

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Public Hearing of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio

August 1, 2019

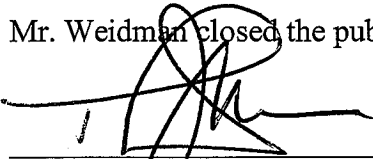
The Public Hearing for the 2020 Tax Budget was called to order at 6:45 p.m. by Mr. Weidman.

Mr. Porter explained the 2020 Tax Budget which he distributed to the Board. He emphasized that this is not an operating budget, rather it is a form from the Hamilton County Auditor that must be completed and submitted back to the Auditor. The tax budget shows what the Township has spent through July 2019 and estimates income and expenses for the remainder of the year. Mr. Porter stated the budget proves to the County Auditor that the Township needs the funds generated by the tax levies that are in place.

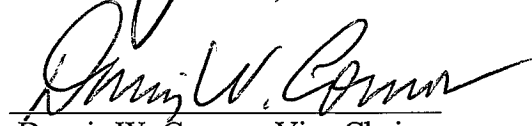
Mr. LaBarbara asked if the estimated income and expenditures for 2020 would be pretty much the same.

Mr. Porter answered yes, noting it could change slightly due to the possibility of additional local government funds as a result of the house bill.

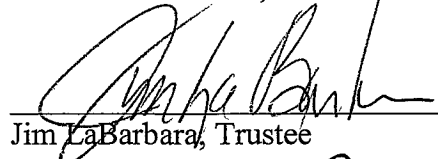
Mr. Weidman closed the public hearing at 6:48 p.m.



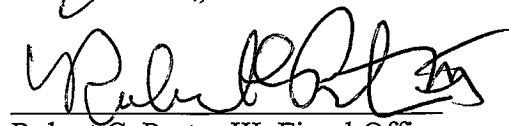
Thomas J. Weidman, Chairman



Dennis W. Connor, Vice Chairman



Jim LaBarbara, Trustee



Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

08/01/2019

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August 1, 2019

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

The invocation from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was then read by Mr. Connor.

Pledge to the Flag.

Present for the meeting were Chairman Weidman, Vice Chairman Connor, Trustee LaBarbara, Fiscal Officer Porter, Law Director Miller, Administrator Bickford, Fire Chief Penny and Lt. Smith from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Superintendent / Assistant Administrator Kellums, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holbert and Parks and Recreation Director McKeown were excused.

The approval of the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting held July 11, 2019 were presented for approval. Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve them.

Mr. LaBarbara stated he wanted to clarify the July 11th meeting minutes in regards to a discussion about the timeline for a residential fence inspection and showed an approved Zoning certificate for Mr. Ashcraft, a Sycamore Township resident, noting he did obtain a permit in 2011.

Mr. Connor noted the July 11th minutes were accurate as reported, the correction Mr. LaBarbara noted this evening would be in the August minutes.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. LaBarbara reviewed the events of the July 30th Workshop Meeting in which the Board of Trustees voted to enact a time limit of four minutes on public comments at Trustees meetings and limit residents to comments only, no questions. Mr. LaBarbara stated he received calls from residents upset about this asking how they can ask questions as they often get very late responses or the Township doesn't get back to residents. He stated this bothers him a lot that a resident can't ask a question said he wonders what we are afraid of. Mr. LaBarbara said the timing for this cannot be worse since it is an election year and spoke of transparency and secrecy. He stated he spoke to the Anderson Township Administrator who said residents there can ask questions or sing a song or do whatever they want in their four minutes. He went on to give examples of how Symmes and some other Townships handle residents' comments and questions. Mr. LaBarbara suggested instituting an ombudsman structure in which an individual expedites, coordinates, researches and communicates by writing down all questions asked and responding to residents later via email. He went on to say he thinks the Board should allow residents to ask questions within the four minute time frame.

Mr. Connor stated he thinks the "no questions" is being taken too literally noting the things Mr. LaBarbara described would be permitted. He said the issue is the asking questions during the meetings and being expected to answer off the top of their heads which is not fair.

Mr. LaBarbara agreed that is not fair to the Trustees.

Mr. Connor went on to say asking a question and if it's something that we can research and get back to them, of course, that would be permitted. He pointed out the format in which residents ask questions expecting an immediate answer is impractical. Mr. Connor stated Mr. LaBarbara's comments about us not getting back to people is an overgeneralization noting when he has been contacted by email or phone and he has taken those to staff he feels like he has gotten very good response from staff and to say that there is a lot of delays and staff is stalling until they go away is not a fair representation of what staff does.

Mr. LaBarbara asked if the Board was changing the vote from the last meeting so that we will accept some questions.

Mr. Weidman addressed the issue saying one of the reasons the question issue was brought up is because we've had people ask our Fiscal Officer how much money we have in our bank account right now and expect an answer. He pointed out that is nonsense because it changes every day.

Mr. LaBarbara said he agrees with Mr. Weidman on that.

Mr. Weidman went on to say that is one of the reasons why questions were brought up. He said people can do whatever they want with their four minutes just don't expect to get an answer immediately. Mr. Weidman stated he agrees with Mr. Connor that we have a great staff and the best recourse for questions is to contact staff at the Township.

There was continued discussion on the subject with Mr. Miller suggesting questions be recorded and answered during the Administrator's report at the following meeting.

