

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of **MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES** Meeting

Held

May 3,

2021

Chair Lynn Stewart called the Mifflin Township Board of Trustees Meeting to order via an advertised conference call at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, May 3, 2021 with Vice Chairman Kevin Cavener, Trustee Richard Angelou, Fiscal Officer Rick Duff, Township Administrator Nancy White, Fire Chief Fred Kauser, Police Chief Tammy Phillips, Service Director Roger Boggs, HR Director Becky Kadel, PIO Melissa Rapp and IT Director Craig Main attending. Assistant to the Fiscal Officer Rebecca Rousseau, Administrative Assistant Melanie Barnette, and Franklin Co. Deputy Sheriff Keith Upton were online.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Stewart.

TRUSTEES COMMENTS:

Mr. Angelou thanked the Fire Department for all they do. He said he appreciated the work on setting up the vaccination center.

MINUTES & WARRANTS:

Res. 109-21 Approve the April 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Cavener moved to approve the April 20, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Res. 110-21 Approve Warrants of June 2021

Mr. Angelou moved to approve the Warrants of June 2021. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Fiscal Officer Duff presented a list from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control of all liquor permit holders due to renew July 1st. There were no objections to the list. (See Referral File.) Administrator White suggested to Fiscal Officer Duff that he check with Prevention to see if there are any violations that may impact approval. Fiscal Officer agreed to do so.

Fiscal Officer Duff presented a vehicle damage estimate from Mr. Paul Scheel for damage caused by a rock in the amount of \$106.75 that occurred during road construction on Drake Road. He said the contractor is not responding to Mr. Scheel. Chair Stewart requested Mr. Boggs call the contractor for payment of the repair. Mr. Boggs agreed to do so.

Administrator White made the trustees aware of a new certificate required by the State Auditor's Office, *Certificate of Transition by Outgoing Fiscal Officer*. She said Ohio Revised Code Section 117.171 was recently enacted requiring the timely completion and submission of the certificate when there is a change in the position of fiscal officer.

FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:

Fiscal Officer Duff said he would like to discuss the police levy that was last passed, not the levy that is on the ballot tomorrow. He said it was supposed to bring in over \$100,000 in tax in perpetuity, but the way it was worded limits the use for the payment of debt charges and bond and notes to be issued by the township for the cost of constructing a new police station facility, making site improvements, and acquiring furniture and equipment, per Ohio Revised

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Code. He said the levy provides the township with plenty of funds for the building of a police station, but once the new station is completely built and furnished, we may want to do a replacement levy so the funds would no longer be limited to building a new station as stated in the levy language. He said the levy language does not include the purchase of police cars.

Chair Stewart said it is good that we are reminded that the levy language states it is for the purpose in which Mr. Duff stated. She requested that when budgeting is done the purpose of the funds be highlighted to prevent it being lost over the years.

2021 – 2022 Fiscal Officer's Update

Fiscal Officer Duff presented the General Revenue Trends. He said the General Fund is funded by a .7 inside mil levy which has been stagnant since 2009, most likely due to flat property values, annexations, and the lack of new development. He said when properties are reevaluated and increase in value, the inside millage does increase the tax; our general fund should increase. He said the first half of 2021 showed an uptick and hopefully we shall see more. He said he researched the inside millage and found there are 10 mils available that are split amongst local governments including city, county, schools, and townships. It appears we may be able to obtain .1 mils of inside millage. This is a process that would be done with the June budget and could render of \$100,000. He said unlike Columbus and Gahanna which get approximately 2 mils to cover their police and fire pension fund pickups, by State law, townships are ineligible for this unfortunately. Fiscal Officer Duff said Road & Bridges (RB) is in better shape as the revenue coming from the gas tax hike and Permissive Motor Vehicle tax, an additional \$10/license plate in the township. He said Police and Cemetery will always have a tight budget. He said traditionally, the General Fund helped the Police and Cemetery with \$100,000 transfer each per year. He said going forward he recommends doing it on an as-needed basis at the end of the year. Administrator White provided historical information as to why those transfers began many years ago. Fiscal Officer Duff said that in 2021, the year began with \$1M in surplus, down from \$2M in surplus in 2010. Of the \$1M in surplus, half of the funds came from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) set aside from last year's BWC bonuses. He said by department, the Fire department brings in 89% of our tax, Police get less than 5%, General Fund 5.75% and R&B .75%. Without the large Fire budget, the general budget would be significantly cut, but so would the workload. He said Fire is now paying for the general task workloads such as the IT Director and one-half of the HR Director. He said looking at the number of checks written, nearly 20,000 checks were written for Fire whereas General, Service and Police-combined totaled less than 15,000. He said we have a large budget for a township; budgetarily it is similar in size to cities such as Bexley and Upper Arlington.

