

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 10:30 a.m.

The Special Meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Fiscal Officer Porter.

Present for the Special Meeting were Trustee James, Trustee Schwegmann, Trustee Weidman, Fiscal Officer Porter, Interim Administrator/Superintendent Kellums, Planning & Zoning Administrator Miller, Fire Chief Rob Penny and Finance and Accounting Director Debbie Campbell.

The invocation was read by Mr. Kellums.

Pledge to the Flag.

Mr. Porter welcomed Ms. Schwegmann to the Board of Trustees. He then called roll and all three Trustees indicated they were present.

Organization of the Board

Mr. Porter requested a motion to organize the Board for 2022.

Ms. Schwegmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, for Mr. Weidman to serve as Chairman of the Board. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Mr. Weidman then began to lead the meeting as Chairman.

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, for Ms. Schwegmann to serve as Vice Chairman of the Board. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Executive Session

A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. James, to adjourn the meeting to executive session as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(1) to discuss the employment and compensation of the Township Law Director. Mr. Weidman noted action may be taken as a result of the discussion in executive session.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: Aye; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

End Regular Session: 10:34 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 10:36 a.m.

End Executive Session: 10:52 a.m.

Back in Regular Session: 10:53 a.m.

Mr. Porter called roll. All three Trustees indicated they were present.

Ms. Schwegmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to terminate the contract with the current Law Director Mr. Deepak Desai.

Mr. James stated he does not think this is the right decision, but the Board has the right to choose its counsel and the majority controls that. He then asked if that is the proper language to say we are terminating a contract.

Mr. Weidman stated we did not actually have a contract; it was a resolution and asked Ms. Schwegmann if she had made her motion with an effective date.

She restated her motion to terminate the contract with the current Law Director Mr. Deepak Desai effective January 31, 2022. Mr. Weidman seconded.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: No; ; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

Ms. Schwegmann made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to hire an Interim Law Director, Mr. Larry Barbieri of Schroeder, Maundrell, Barbieri & Powers per a contract that was circulated earlier.

Mr. Weidman noted Mr. Barbieri comes with a great deal of knowledge of local government, and we are looking forward to having him on board.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: Aye; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

Ms. Schwegmann made a motion to direct Interim Administrator Kellums to circulate an RFQ in the effort to hire a permanent Law Director. Mr. Weidman seconded.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: Aye; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

Mr. Weidman invited Mr. Barbieri to join the Board on the dais.

Accounting Software

Discussion of UAN/BUCS Software

Mr. Weidman reported he had invited staff who use the Township's accounting software every day, Chief Penny, Mr. Kellums and Ms. Campbell, as well as Fiscal Officer Porter, to discuss the accounting software so the Board may understand the pros and cons of the switch that was made from BUCS to UAN.

Chief Penny displayed a PowerPoint presentation he had prepared comparing UAN and BUCS. He then pointed out items he said are issues with the UAN software such as the use of a USB drive for system backup and the inability of department heads to add new vendors.

Mr. James asked if the State Auditor's office had been contacted about the issues.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Porter noted the Township had no support or training for UAN from the Auditor's Office which Mr. Porter stated is the reason Mr. Warrick had to bring in temporary help from Mr. Rick Cropper for the entire year.

Ms. Campbell reported she contacted UAN about uploading the Township's financial information to the Ohio Checkbook and was told UAN only has the capability to do that once a year after the year is closed. She noted Mr. James had requested the financial information be uploaded quarterly. She said data may be updated to the Ohio Checkbook quarterly or even monthly from BUCS.

Chief Penny stated BUCS allows data used for budgeting to be exported in Excel so that the data may be manipulated and updated for future budgets. He stated UAN exports data only as a PDF which makes it very time consuming for planning budget

Ms. Schwegmann asked Mr. Kellums if he has the same issues.

Mr. Kellums answered yes, UAN is cumbersome.

Chief Penny went on to report other issues with UAN such as the inability to attach invoices and difficulties with searching for invoices to find out if they have been paid. He noted that he has had problems with missed invoices and past due notices due to the UAN workflow which requires a requisition, an email to Ms. Campbell with the invoice so she can create a purchase order, then an email back to him with the invoice to enter it. Chief Penny said BUCS allowed him to process an invoice all the way through himself without having to email back and forth with Ms. Campbell.

Chief Penny stated UAN does not track the amount left in an account until after the checks are cut, making it necessary for him to create a miniature check register on the side to keep track of what has been spent between Trustees Meetings. He said that is made even more difficult because some invoices are paid by him, and some are paid by Ms. Campbell. He stated BUCS keeps track of the balance for invoices entered and outstanding.

Mr. Kellums agreed that has been a big problem for everyone.

Chief Penny noted BUCS flags duplicate invoices immediately, UAN does not. He stated sometimes a duplicate invoice will be entered and Ms. Campbell has to fix that mistake. He said BUCS allows the invoice to be inserted into the actual transaction.

Chief Penny explained the process to create a requisition in UAN noting there is no place to put an invoice number or attached or insert the invoice.

Mr. Kellums said there is a balance available on the requisition form for the account you choose but it is not always correct.

Chief Penny said the only day that number is correct is the day after a check run.

Ms. Schwegmann asked questions of Chief Penny.

Chief Penny and Ms. Campbell reiterated how cumbersome the UAN workflow is to work with when you have multiple people using it.

Ms. Schwegmann said it sounds like staff has quite a bit of experience with both software and asked if UAN is sophisticated enough for this Township.

Mr. Porter answered in his opinion it is not. He stated he did not want to switch to UAN and neither he nor staff was asked for input on what software the Township should use.

