

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE
Room 1058, IGCN – 100 North Senate
Indianapolis, IN 46204

IN THE MATTER OF THE REQUEST)
OF SUGAR CREEK TOWNSHIP,) **A23-033**
HANCOCK COUNTY, FOR AN EXCESS)
LEVY DUE TO THREE-YEAR GROWTH)

The Department of Local Government Finance (“Department”) has reviewed an appeal by Sugar Creek Township, Hancock County (“Township”) for an excess levy in the amount of \$265,000 to its fire maximum levy due to three-year growth. Ind. Code § 6-1.1-18.5-13 allows the Department to grant permission to a civil taxing unit to increase its maximum levy if the Department finds that the quotient determined under Step Six of the following formula is equal to or greater than one and two-hundredths (1.02):

Step 1: Determine the three calendar years that most immediately precede the ensuing calendar year:
2023, 2022, and 2021

Step 2: Compute separately, for each of the calendar years determined in Step 1, the quotient (rounded to the nearest ten-thousandth (0.0001)) of the sum of the civil taxing unit's total assessed value of all taxable property divided by the sum determined under this Step for the calendar year immediately preceding the particular calendar year.:

Township assessed values for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively:

<i>2020:</i>	<i>734,540,312</i>
<i>2021:</i>	<i>763,696,396</i>
<i>2022:</i>	<i>811,907,113</i>
<i>2023:</i>	<i>986,605,041</i>

Step 2 quotients:

<i>2021/2020:</i>	<i>1.0397</i>
<i>2022/2021:</i>	<i>1.0631</i>
<i>2023/2022:</i>	<i>1.2152</i>

Step 3: Sum the results of Step 2 and divide by three:

1.1060 ([1.0397+1.0631+1.2152]/3)

Step 4: Compute separately, for each of the calendar years determined in Step 1, the quotient (rounded to the nearest ten-thousandth (0.0001)) of the sum of the total assessed value of all taxable property in all counties divided by the sum determined under this Step for the calendar year immediately preceding the particular calendar year.

Statewide average quotients for 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively:

1.0392; 1.0541; 1.1481

Step 5: Add the Step 4 results and divide by three:

1.0804 ([1.0392; 1.0541; 1.1481]/3)

Step 6: Divide the Step 3 results by the Step 5 results:
1.0236 (1.1060/1.0804)

The maximum amount that the Department may award is the amount by which Step 3 exceeds the maximum levy growth quotient (“MLGQ”) as calculated according to Ind. Code § 6-1.1-18.5-2 (this amount is 1.04 or 4% for 2024; since 1.0236 is greater than 1.020, the Township is eligible for a three-year growth appeal):
0.0660 (06.60%) (1.1060-1.0400)

The Township’s 2023 maximum fire levy is \$3,954,379. This is the most recent fire maximum levy that the Department can use as the basis for an adjustment. Multiplying this figure by the 6.60% growth factor calculated above results in a figure of \$260,977, which is the maximum for which the Township could qualify under the statutory formula. Under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-18.5-12(a), the Township must also show that it is unable to perform its government functions without this increase.

The Township states in its appeal that the excess levy is needed because of “an increase in services needed from the fast development of residential housing” and “the standard levy adjustment is not keeping pace with the Township’s needs.” The Township claims that the fire department’s resources are constrained “with the addition of more than 10 new neighborhoods in the last few years,” thus there is “an increased need for additional public safety employees as well as expenses and capital items and capital items that co-inside[sic] with operating a fire department.”

The Department made an inquiry about the use of the excess levy, specifically the expected cost for an additional firefighter and the amount of runs done by the fire department. The Township responded that the cost for a single firefighter’s salary and benefits would be \$100,000. The Township also stated that no additional hirings are expected in 2024, but having to hire staff will have to happen in the future as build-outs continue in the Township.

The Township also provided a count of total service runs by the fire department from 2003 through 2022. This listing represents the Township fire department had 892 total runs in 2003, compared to 2,412 in 2022. The count of service runs since 2018 are as follows:

2018	1,635
2019	1,763
2020	1,738
2021	2,087
2022	2,412

The Township’s Form 3 states an excess levy amount of \$300,000 in the Township Fire and EMS Fund. The Township has not previously submitted an excess levy appeal. The Township received an adjustment, of approximately \$743,619, to its fire maximum levy under Ind. Code § 6-1.1-18-28 for pay-2024.

After a review of the petition, the Department, following Ind. Code § 6-1.1-18.5-12 and 13, and in consideration of all evidence provided, finds as follows:

APPROVED WITH MODIFICATION:

The Township's excess levy appeal is approved in the amount of **\$260,977**. This figure reflects the amount for which the Township qualifies under the statutory three-year growth formula and does not exceed the amount for which the Township advertised and petitioned the Department. This is a one-time, permanent increase.

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL of this Department on this 6 day of
December, 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Shackle', written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Shackle, Commissioner