Fiscal Officer Duff presented his revised pay schedule for Administration, editing it down to six steps and adding in the proposed two new positions as well. He said since there has not been an increase since 2018, he added two annual cost-of-living increases that were the same as Social Security's minimal cost-of-living increases. He said the adjustments are the "right thing to do." Chair Stewart said we must first ensure we are gathering all the revenue available to us. Fiscal Officer Duff said he will apply for the inside millage but will not have a determination until the end of the year and the township would receive the revenue next year. He said it is a long shot if we can get it, but worth the attempt. As a correction, Ms.

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Rousseau said the township would get the determination in August of this year with the tax budget rather than the end of the year. She said she did this for Plain Township when she was the Fiscal Officer there; that is how she knows this for sure. She said Mifflin Township would need to apply every year for the inside millage.

Fiscal Officer Duff provided the Fiscal Office staffing review explaining the current configuration (See Referral File), Fiscal Officer – part time; Assistant Fiscal Officer – full time; Accounting Assistant – part time. He said what is needed is a Fiscal Officer (a statutory requirement); Finance Director – fulltime (Rebecca Rousseau), Accounting Specialist – full time (new position); Accounting Assistant – part time (Hollie Wonderly). He said ideally the new Accounting Specialist would take over the job of Finance Director when Ms. Rousseau retires. Then, the Accounting Specialist would move into the role of the Accounting Specialist, hiring a new Accounting Assistant if needed. He suggested the Accounting Specialist position be funded by the Fire department. He would like billing responsibilities to return to Fiscal Office utilizing a billing tracking process. For the first year, the position could be funded by the interest money that returns to the Fire department or with BWC funds that were saved in the approximate amount of \$150,000. All BWC bills would be paid with the remaining funds. After one and one-half years, he said he hopes that the position could then be funded through Fire after Chief Kauser is into his new levy cycle. Administrator White suggested utilizing the Accounting Specialist more, in a fulltime capacity. She also suggested the idea of promoting the Accounting Assistant to the Accounting Specialist position based on her experience in the department. There was discussion about the learning curve and the need for government accounting experience in the position. Chair Stewart said we are fortunate to have Ms. Rousseau as a CPA and former Fiscal Officer knowledge; her shoes will be hard to fill when she retires. Chair Stewart said Fiscal Officer Duff's experience in the office prior to being elected as Fiscal Officer has been very beneficial. Administrator White suggested holding off hiring the part-time Accounting Assistant to see what is needed and how things work out. She said currently there is not a job description for a Finance Director. She said there are questions and considerations that need to be decided such as whether the Finance Director will be exempt, etc. Fiscal Officer Duff said the title of Finance Director seems to be a more official title than Assistant to the Fiscal Officer, however the title could be something else, if needed. Chair Stewart said there is a lot for Fiscal Officer Duff to accomplish: inside millage and the Fiscal Office's reorganization. Chair Stewart said she looks forward to his staffing recommendation once all the behind-the-scenes efforts are completed, such as the creation of job descriptions, salaries etc. She requested Fiscal Officer Duff meet with Chief Kauser, Administrator White, and Ms. Kadel to determine a job descriptions and salaries for a final recommendation to put before the board. Fiscal Officer Duff agreed to do so.

Fiscal Officer said he appreciates the opportunity to present this idea in a team meeting, being able to hear everyone's ideas is very helpful. Chair Stewart said that is the intention of these meetings and she thanked Mr. Duff for that.

Fiscal Officer Duff said he struggles with the time required of him in his role. He said he was working 10 hrs./week before the election and he is still doing the same work plus the additional duties as Fiscal Officer which is easily an additional 10 hrs./week. Chair Stewart

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said that will need to be resolved as well. Mr. Angelou said that the Fiscal Office should be the top priority. Chief Kauser said he although he is supportive of taking care of things that are the Fire department's responsibility, historically the Fire department would fund a position within his organization rather than funding positions in another department. In such, these higher-level positions make good sense and Fire will pay its fair share. He said a bigger reorganization may be needed, leveraging the current staff by way of current task analysis of work assignments. He said we must prioritize the most important work and task on subsequent roles. Chief Kauser requested this information from Fiscal Officer Duff soon as levy planning is underway, and the positions may impact his budget. He requested Fiscal Officer Duff provide the relative burden of Fire as it relates to the check count/activity level in real time, over the last two or three years. Chief Kauser said he would also like to know the new valuation from Franklin County as the property values have risen. Fiscal Officer Duff agreed to provide these requests for information. Administrator White referred Fiscal Officer Duff to a valuation report generated by the Franklin County Auditor's Office that is published annually that has the detail needed. Administrator White said the reappraisal of properties depend on location as to the percentage of valuation increase. Fiscal Officer Duff said he believes the 17% to 18% valuation increase was for the Gahanna area only.

