

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio

February 16, 2021

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the issuance of guidelines to limit public gatherings to ten people or less by Governor DeWine and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health, and due to enabling legislation (House Bill 404) which extended the ability of local governments in Ohio to meet remotely during this time, this meeting was held remotely via Zoom. Members of the public were given the opportunity to participate live in the meeting remotely via Zoom. Video of the meeting was live streamed to the public on the internet.

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

Present for the meeting were Chairman James, Vice Chairman LaBarbara, Trustee Weidman, Fiscal Officer Porter, Law Director Desai, Administrator Warrick, Superintendent / Assistant Administrator Kellums, Planning & Zoning Administrator Miller, Fire Chief Penny and LT. Tarr from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

The invocation was read by Mr. Kellums.

Pledge to the Flag.

The Trustees, Mr. Porter, Mr. Warrick, and Mr. Desai gave consent for their signatures to be added electronically to any documents approved tonight.

Approval of the February 2, 2021 Trustees Meeting Minutes

The February 2, 2021 Trustees Meeting Minutes, which included a Public Hearing, were presented for approval. Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara to accept them. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Presentation – Natalie Fields, Deer Park Branch Library

Mr. James introduced Natalie Fields, Branch Manager of the Deer Park Library in the Dillonvale Shopping Center, who was invited to attend the meeting by Mr. LaBarbara. Ms. Fields addressed the Board with a brief overview of what to expect with the renovation for the new location of the Deer Park Branch in a larger space in the Dillonvale Shopping Center. She discussed the tremendous community support of the library and reviewed feedback from the public about what they want from the library.

Ms. Fields pointed out the new Deer Park Branch will be the largest branch in Hamilton County outside the main downtown library which shows a huge investment in our community. She said it will be five times larger than the current space. Ms. Fields showed the floor plan of the new space and explained the amenities. She also showed some color renderings of the space and shared a QR Code for people to use to see an immersive 3D view of the new space.

Mr. James stated the design looks beautiful and thanked Ms. Fields for presenting. He said he was able to participate in the July, 2019 Community Listening Session and it was very productive.

The other Trustees and Mr. Kellums commented positively about the renovation and renderings shown.

Mr. James requested the QR code and February 17th Deer Park Library Renovation & Expansion Information Session be shared on the Township's website and social media.

Sheriff Patrol Report

Lt. Tarr reported there will be an active shooter drill at Moeller High School the morning of February 25, 2021. He said the Hamilton County Sheriff, Sycamore Township Fire Department, and the staff and students at Moeller will all participate in the drill.

Lt. Tarr informed the Board he attends Symmes Township meetings on the first Tuesday of the month and will have Sgt. Chris Sovern, who is very familiar with Sycamore Township, attend the Sycamore Township meetings on the first Tuesday of the month in his place.

Mr. LaBarbara requested an update saying he understands another suspect has been apprehended in connection with the 2019 shootings at the Hampton Inn.

Lt. Tarr answered yes, saying that was one of two suspects in the case from Atlanta, noting the other suspect from Atlanta remains at large. He pointed out the two suspects that were charged with murder are both in custody.

EMS/Fire Report

Covid-19 Update

Chief Penny reported there are 74 additional people quarantined at home since the last Trustees Meeting. He said he did not have information about the number of people released from quarantine.

Chief Penny reported one of the Township's Firefighter's father passed away suddenly shoveling snow this morning. He said the father had served the Township as a firefighter for about ten years beginning in 1995. He offered condolences and support to the family.

Building Issues

Chief Penny reported he had gotten some pricing on what it would take to address Fire Department building issues. He said he met with Mr. Warrick last week and Mr. Warrick has names of people who build fire stations that he will reach out to for pricing as well. He said the floor on the second level of Station 92 has dropped about three inches and pointed out there are a lot of problems with the building other than cosmetic.

Mr. Weidman asked Chief Penny if this would have to go out to bid.

Chief Penny said right now he is trying to get some pricing and direction on what to do with the building and then we will go out to bid.

Mr. Weidman asked the purpose of bringing in the people Mr. Warrick knows.

Chief Penny answered he is trying to see if there is one contractor who could do multiple things rather than having a bunch of different contractors. He spoke about the difficulty he has had dealing with multiple contractors.

Mr. Warrick said he and Chief Penny are information gathering right now ahead of bringing it to the Board to construct a bid process.

Chief Penny reported there have been a couple fires lately and cautioned the public against using kerosene heaters even in the garage due to fire and carbon monoxide risks.

Mr. James asked if there had been accidents due to snow and ice.

Chief Penny answered this last snow has not been much of a problem. He stated there tend to be more accidents when there is a dusting because people aren't being as cautious as they are during a major snowstorm.

Roads, Maintenance and Recreation Report

Mr. James commented Mr. Kellums' crew is awesome at cleaning the roads and stated people are praising them all over social media. He asked Mr. Kellums to pass along appreciation from everyone in the meeting.

Mr. Kellums reported on the efforts to keep the snow cleared during the recent snow events. He said the crew has been working 12 hour shifts and, on this storm alone, 243 tons of salt were used. He said they achieved great results from using the new system for brine, beet juice and calcium chloride.