Mr. Weidman stated residents call the Administrator and the Township every day and ask questions. He said people can use their four minutes however they want but the back and forth that has been happening of late violates the spirit and intent of the time for resident comments which has been on the agenda for years. Mr. Weidman stated he thinks the Board all understands the parameters.

Mr. Doug McGrew, of 4212 Myrtle Avenue, Sycamore Township, OH 45236, addressed the Board. Mr. McGrew stated he likes the time limit for public comments saying, unfortunately, the meeting have degraded over the last year and a half or more to one and a half to two hour meetings with the same three members of the same organization routinely attacking the members of the board noting it will be nice to have a decent meeting in a decent amount of time.

Mr. McGrew brought up a property maintenance issue at 4231 Myrtle Avenue noting vines from that house are so overgrown they are affecting other properties.

Chief Penny stated the monthly report was sent out today and would be posted on the Fire Department website. He also stated the Crown Victoria will be cleaned up and put on the auction site.

Mr. Bickford reported on behalf of Mr. Kellums that the Sycamore Road Project is really picking up and the Township received a request from Republic Services to begin collecting trash at 4:30 a.m. because of the road work. He noted they are working to keep that from happening.

Mr. Miller reported on land on Pine Road that will be purchased as part of an agreement between the Township and Lucke Land Group to construct an additional detention area. He said he will have that purchase paperwork for approval at the next meeting. Mr. Miller stated he needs executive sessions for property acquisition and pending litigation.

Mr. Bickford stated Mr. Clark inspected the property Mr. McGrew brought up on Myrtle and discussed it with him. He stated they are looking into the property maintenance and zoning issues there.

Mr. Bickford stated the fiber project is almost complete and his hope is to have surveillance and Wi-Fi in the parks by late fall.

Mr. Bickford also discussed the uptick in solicitations for gas aggregation and noted the Township will never call people to try to get them to switch.

The following purchase orders were presented for approval:

Blanket Vendor	Tuition Reimbursement	\$10,500.00
Blanket Vendor	EMS Supplies/Services	\$15,000.00

Mr. Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve this request. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Bickford reminded the Board to let them know availability for the next Workshop.

Mr. Porter read a communication from the Adler family thanking the Fire/EMS Department for the good care of their mother at Seasons Retirement Home.

Mr. Miller reported he has come up with language that should work for the conditions for the Graters' Ice Cream approval. There was discussion about the trash receptacles and sidewalk.

The resolution "Approving a Site Plan for the Graeter's Ice Cream Development in Sycamore Township" was read. A motion was made by Mr. LaBarbara, seconded by Mr. Connor, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye.

Resolution No. 2019-81 passed this 1st day of August, 2019.

The resolution "Adopting the Sycamore Township Tax Budget for 2020" was read. A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, dispensing with the second reading and declaring an emergency. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye.
Resolution No. 2019-82 passed this 1st day of August, 2019.

Mr. Bickford stated the nuisance resolution is not available and he assumes it was abated.

The resolution "Approving a Contract for 2019 Onyx Road Repair Project" was read. A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, dispensing with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye.
Resolution No. 2019-83 passed this 1st day of August, 2019.

Mr. Connor reported on the Library Listening Session for the Deer Park Branch which was very well attended saying people had some very good ideas which will be going into a Master Plan that the Library will implement. He said it was a very good session.

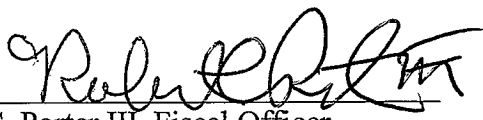
Mr. LaBarbara noted the rumor that the Deer Park Branch Library would be closing is not true.

Mr. Connor verified saying that rumor was dispelled quickly.

Mr. LaBarbara requested the meeting audio be updated on the website and Mr. Bickford stated he will look into it.

The Receipts and Disbursements of August 1, 2019 were available in the Fiscal Officer's Office and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

I hereby certify that the money for payment of these bills is in the fund provided and duly and properly appropriated.

Signed: 
Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

A motion was made by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to accept them. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

A motion to enter into **Executive Session to discuss Property Acquisition and Pending Litigation** was made by Trustee Connor and seconded by Trustee LaBarbara.
Vote: Connor: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: Aye.

End regular session: 7:34 p.m.

Begin Executive Session: 7:39 p.m.

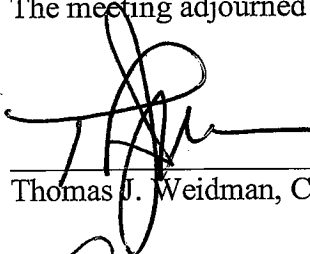
End Executive Session: 7:52 p.m.

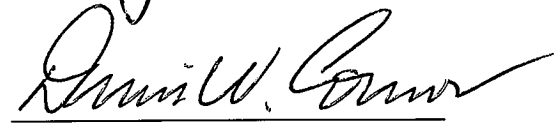
Back in regular session: 7:54 p.m.

Mr. Connor made a motion to authorize Law Director Miller to sign the agreement with Mr. Carl Stitch for Moeller mediation. Mr. LaBarbara seconded the motion. Mr. Porter called roll. All Aye.


A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Connor and seconded by Trustee LaBarbara. Vote: All Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Thomas J. Weidman, Chairman

Dennis W. Connor, Vice Chairman

Jim LaBarbara, Trustee

Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer
08/01/2019