Chair Stewart said regarding Fiscal Officer Duff's chart on roles and responsibilities (See Referral File), everyone on the chart with exception to Administrator White works for him. She inquired about Ms. Barnette being listed. Fiscal Officer Duff said that is because the responsibility of meeting minutes is under the Fiscal Officer's legal role per the Ohio Revised Code. He said he does not anticipate changing Ms. Barnette's responsibility of typing the meeting minutes.

TOWNSHIP ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Administrator White presented the list showing the purchase approvals she has made in the first quarter of the year that were over \$2,500 and less than \$5,000.

2021 – 2022 Township Administrator's Update

Administrator White reviewed several items she will be working on throughout the year (See Referral File).

She said there is a new trash and recycling contract taking effect on January 1, 2022. It is in the bid process now; solid waste collection will be bid separately. She said we are in Consortium #1 which has a larger service population.

Administrator White said she will continue to work with Franklin County Economic Development and Planning, along with COCIC and the Franklin County Engineer's Office, on the Leonard Park development plan. She said drainage is an important part of the development plan. She will also be working with the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning on updating the Clinton-Mifflin Comprehensive Plan as it has not been updated since 2009, before storm drainage was installed and water was made available to the Leonard Park area. She said COCIC (the land bank) is interested in working with Mifflin Township as it relates to the property the township owns on Stelzer Road and the properties immediately behind it.

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Administrator White said she is working with the PIO to promote the township as well as keeping current on township events with a newsletter and Township story. She said since her employ in 1984, so many accomplishments, changes and growth have occurred making the township better. She said she would like to tell the story in small increments for readability.

Administrator White said she will work with the Service Director to get a Code Enforcement program in place with a noise and/or maintenance code for the township. She said although we have code enforcement for trash and related violations, a maintenance code would require the upkeep of property.

Administrator White said she will be researching and initiating the trial solar street lighting in the unincorporated area of Leonard Park/East Linden to determine feasibility and effectiveness. She said Mr. Boggs has received response on the light heads but are having difficulty gathering information about which poles to use. In East Linden most of the electricity runs behind the homes; to be productive, the lights should be on the street. She said solar is the answer for the area if it will work. She said she must research the cost and possibly apply for a streetlight grant.

She said she would also like to research the use of cameras to curtail dumping. Mr. Boggs said the configuration (18' to 20' range) and the legality of cameras would need to be researched. He said a grant may be possible also for this endeavor. He said he envisions adding more lighting over time, hopefully township wide.

Fiscal Officer Duff inquired about the burnt homes on Melrose and 2151 Cassidy Avenue. He said they are eyesores: abandoned and collapsing. He said the home on Cassidy Avenue is a non-profit; we are not collecting any taxes on it. It is owned by Sunbury Urban Farm, along with three other properties in the township. Administrator White agreed to contact COCIC about the burnt homes. She said it may also be a matter for the Franklin County Board of Health.

Administrator White said she would like to institute a 30-minute weekly meeting, via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, with department heads to be up to date with events and activities from the previous week and for the current week. She said a list would be generated for the trustees to keep them abreast. Chair Stewart said she would like to see more of this type of information sharing happening at this meeting as well.

Administrator White said she would like communication to go out about the plans for new fire station to curtail false information from circulating.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Ms. Kadel said she did not have anything new to report.

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PIO:

Ms. Rapp reviewed the memo that outlined the process to update business cards with the new branding. She asked that any changes to the business card be noted on her form and returned to her. She said she will have Administration do the same this week.

Ms. Rapp reviewed the overview of the SWACO Recycle Right Campaign which will run in May and June. She said she will be partnering with SWACO to promote it with social media posts, a magnet mailer to the residents in the unincorporated area, etc. She said she will involve the MORPC Intern for help on this project.

Ms. Rapp provided the media packet update. It was decided that ongoing a digital copy should be included in the e-mailed packet that Ms. Barnette sends to the trustees and a hardcopy should also be placed in the binder located in the trustees' office. Ms. Rapp said she plans to provide analytics on the events she posts and will cross-post on the various media platforms. Mr. Cavener said he would like the website to include past event information also. He and many others are not on social media but will look to the website for information. Ms. Rapp agreed to post past events within the "Events" portion of the website.

Ms. Rapp said she will be focusing on the upcoming levy election and the firefighters' graduation ceremony.

SERVICE:

Mr. Boggs requested the approval for Rocky and Paula Gross to sell back two graves, Lot 49, Section M, Block 5, Graves 7 and 8, in the amount of \$300 (\$150/each).

Res. 111-21 Approve Rocky and Paula Gross to sell back two graves, Lot 49, Section M, Block 5, Graves 7 and 8, in the amount of \$300 (\$150/each).

