMS levies for the Village of Versailles and Wayne Township. For additional information or questions, contact your local officials or visit the Village of Versailles website and/or Facebook page.