

## IL/PV fire district merger passes

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### Content

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Lancaster County Council unanimously approved the merging of the Indian Land and Pleasant Valley fire districts after a public hearing at the Aug. 14 council meeting.

The formerly separate districts will now operate as the Indian and Fire Department.

No one spoke at the public hearing, although multiple fire department employees came to hear council's decision.

Council passed the first reading of the merger June 26 and second reading July 17.

In October 2022, council received requests from both district fee boards to merge.

County Council voted to merge the two departments for several reasons, such as attracting new firefighters (paid and volunteer), retaining existing firefighters, improve training, stabilizing service calls and fire station capacity, improve responsiveness and fire service to taxpayers, residents and businesses, and spread fire costs throughout the county more efficiently.

The fire district is now an administrative division of the county, and the assets of both districts will be transferred to the county. The newly passed ordinance still enables fire protection services within the designated areas.

County Administrator Dennis Marstall confirmed that the county will pay off the remaining \$1 million debt from Pleasant Valley Fire Department. Council will later determine whether Pleasant Valley will continue to pay council back, and whether the payments will be redirected or waived, after implementation.

The merger will officially take place in September.

## **Advisory board**

Council will now vote on five people to fill an advisory board for the fire district through 2025 to help it get established. Councilmen Terry Graham, Jose Luis and Brian Carnes will generate personnel nominations for the fire district board for the council to vote on.

Two members will be from the Pleasant Valley district and three will be from the Indian Land district. The two fire chiefs will also sit on the board.

Standard protocol is for council to look through applications and vote in public session, but the ordinance was amended to allow the three Panhandle council members to encourage and nominate applicants in the two areas, before council's vote. That amendment was brought forward by Luis and unanimously passed.

The initial meeting of the Indian Land Fire Advisory Board will be at 7 p.m. Sept. 19 at Fire Station 10, 285 Six Mile Creek Road, Indian Land. If you have questions regarding this meeting, contact Chief Greg Nicholson at [gnicholson@lancastersc.net](mailto:gnicholson@lancastersc.net) or Deputy Chief Christopher Miller at [cmiller@lancastersc.net](mailto:cmiller@lancastersc.net).