Chair Stewart moved to approve Rocky and Paula Gross to sell back two graves, Lot 49, Section M, Block 5, Graves 7 and 8, in the amount of \$300 (\$150/each). Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Mr. Boggs requested the approval to hire Hunter Blankenship as a seasonal, part-time employee at \$16/hour, not to exceed 28 hrs./week, contingent upon his passing of his background check.

Res. 112-21 Approve the contingent hire of Hunter Blankenship as a seasonal, part-time employee at \$16/hour, not to exceed 28 hrs./week.

Mr. Angelou moved to approve the contingent hire of Hunter Blankenship as a seasonal, part-time employee at \$16/hour, not to exceed 28 hrs./week. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Mr. Boggs provided an update on three homes planned to be built in Leonard Park by Mr. Eddie Jewell for his personal use.

CODE:

Mr. Boggs provided an update on the progress of the clean-up at 2136 Myrtle Avenue.

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POLICE:

Chief Phillips requested a pay step increase for Officer Matthew Peddicord from Step 4 to Step 5, effective May 3, 2021. She provided his annual performance evaluation.

Res. 113-21 Approve the pay step increase for Officer Matthew Peddicord from Step 4 to Step 5, effective May 3, 2021.

Mr. Cavener moved to approve the pay step increase for Officer Matthew Peddicord from Step 4 to Step 5, effective May 3, 2021. Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Chief Phillips requested the purchase of three Motorola portable radios from B&C Communications in the amount of \$12,119.04. She said radios currently in use are outdated and batteries can no longer be obtained.

Fiscal Officer Duff said funds from the Police levy may be used. Mr. Cavener requested Mr. Duff seek legal counsel's opinion on this matter. Chair Stewart also requested that he research financing options, if necessary. Mr. Duff agreed to do so. Chair Stewart said, in the meantime, a resolution should be passed allowing the radios to be purchased contingent upon how they will be purchased.

Res. 114-21 Approve the purchase of three (3) Motorola portable radios from B&C Communications in the amount of \$12,119.04, contingent upon how they will be purchased.

Mr. Cavener moved to approve the purchase of three (3) Motorola portable radios from B&C Communications in the amount of \$12,119.04, contingent upon how they will be purchased. Chair Stewart seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Chief Phillips requested the acceptance of the resignation of Officer David Wolfel, effective May 15, 2021. She said he has accepted another position with an agency in Baltimore, Ohio. Chief Phillips said she is not allowing him to have a double commission as it "muddies the water" with policies and procedures. She said if he were engaged in a critical incident with another agency and placed on administrative leave, he would not be allowed to work for our department either. Chief Phillips said she is unsure whether the new county prosecutor would allow a double commission.

She said there are three candidates in the hiring process, but they are several months away from being on patrol because of the background check and training.

Res. 115-21 Accept the resignation of Officer David Wolfel, effective May 15, 2021.

Chair Stewart moved to accept the resignation of Officer David Wolfel, effective May 15, 2021. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Chief Phillips provided a few updates: Drug Take Back Day occurred on April 24th. She said it was the lowest weight of collection, only seven pounds. Provisional Certificates for Group 1 (Use of Force & Recruitment & Hiring) and Group 2 (Community Engagement & Body

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Worn Cameras) have been achieved with the Ohio Collaborative Community Police Advisory Board. She said she is actively working on Group 3 and 4 and expects certifications by the end of the year. Chief Phillips said the next community outreach meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 22nd with a focus on available resources. She will have Ms. Rapp advertise the meeting as soon as the date is confirmed. Chief Phillips said the new police station plans include an electronic sign to promote events such as this.

FIRE DIVISION:

No requests or updates.

OPERATIONS CENTER:

No requests or updates.

MIFFLIN DISPATCH (and 911/CAD System Partners):

No requests or updates.

MIFFLIN TECHNOLOGY:

Chief Kauser said that in July there will be a national tradeshow conference which will draw a lot of attention from police and fire departments. He expects several tours of the Operations Center will be given during this time.

Chief Kauser said the security policy is in its final draft phase but will be evolving over time. He said a keynote of the policy is whether the Operations Center is a public building. He said a very broad statement about security of public meetings is included in which a uniformed police officer will be posted at the meeting when we anticipate public interaction. He recommends high energy events and large public assemblies be held at the township meeting hall with a uniformed police officer present.

Administrator White shared a recent personal story in which library personnel required her to swipe her access card upon entrance into the building although she was entering the building at the same time. She said this was good to see.

Trustee Angelou asked questions about the security policy in which the driver's license is collected. Chief Kauser explained that the driver's license is held while the person is in the building and helps to ensure the visitor's badge is returned.

Mr. Main said SSI will start on May 5, 2021.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

VISITORS COMMENTS:

No visitors.

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Chair Stewart moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Lynn M. Stewart, Chair

Richard J. Angelou, Trustee

Kevin J. Cavener, Vice Chairman

Rick Duff, Fiscal Officer