



Ohio Revised Code

Section 505.375 Fire and ambulance district creation.

Effective: December 19, 2016

Legislation: House Bill 471 - 131st General Assembly

(A)(1)(a) The boards of township trustees of one or more townships and the legislative authorities of one or more municipal corporations, or the legislative authorities of two or more municipal corporations, or the boards of township trustees of two or more townships, may negotiate an agreement to form a fire and ambulance district for the delivery of both fire and ambulance services. The agreement shall be ratified by the adoption of a joint resolution by a majority of the members of each board of township trustees involved and a majority of the members of the legislative authority of each municipal corporation involved. The joint resolution shall specify a date on which the fire and ambulance district shall come into being.

(b) If a joint fire district created under section 505.371 of the Revised Code or a joint ambulance district created under section 505.71 of the Revised Code is dissolved to facilitate the creation of a fire and ambulance district under division (A)(1)(a) of this section, the townships and municipal corporations forming the fire and ambulance district may transfer to the fire and ambulance district any of the funds on hand, moneys and taxes in the process of collection, credits, and real and personal property apportioned to them under division (D) of section 505.371 of the Revised Code or section 505.71 of the Revised Code, as applicable, for use by the fire and ambulance district in accordance with this section.

(2)(a) The board of trustees of a joint ambulance district created under section 505.71 of the Revised Code and the board of fire district trustees of a joint fire district created under section 505.371 of the Revised Code may negotiate to combine their two joint districts into a single fire and ambulance district for the delivery of both fire and ambulance services, if the geographic area covered by the combining joint districts is exactly the same. Both boards shall adopt a joint resolution ratifying the agreement and setting a date on which the fire and ambulance district shall come into being.

(b) On that date, the joint fire district and the joint ambulance district shall cease to exist, and the power of each to levy a tax upon taxable property shall terminate, except that any levy of a tax for the payment of indebtedness within the territory of the joint fire or joint ambulance district as it was



composed at the time the indebtedness was incurred shall continue to be collected by the successor fire and ambulance district if the indebtedness remains unpaid. All funds and other property of the joint districts shall become the property of the fire and ambulance district, unless otherwise provided in the negotiated agreement. The agreement shall provide for the settlement of all debts and obligations of the joint districts.

(B)(1) The governing body of a fire and ambulance district created under division (A)(1) or (2) of this section shall be a board of trustees, appointed as provided in the agreement creating the district. Members of the board may be compensated at a rate not to exceed thirty dollars per meeting for not more than fifteen meetings per year, and may be reimbursed for all necessary expenses incurred, as provided in the agreement creating the district.

(2) The board shall employ a clerk and other employees as it considers best, including a fire chief or fire prevention officers, and shall fix their compensation. Neither this section nor any other section of the Revised Code requires, or shall be construed to require, that the fire chief of a fire and ambulance district be a resident of the district.

Before entering upon the duties of office, the clerk shall execute a bond, in the amount and with surety to be approved by the board, payable to the state, conditioned for the faithful performance of all of the clerk's official duties. The clerk shall deposit the bond with the presiding officer of the board, who shall file a copy of it, certified by the presiding officer, with the county auditor of the county containing the most territory in the district.

The board also shall provide for the appointment of a fiscal officer for the district and may enter into agreements with volunteer fire companies for the use and operation of fire-fighting equipment. Volunteer firefighters acting under such an agreement are subject to the requirements for volunteer firefighters set forth in division (A) of section 505.38 of the Revised Code.

(3) Employees of the district shall not be removed from office except as provided by sections 733.35 to 733.39 of the Revised Code, except that, to initiate removal proceedings, the board shall designate a private citizen or, if the employee is employed as a firefighter, the board may designate the fire chief, to investigate, conduct the proceedings, and prepare the necessary charges in conformity with those sections, and except that the board shall perform the functions and duties specified for the



municipal legislative authority under those sections. The board may pay reasonable compensation to any private citizen hired for services rendered in the matter.

(4) No person shall be appointed as a permanent full-time paid member of the district whose duties include fire fighting, or be appointed as a volunteer firefighter, unless that person has received a certificate issued under former section 3303.07 or section 4765.55 of the Revised Code evidencing satisfactory completion of a firefighter training program. The board may send its officers and firefighters to schools of instruction designed to promote the efficiency of firefighters and, if authorized in advance, may pay their necessary expenses from the funds used for the maintenance and operation of the district.

