

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Held

August 1,

2022

Chair Lynn Stewart called the meeting of the Mifflin Township Board of Trustees to order in the Joseph F. Spanovich Meeting Hall at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 1, 2022. Chair Stewart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Fiscal Officer White performed the roll call: Chair Lynn Stewart, Vice Chair Richard Angelou, Trustee Kevin Cavener, HR Director Becky Kadel, PIO Melissa Rapp, Service Director Roger Boggs, Fire Chief Fred Kauser, and MORPC Intern JJ Price were present. Police Chief David Briggs was out due to illness. IT Director Craig Main was out on vacation. Administrative Services Coordinator Melanie Barnette and Accounting/Payroll Assistant Rick Duff attended online.

TRUSTEES COMMENTS:

None.

MINUTES:

Chair Stewart requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 19, 2022.

Res. 157-22 Approve the Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2022.

Mr. Angelou moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of July 19, 2022. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Fiscal Officer White said a notification bulletin was received from the Franklin County Engineer's Office about the 90-day road closure at Sunbury and Woodward Ave. for the repair of a bridge. Mr. Boggs said this closure will not affect Mifflin Township's fire or police response.

Mr. Angelou agreed to attend the Gahanna Library Hardhat Tour on August 17th at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Cavener and Chair Stewart said they were unavailable to attend.

FISCAL OFFICER'S REPORT:

Fiscal Officer White requested the first trustees meeting in September be moved from Monday, September 5th to Tuesday, September 6th to allow for the Labor Day holiday. The trustees agreed with the date change proposal. She said the meeting will be advertised on the township's website and the press will be notified.

Fiscal Officer White proposed reorganizing the Administration Office to be referred to as Administration and Finance Office. She said that many similar entities have done this. She presented the revised Administration/Finance Pay Schedule for approval. She said it's time to look forward and reorganize. Additional help is needed as retirements and other departures are expected. She said that a while ago, the trustees created the Administrative Services Coordinator title and Melanie Barnette has stepped into that position. At that time, there was not a pay schedule for that position. Fiscal Office White said additional employees may be needed. Fiscal Officer White presented a pay schedule suggesting that the Administration department be comprised of an Administrative Services Manager, Receptionist, HR Director,

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES Meeting

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2022

and Public Information Officer. The Finance Department would be comprised of the Fiscal Officer, Assistant to the Fiscal Officer, Accounting Assistant and possibly a Payroll Clerk. She said some of the positions are part-time. Again, this is looking to the future and the need for assistance. Fiscal Officer White said that she and Chief Kauser researched the MORPC 2021 salary survey and the U.S. Department of Job and Labor Statistic's O-NET Online pay rates to determine the proposed rates on the revised pay schedule, reducing the number of steps to five and adding a probationary step.

Chair Stewart offered the trustees' gratitude to Chief Kauser and Ms. White for their hard work on this project. She said it makes good sense to reorganize according to the recommendation of Fiscal Officer White. Chair Stewart said the reorganization is a good idea as it is more efficient and takes the management of some employees away from the Fiscal Officer by having an Administrative Services Manager. Chair Stewart said the compensation research makes sense also. Chair Stewart said the budget has tripled since she started with the township and some employees are long overdue for pay increases. Chair Stewart said it is time for this reorganization and setting a new stage, bringing the office into the year of 2022.

Mr. Angelou asked if the new rates include the cost of benefits. Fiscal Officer White replied that the revised rates are hourly rates only. There was discussion about incorporating the pension pickup and a portion of the HSA dollars into the hourly rate. Fiscal Officer White recommends that starting at the beginning of 2023, the discontinuation of pension pickup and the adoption of a pay schedule like the Fire Division's. She said that doing so would require changing the pay schedule again. Fiscal Officer White said she is also looking at doing the same for Police. She is still analyzing the financials of this and the considerations to be made. She said that due to the resolution wording restrictions from OPERS, an employee could not opt out of the discontinuation of pension pickup if they are close to retirement. She said it would increase the employees' retirement amount (which is the average of the three highest years of salary).

