MIAMI TWP. — Miami Township has a new fire chief, and he comes from West Chester.

Stephen Kelly, formerly the captain of emergency medical services for West Chester Township, was offered a conditional contract recently.

“He targeted what we were looking for,” said Trustee Ken Tracy.

“He came from an outstanding township – West Chester Township, which is one of the largest townships in the state of Ohio – with great experience and knowledge.”

Kelly recently received his master’s degree in public administration from Northern Kentucky University and said he is excited to put it to use in Miami Township.

“As far as personally and professionally, I’m a driven person – very motivated. I’ve been with West Chester for 17 years, so I’m very dedicated to the organization I work for,” Kelly said.

Kelly, a Mason resident, takes over the position after officials bought 1.12 acres of land on Sugar Camp Road to potentially be used for a new station.

“I think initially (my challenge) is going to be getting to know the culture of the department and township as a whole,” Kelly said.

“Getting with the department, I understand they have acquired some land and are interested in adding a fourth station. That presents a great deal of challenges ... as (to) how we would go about doing that in a fiscally responsible manner.”

But Kelly has been a part of similar expansion during his time in West Chester.
“When I first started we also had three stations. Then in 1998, West Chester added two stations,” he said.

“That’s still true,” he said. “We’re looking at potentially adding another station.”

Kelly beat out 35 other applicants to get the job.

“We’ve had a pretty intense interview and application process,” said Township Administrator Larry Fronk.

Trustee Karl Schultz acknowledged the new chief will be challenged.

“We’re working in a challenging environment. All governments are working in a challenging environment, and his challenge is to provide absolutely the best level of service at the best value to the taxpayers,” Schultz said.

“(Kelly) has all the qualifications we need for a fire chief.”

One thing Kelly doesn’t have is experience as a chief. He was promoted to captain in 2008.

“Titles within in each township are different so it’s important to evaluate not the title, but the responsibility level,” Tracy said.

“His responsibility level was very high up within the West Chester organization.”

Jim Whitworth, Miami Township’s former fire chief, retired Aug. 16.

The position has been filled on an interim basis by Patricia Brooks, the former fire chief for Forest Park.

If Kelly passes his drug test and background check, trustees are expected to formally hire him at their Oct. 7 work session.

His potential salary was not immediately released.