The board may choose, by adoption of an appropriate resolution, to have the state board of emergency medical, fire, and transportation services license any emergency medical service organization it operates. If the board adopts such a resolution, Chapter 4766. of the Revised Code, except for sections 4766.06 and 4766.99 of the Revised Code, applies to the organization. All rules adopted under the applicable sections of that chapter also apply to the organization. The board may remove, by resolution, its emergency medical service organization from the jurisdiction of the state board of emergency medical, fire, and transportation services.

(C) The board of trustees of a fire and ambulance district created under division (A)(1) or (2) of this section may exercise the following powers:

(1) Purchase or otherwise provide any fire apparatus, mechanical resuscitators, or other fire or ambulance equipment, appliances, or materials; fire hydrants; and water supply for firefighting purposes that seems advisable to the board;

(2) Provide for the care and maintenance of equipment and, for that purpose, purchase, lease, lease with an option to purchase, or construct and maintain necessary buildings;

(3) Establish and maintain lines of fire-alarm communications within the limits of the district;

(4) Appropriate land for a fire station or medical emergency unit needed in order to respond in reasonable time to a fire or medical emergency, in accordance with Chapter 163. of the Revised



Code;

(5) Purchase, appropriate, or accept a deed or gift of land to enlarge or improve a fire station or medical emergency unit;

(6) Purchase, lease, lease with an option to purchase, maintain, and use all materials, equipment, vehicles, buildings, and land necessary to perform its duties;

(7) Contract for a period not to exceed three years with one or more townships, municipal corporations, counties, joint fire districts, joint ambulance districts, governmental agencies, nonprofit corporations, or private ambulance owners located either within or outside the state, to furnish or receive ambulance services or emergency medical services within the several territories of the contracting parties, if the contract is first authorized by all boards of trustees and legislative authorities concerned;

(8) Establish reasonable charges for the use of ambulance or emergency medical services under the same conditions under which a board of fire district trustees may establish those charges under section 505.371 of the Revised Code;

(9) Establish all necessary rules to guard against the occurrence of fires and to protect property and lives against damage and accidents;

(10) Adopt a standard code pertaining to fire, fire hazards, and fire prevention prepared and promulgated by the state or by a public or private organization that publishes a model or standard code;

(11) Provide for charges for false alarms at commercial establishments in the same manner as joint fire districts are authorized to do under section 505.391 of the Revised Code;

(12) Issue bonds and other evidences of indebtedness, subject to Chapter 133. of the Revised Code, but only after approval by a vote of the electors of the district as provided by section 133.18 of the Revised Code;



(13) To provide the services and equipment it considers necessary, levy a sufficient tax, subject to Chapter 5705. of the Revised Code, on all the taxable property in the district.

(D) Any municipal corporation or township may join an existing fire and ambulance district, whether created under division (A)(1) or (2) of this section, by its legislative authority's adoption of a resolution requesting the membership and upon approval of the board of trustees of the district. Any municipal corporation or township may withdraw from a district, whether created under division (A)(1) or (2) of this section, by its legislative authority's adoption of a resolution ordering withdrawal. Upon its withdrawal, the municipal corporation or township ceases to be a part of the district, and the district's power to levy a tax on taxable property in the withdrawing township or municipal corporation terminates, except that the district shall continue to levy and collect taxes for the payment of indebtedness within the territory of the district as it was composed at the time the indebtedness was incurred.

Upon the withdrawal of any township or municipal corporation from a district, the county auditor of the county containing the most territory in the district shall ascertain, apportion, and order a division of the funds on hand, including funds in the ambulance and emergency medical services fund, moneys and taxes in the process of collection, except for taxes levied for the payment of indebtedness, credits, and real and personal property on the basis of the valuation of the respective tax duplicates of the withdrawing municipal corporation or township and the remaining territory of the district.

(E) As used in this section:

(1) "Governmental agency" includes all departments, boards, offices, commissions, agencies, colleges, universities, institutions, and other instrumentalities of this or another state.

(2) "Emergency medical service organization" has the same meaning as in section 4766.01 of the Revised Code.