Mr. Angelou inquired about the outside study of the Fiscal Office. Fiscal Officer White said it is not a study, rather it is the documenting of the procedures of the Fiscal Office. However, there is an opportunity to have a study conducted, if interested.

Fiscal Officer White said that a determination needs to be made as to where the current Administration and Finance employees are on the pay schedule. She said firefighters have a schedule that they use, and it is updated periodically with percentages of increase. She would like to do the same for Admin and Finance. Recently, Service and Fire have updated their pay schedules. Chief Briggs is researching the police pay schedule for an update as well as discontinuing the pension pickup. Fiscal Officer White said she would like to see the pay schedules updated annually in January, as well as shorten the steps. She said that she would meet with Melanie Barnette and Becky Kadel to determine the step placement for each Administration and Finance employees, barring their own step placement. Melanie and Nancy will determine Becky Kadel's step placement and Becky and Nancy will determine Melanie's step placement. Fiscal Officer White said the new pay schedule would be effective on August 7, 2022.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of *MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES* Meeting

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August 1,

2022

Res. 158-22 Accept the reorganization of the Administration/Finance office as presented by the Fiscal Officer and accept the reallocation of the pay schedule for the Administration and Finance employees also presented by the Fiscal Officer, effective August 7, 2022.

Chair Stewart moved to accept the reorganization of the Administration/Finance office as presented by the Fiscal Officer and accept the reallocation of the pay schedule for the Administration and Finance employees also presented by the Fiscal Officer, effective August 7, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Angelou. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Fiscal Officer White said she has been researching the ability to control the maintenance for the properties in the unincorporated areas of the township. JJ Price, MORPC Intern, provided a presentation on his research. He said the township cannot have a rental registration as it is not a home-rule township, according to legal counsel, but suggests a property maintenance code, per ORC §505.73. He provided the trustees with a summary of the 2021 International Property Maintenance Code allowing for enforcement of the code on exterior property. He said it creates a code enforcement department, headed by a code enforcement official, possibly part-time, with a vehicle, issuing and following up on violation notices, and referring them to the county prosecutor's office, if needed. He said the fees would be set by the Board of Trustees. This code allows for the entrance into a fenced backyard. He said there would be a Board of Appeals comprised of five individuals not employed by the township with required experience and training, i.e., retired professionals of the township or other entities. He further explained the various sections of the document. He specified that the homeowner is responsible for trash pickup.

Fiscal Officer White said the code enforcement official could be Roger Boggs. He could then appoint deputies. He could hire someone to do the work of a code enforcement officer. He questioned whether it would be its own department or part of the service department. Also, he questioned if there would be funding. If so, he is onboard. Fiscal Officer White said discussions have not reached that detail yet. She said a big hurdle is finding someone qualified. Today's presentation is an overview for the trustees to ponder. She shared her idea of possibly sharing a code enforcement officer with another township. Mr. Angelou said Mr. Boggs should begin the search of finding a candidate. Chair Stewart requested the number of absentee landlords. JJ Price offered to find this information from the Franklin Co. Auditor's website. Chair Stewart said she does not want the property maintenance code to become burdensome on the actual resident property owners. Mr. Cavener said he would like to see this help the residents by improving the property values because the area will be cleaned up. Chair Stewart requested more information necessary to create this code enforcement department: cost, full or part-time employee(s), vehicles required, etc. Ms. Kadel said a job description exists that can be modified. Mr. Price said there is a Code Enforcement Association to which licensing can be obtained. He said in central Ohio, Blendon Township has a property maintenance code, but Mifflin Township would be the first non-home ruled township in the county to adopt a property maintenance code. Chair Stewart said she appreciated Mr. Price's time and effort on this research.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES Meeting

