

Channahon considers impact fee requests

By Jeanne Millsap

SPECIAL TO THE HERALD NEWS

CHANNAHON — Village trustees dealt with two requests involving impact fees this week, one for an increase and another for a rebate.

Channahon Fire Chief Dave Riddle asked the board to increase the amount the department receives from the fees, which are collected by the village and distributed among several governmental entities, such as schools, libraries, park districts and the fire department.

The fire department's fees have not increased in the 10 years since the impact fees were established, Riddle told trustees, even as many neighboring towns and villages have increased the amount they give to their fire departments.

Shorewood, for instance, according to Riddle, gives their fire department \$700 in impact fees per new resident. The amount of impact fees the Channahon Fire Department receives is based on the number of bedrooms in the new homes, but averages between \$200 and \$250 per house.

"The demands for service continue to rise," Riddle said after the meeting. "We would like to see an increase to maintain our delivery of services."

Impact fees are designed to pay for services new homeowners use before the local governments receive the homeowners' first property tax installment. Riddle said it's the duty of the Channahon Fire Department to serve residents even months before they pay property taxes that go toward the functioning of the department.

"From the first shovelful of dirt, we're subject to response," he said.

Riddle said the CFPD also serves businesses in the same manner and asked the board to consider implementing an impact fee for new commercial and industrial buildings.

Village trustees could take the matter into consideration for action in a future meeting.

In another matter involving impact fees, the board was split on whether to reimburse on resident on the impact fees he already paid to build a new home on the site of a "tear down."

Impact fees are designed to offset any "impact" the new residents will have on governmental services before property taxes set in, but the owner of the tear-down property told trustees the home will not have any negative impact on the community, as the property generated taxes for years and will continue to generate even more taxes when the larger home is completed there.

It's almost like bonus money the recipients would be getting from the impact fee, owner Matt Rittof told trustees.

A couple of trustees, including Chuck Lyons, said they had no problem waiving the village's portion of the impact fees for the new home, but felt it wasn't their place to waive the fees the schools, library, park district, and fire district would be receiving.

Lending credence to Rittof's logic, Briscoe said the larger amount of property taxes generated by the new, bigger home for years to come would more than make up for the one-time loss of an impact fee.

Voting in favor of waiving the fees were trustees Scott McMillin, Gary Davidson, and Debbie Militello. Voting against were Chuck Lyons, Sam Greco, and Judie Nash.

Village President Joe Cook was not present at Monday's meeting to break the tie, so the matter will be brought up again at the next board meeting.

Trustees are carefully considering the subject as a matter of policy, knowing the issue could come up again in the older sections of town.

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