Mr. LaBarbara asked how we are doing on salt.

Mr. Kellums answered we are ok, and he has another 500 tons of salt ordered. He noted preparations are underway for another round of possible accumulation Wednesday night into Thursday.

Chief Penny said the maintenance crew does a phenomenal job and the men have great attitudes.

Mr. Kellums reported there is a bid opening for the 2021 Road Program on Friday, February 19th at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. James asked about the maintenance building progress.

Mr. Kellums said no one has been there the past couple days due to weather. He said there was a nine-page punch list which they are getting close to completing. He reported the driveway at Sycamore Road is now open for use by the fire trucks.

Planning & Zoning Report

Mr. Miller reported he had a nuisance resolution for the Board's consideration for a property on East Galbraith Road on which the property owner has been storing materials such as garbage and

junk vehicles. He said looking at aerial views of the property over the last 15 years, some of the vehicles have been on the property that long. He said this resolution is for materials and debris only to enable them to get on site and better document and inventory the vehicles. He reported there have been some conversations with the property owner who claims he has documentation that he has permission to use this property for storage. Mr. Miller said Mr. Clark documents conditions on this property, and all nuisance properties, weekly.

Mr. James commented he has discussed this property with Mr. Miller and acknowledged it is a problem.

Mr. Miller noted the Township has received complaints from neighboring residents about this property.

Resolution – 3684 East Galbraith Road Nuisance Property

The resolution “Providing for and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 3684 East Galbraith Road, Sycamore Township, OH 45236” was read by Mr. Miller. A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara to approve the resolution, and dispense with a second reading.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Resolution 2021-011 passed this 16th day of February, 2021.

Mr. Miller reported he is moving forward with the Montgomery Road Study regarding Township owned properties there and has 95% of a list of names for the resident, business, and developer focus groups. He said Mr. Warrick has coordinated use of the auditorium at Jewish Hospital so the focus groups have space to meet in person. He said outside planning consultant Jay Stewart will facilitate the focus groups and meetings will commence in March.

Law Director Report:

Mr. Desai requested a motion at the end of the agenda to discuss pending litigation with the Law Director.

Public Comments:

Ms. Kathy Kugler, of 7106 Tenderfoot Lane addressed the Board. Ms. Kugler stated she had asked at a previous meeting if the Trustees would consider starting a volunteer group to do things for the community. She said she hadn’t heard back from anybody and requested someone get back to her so she could develop some ideas to bring back to the Board. Ms. Kugler then asked if the Trustees would consider having the comments from the public take place at the end of the meeting so they could comment on business in real time. She then discussed how good it is to get out and walk and asked if it is possible to clear walking paths in Bechtold, McDaniel and Schuler Parks after snows so that people can walk the paths. Ms. Kugler also asked if the Trustees are receiving copies of the minutes from the Parks Advisory Committee meetings.

Mr. James asked Mr. Kellums if it was feasible to clean the walking paths in the parks.

Mr. Kellums answered we do not have the equipment to do that right now. He said the Township would have to buy equipment; it would take time and manpower; and it would have to be done after the Maintenance Department has Township roads clear of snow.

Mr. James requested Mr. Kellums obtain a cost estimate for clearing the walking paths of snow.

Mr. Kellums commented he assumes we would need to salt the paths also and asked Mr. Desai about liability involved if someone were to fall after we salt and the path ices again.

Mr. Desai suggested putting up disclaimers.

Mr. James said the Trustees are seeing Parks Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes and the Board will consider her other comments as well.

Administrator Report:

Mr. Warrick said there would be a delay to set up a Zoom Room for an Executive Session as it was not something we prepared for ahead of time.

Mr. Warrick said we had plenty of phone in compliments and as someone who drives in from outside the Township, it is very obvious when he enters Sycamore Township. He said the brine and beet juice application seems to work better than other communities' processes. He said there were a few people with issues and the maintenance crew was very accommodating to remedying those requests.

Purchase Orders over \$2,500.00

Mr. Warrick presented purchase order number 8729A, a blanket purchase order for roads materials necessary to pay for the additional five tons of salt Mr. Kellums mentioned in his report.

Blanket Vendor	Roads Materials	\$36,667.00
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Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve this request. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Warrick presented purchase order number 8794 for Pillar Insurance for renewal of firefighter's insurance plan.

Pillar Insurance	Renewal Firefighters Insurance	\$8,247.00
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Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve this request. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Kellums reported there will be a cost of \$11,130.05, which has already been appropriated and encumbered, for Capital Electric to troubleshoot the fiber issues at Bob Meyer Park.

Fiscal Officer Report

Mr. Porter said he received three communications from residents complimenting the snowplow drivers and asked if he had permission to read them.

Mr. James gave permission for Mr. Porter to provide a summary of the communications.