Held

August 1,

2022

Fiscal Officer White said a BWC audit took place last week. Our wages were underreported; therefore, we will owe additional money in the approximate amount of \$19,000. She said the Finance Office now has a better understanding of the reporting and the allowable deductions. She said it was a technical error that was made. She said that once she receives information from BWC, she will make a request to approve the payment at a future meeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Ms. Kadel provided updates. (See Referral File.) She thanked Ms. Rapp for providing information on the Franklin County Community Mask Advisory. Ms. Kadel provided the advisory as informational only. Chair Stewart said it seems that more people, including employees, are becoming infected. The trustees recommended masks be worn during large gatherings.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER:

Ms. Rapp presented the documents included in the trustees' packet: Media and Social Media Reports from July. She said the Mifflin Firefighter Blood Drive is August 25th, 12 – 6 pm, at Station 131. Timeslots are still available for donations. Registration links can be found on social media and the township's website. She said the website projects include adding a section for the digital newsletters; updates to the financial reports section; and the digital fire prevention permit application process. She said she is working to get all the forms online within the website. Ms. Rapp explained that residents can sign up for the newsletter by going to the link on the township's homepage. The newsletter is sent out digitally by e-mail. She has added all township staff to the distribution. She said there are approximately 200 registered for the newsletter, township staff and residents. She requested names and e-mail addresses for additional registrations to be included on the distribution list. Chair Stewart said she would like to see the newsletter be more specific to the township, including firefighters' names, departments, etc., when appropriate. She requested Ms. Rapp meet with each department head to determine articles for the newsletter regarding the department. Ms. Rapp said she would create a newsletter schedule for the departments to follow outlining when his/her newsletter topic would need to be submitted. Chair Stewart said she had expected to see an article about the MECC Dispatch Center Opening in this newsletter. Ms. Rapp is planning the Fire Prevention Week Open House, also known as Adventure Day. The event is Sunday, October 9th. Ms. Rapp said she will be attending the MORPC social media summit tomorrow, 9 am – 1 pm. She has also registered for the Ohio Attorney General's Sunshine Law online training on September 15th and will represent all Mifflin Township's public officials. She said she is watching for the State Auditor's Public Records training dates. Fiscal Officer White said she learned at a County Officers meeting that elected officials will soon be required to attend the trainings. The trustees agreed that the requirement makes good sense. Chair Stewart inquired about the Fire Division's request to post their own social media. Chair Stewart requested Ms. Rapp meet with every department head, including Fiscal, Admin, Service and Police to determine their expectations and requirements of her position as a Public Information Officer. Ms. Rapp said she has attempted to meet with Chief Kauser but has not yet, but plans are made to meet this week to accommodate the Fire Division needs in a manner that keeps consistency with the township's message. Ms. Rapp agreed to provide the trustees

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting

Held

August 1,

2022

with a document at the next meeting that outlines each departments' social media requirements and what she will be doing for each department.

SERVICE:

Mr. Boggs provided update on the cemetery damage. The court date was pushed back from July 13th. He has been in contact with one of the family members and an assistant prosecutor that is on the case. He said he has responded to the assistant prosecutor's request for additional information. He said the assistant prosecutor reached out to additional family members about the case and has requested they attend the hearing to tell their side of the story and the emotional stress caused by the damage. He said he has sought legal advice and is awaiting a response to his questions. Mr. Boggs said the junkyard case will be heard on August 9th. He has reached out to the Franklin County Code Enforcement Officer to ensure it remains on their radar; he has not heard back from him. Mr. Boggs said the Lindale Road case (with the storage containers and shed on the property) will be heard on August 31st.

Mr. Boggs said he plans to visit the flagpole store in-person since his calls have not been returned. He said the new tractor has arrived and is being used for the first time today. He said the trailer has also been received and is in use.