1. A communication from Carol Martini of 8098 Merrymaker Lane thanking the snowplow drivers who were on Merrymaker for doing such a great job clearing the cul de sac.
2. A communication from Audrey Stites of 7934 Merrymaker Lane thanking the snowplow drivers who did a great job clearing the snow on Merrymaker Lane.
3. A communication from Dan Tracy of Bearcreek Drive thanking the snowplow drivers who did a great job clearing the snow.

Mr. James said he appreciates residents letting us know how we are doing; good or bad.

Mr. Weidman commented the previous Chairman would not allow Mr. Porter to read communications from residents and asked for clarification from the new Chairman about communications.

Mr. Desai said communications should be summarized.

There was a discussion about communications and when they should be read.

Mr. James said he appreciates them but is not sure we need to take time in the meeting to read them all. He noted if residents wished to comment they have the opportunity to speak at the meetings.

Mr. Weidman asked if Mr. James' position is that we will summarize communications and not read them.

Mr. James answered he is not taking a position and will consider it.

Mr. Weidman asked if he will be selective on what is read based on content.

Mr. James said we get all sorts of communications at the Township and the board does not need to take up time at the meetings to read them.

Pay Bills and Read Receipts

The Receipts in the amount of \$132,519.19 and Disbursements in the amount of \$318,001.68 for February 16, 2021 were read by the Fiscal Officer 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: /s/ Robert C. Porter III
Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara to accept them.
Mr. LaBarbara called roll. Vote: James: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Trustee Comments

Mr. Weidman stated we have Eli Chang on the meeting and wished him luck in his pursuit of the Ohio Township Association Scholarship and in future endeavors. He then thanked Mr. Kellums and his crew for doing such a great job keeping the streets clear after the recent snow and for working long hours. Mr. Weidman reported the Hamilton County Township Association Meeting will take place on February 25, 2021 and asked for confirmation from Mr. James and Mr. LaBarbara that they had received his email about the meeting.

Mr. LaBarbara stated he was on the Hamilton County COVID-19 update call this morning and reported daily case counts continue to decline. He said vaccines for COVID-19 are available for those age 65 and older and phasing has been paused to catch up on those in that age group.

Mr. LaBarbara said he owed an apology to Mr. Petty and the Parks Advisory Committee because he had left the January Parks Advisory Meeting early and understood they decided to wait until the parks survey results were in to decide on his idea to have two tennis courts which could be used as four Pickle Ball courts at Bechtold Park. He said he reported as such at the February 2nd Trustees Meeting but has since learned the Committee decided at the end of the January meeting to support his idea 100 percent. Mr. LaBarbara said that was the first step, second step to convince the other Trustees and third step is to get the funding. He likened this to the movie Field of Dreams. He spoke of the success of Pickle Ball Courts in other communities and thanked the Parks Advisory Committee for their support of this project which he will revisit next year.

Mr. LaBarbara thanked Mr. Kellums and his crew for their hard work this week and also for a great job on the new monument sign outside of the Township Government Complex.

Mr. James welcomed Eli Chang and thanked him for joining the meeting. He said he learned about the Ohio Township Scholarship last month, has been trying to bring it to people's attention, and is glad to see Eli applied. He said he hopes others in the Township will apply as well and reminded people the application deadline is February 28th. He stated the OTA awards four \$1,500 scholarships to students who reside in an Ohio Township and one of the qualifiers is you must attend a Township meeting in order to apply.

Mr. James noted today is Mardi Gras and there are no parades in New Orleans this year, but people are looking at floats in peoples' yards which may inspire us to come up with ways to get together and celebrate during COVID spring and summer in our neighborhoods.

Announcements

Mr. James said announcement changes are noted on the agenda and include the Board of Zoning Appeals remote meeting held on Wednesday, February 17th; the bid opening Friday, February 19th at 10:00 a.m.; and the Public Hearing for Zoning Case 2020-07Z at 7860 Montgomery Road is Tuesday March 16th at 6:00 p.m. He referred people to the website calendar for other events.

Executive Session

Mr. Weidman made a motion to adjourn into executive session with Law Director Deepak Desai as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 to discuss pending litigation. Mr. LaBarbara seconded the motion.

Mr. James invited Fiscal Officer Porter, Mr. Warrick, Mr. Kellums and Mr. Miller into the Executive Session with the Trustees.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: James: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: Aye

End Regular Session: 8:11 p.m.

Begin Executive Session: 8:14 p.m.

End Executive Session: 8:22 p.m.

Back in Regular Session: 8:22 p.m.

Mr. Porter called roll; all three Trustees were present.

A motion was made by Mr. Weidman to instruct Law Director Desai to file a motion with the court to enforce a Settlement Agreement in the House of Browns case. Mr. James seconded the motion. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. James explained for the public's reference this is a motion to enforce a settlement agreement in place in which the other party has not fully complied. He said it is the Township's hope that the other party will come into compliance, but we have no choice but to enforce it now as the deadline has passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: All Aye.

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

/s/ Thomas C. James, Jr.

Thomas C. James, Jr., Chairman

/s/ Jim LaBarbara

Jim LaBarbara, Vice Chairman

/s/ Thomas J. Weidman

Thomas J. Weidman, Trustee

/s/ Robert C. Porter III

Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

02/16/2021