Mr. Boggs said he will be posting for the second Service Specialist II position. He said foundations have been poured and are up to date. Mr. Cavener inquired about the standing water issue at Riverside Cemetery. Mr. Boggs said topsoil and grass seed have been added and grass is growing. He said he is unaware of any water issues at Riverside Cemetery while he was away from the office for the past two weeks. He said there was a report of a tree that fell from the cemetery property onto another property that took out the homeowner's electricity. AEP was contacted.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:

He said properties were tagged. His staff is addressing reported issues immediately.

POLICE:

Chief Briggs was out ill. A special meeting had been previously advertised for tomorrow to discuss funding the police department. Mr. Cavener requested the meeting be postponed until the Chief is available to attend. Mr. Cavener agreed to follow-up with the Chief to determine a new date for the special meeting.

FIRE:

Chief Kauser requested the pay increase for Christy Prokop, Administrative Office Manager, to \$31.43/hr., effective July 24, 2022; and the step increase to \$34.36/hr., effective the first pay period in January 2023. (See Referral File.) Chief Kauser said the January 2023 step increase includes incentives transferred into the base rate of pay (sick leave, HSA (\$2,000, and longevity.)

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of *MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES* Meeting

Held

August 1,

2022

Res. 159-22 Approve the pay increase for Christy Prokop, Administrative Office Manager, to \$31.43/hr., effective July 24, 2022; and the step increase to \$34.36/hr., effective the first pay period in January 2023.

Chair Stewart moved to approve the pay increase for Christy Prokop, Administrative Office Manager, to \$31.43/hr., effective July 24, 2022; and a step increase to \$34.36/hr., effective the first pay period in January 2023. Mr. Cavener seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Chair Stewart inquired about the title of Administrative Office Manager. Chief Kauser said he will consult Ms. Kadel, Fiscal Officer White, and Ms. Barnette to correct that title. He said this classification will forever be moved into the Administration pay schedule and out of the Fire Division pay schedule. He said the rationale for this is that anyone who is doing office support work should come from a pay schedule of office support workers. He said this prevents the two offices from setting different rates for the same position, causing disparity in pay. He said the intention is to move the position into the Administration Office, rather than the Fire Division. He said Ms. Prokop will not physically move to Administration at this time, only her role. Chair Stewart said she, Chief Kauser, and Fiscal Officer White will need to discuss this further.

Chief Kauser requested to publish the RFQ and schedule the opening of the bids on September 6th for the concrete repairs of the ramp at Station 131 and Station 134.

Res. 160-22 Approval to publish the RFQ and schedule the opening of the bids on September 6th for the concrete repairs of the ramp at Station 131 and Station 134.

Chair Stewart moved to publish the RFQ and schedule the opening of the bids on September 6th for the concrete repairs of the ramp at Station 131 and Station 134. Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Chief Kauser provided updates. (See Referral File.)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

Mr. Main was on vacation. On his behalf, Chief Kauser requested the administrative approval to transfer the current Managed Service Agreement without changes in services, rates, responsibilities and diligence from Sophisticated Systems, Inc. to Crawford Hoying due to a change in ownership of the company.

Res. 161-22 Administrative approval to transfer the current Managed Service Agreement without changes in services, rates, responsibilities and diligence from Sophisticated Systems, Inc. to Crawford Hoying due to a change in ownership of the company.

Chair Stewart moved to approve the to transfer the current Managed Service Agreement without changes in services, rates, responsibilities and diligence from Sophisticated Systems, Inc. to Crawford Hoying due to a change in ownership of the company. Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of *MIFFLIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES* Meeting

Held **August 1,** **2022**

OPS CENTER:

Chief Kauser provided updates. (See Referral File.)

MECC Regional Council of Governments:

Chief Kauser said the MECC RCOG Board will meet this week to consider a proposal to add three full-time dispatchers. The cost will be shared amongst the five entities.

At 11:36 a.m., Chair Stewart moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Angelou seconded. All voted yea. Motion carried.

Lynn M. Stewart, Chair

Richard J. Angelou, Vice Chairman

Kevin J. Cavener, Trustee

Nancy White, Fiscal Officer