Mr. Weidman said CPA Mark Hurst also said a change to UAN is going backwards. He said far be it for this Board to say they know more about accounting software than Fiscal Officer Porter and the staff who works with it every day. He said he was very public about the fact that it does not make sense to him to tell Mr. Porter how to do his job.

Chief Penny showed screen shots of BUCS and explained how easy it was to see if an invoice had already been paid.

Mr. Kellums noted BUCS also gives a history for each vendor.

Chief Penny showed a screen shot from UAN noting how cumbersome it is to see if an invoice had been paid.

Mr. James asked why there is a column for invoice number, and none entered. He asked if the invoice numbers were not being entered.

Chief Penny said the issue is UAN does not allow him to enter an invoice when he completes the form for the requisition and chooses the account from which to pay the invoice. He said Ms. Campbell has to complete the process for him which leads to confusion.

Mr. James stated have two eyes on invoices that are getting paid is not a bad thing.

Chief Penny said that is not a bad thing, but the current workflow is causing issues.

Mr. James said there has not been training due to COVID and frankly, the politics of the accounting system has hindered this as well. He stated he understands it is not working and said he does not care what accounting software we use as long as it tracks money correct, is subject to audit controls, and it provides useful reports to the Trustees which we were not getting in BUCS.

Mr. Kellums said they had examples of financial reports that may be generated from BUCS.

Mr. Kellums said we had all been trained on BUCS it seems they were looking for a solution to a problem that was not there because things were running smoothly for years.

Mr. Weidman said the Township has \$100,000.00 taxpayer money invested in one person to train staff in UAN and we still cannot operate the UAN system for our benefit which makes no sense to him.

Mr. Porter stated the Township switched to UAN because that is what former Administrator Ray Warrick wanted because he was familiar with it at Hamilton Township. He stated he and staff want to go back to BUCS noting he was against UAN from the beginning.

Mr. James said there was more to it than that. He noted he does not care what accounting software we use; he just wants it to have integrity, be protected from fraud, audit trails, and provide useful reports to the trustees who have a fiduciary duty to properly manage and administer the money of the Township. Mr. James said he does have a concern and asked why we have not heard about the issues with UAN before now. He said the department heads should not just say there is a problem but come explain what the problem is noting all the Trustees are available.

Chief Penny reported he went to Mr. Warrick several times about this issue, the first time before the Township changed to UAN. He said when he did so later, Mr. Warrick arranged a meeting with Rick Cropper in which Chief Penny was told the solution to the UAN workflow issues was to print each invoice, hand write on it and hand deliver it to Ms. Campbell.

Mr. James said his point is if there is a problem, get past the politics of it and bring it to the Trustees.

Mr. Weidman stated at least some of the staff was concerned about retribution from our former Administrator, which was a valid concern and one of the reasons it did not come to the Board. He said that issue has been eliminated and now staff is now telling us there is a problem and it is the beginning of the year, so we need to make the transition to BUCS quickly.

Ms. Schwegmann asked if there are modules associated with the BUCS system that could provide additional reporting.

Mr. Porter answered BUCS can generate about any report. He said when he first met Mr. Warrick, he stated he wanted to move to UAN and there was no discussion or input from the people who work with it daily. He noted the Township has had 30 years of clean audits to say that there was a problem is just not the case. He said we could go to a more expensive software, but he would like to see us go back to BUCS. Mr. Porter said the Township has already spent \$100,000.00 on UAN which we should not have had to pay.

Ms. Schwegmann said the duly elected Fiscal Officer in favor of going back to BUCS and staff prefers it as well for streamline of use and because it appears to be a more sophisticated system. She noted the Township has spent a lot on training already in UAN which does not seem to be terribly satisfying.

Ms. Schwegmann made a motion to return to the utilization of the BUCS system for the Township's accounting software. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion.

Mr. James asked if Mr. Cropper was being paid for training staff or for data entry.

Ms. Campbell answered Mr. Cropper was paid for data entry he actually never ran the program. She stated when Mr. Warrick called to initiate UAN, they put the Township on a waiting list and Mr. Warrick did not want to wait which is why he hired Mr. Cropper to put in the data. She noted that was why staff did not get training. She said Mr. Cropper never ran the program and any question she asked his answer was that he would try to figure that out.

Mr. Weidman said so there was not any training, he was data entry.

Ms. Schwegmann commented data entry for \$100,000.00.

Ms. Campbell pointed out Mr. Cropper entered data that had already been entered in BUCS through May, 2021 and he did not enter the invoice numbers which made it difficult to find things.

Mr. Weidman stated for the record, there are about 1,304 Townships in Ohio and the Auditor's office designed this software as a plug and play software for small Townships not for Townships of over 20,000 residents. He noted when Mr. Warrick said 85% of the Townships in Ohio use UAN, that is no surprise because most Townships in Ohio are small. He said UAN is not a good system for a Township of our size that has four JEDZ, a CIC which UAN could not even run without an additional fee contrary to what we were told by the former Administrator. Mr. Weidman stated this is a great move back to BUCS and we should relinquish control of accounting to the duly elected Fiscal Officer. He said Ms. Campbell has worked with UAN every day and it has become an over \$100,000 disaster. Mr. Weidman noted he has been opposed to the change to UAN from the beginning and he thinks we should move back to BUCS because it has been very successful for us over the years and is the best move for the Township.

Mr. James said he disagrees with some of those characterizations.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: Aye; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

Mr. Weidman stated he would like to go back to the Trustees signing the checks as opposed to a prepopulated electronic signature which was done partially because of COVID. He noted this practice allows the Trustees to see the backup paperwork for each check and have the ability to ask questions if needed. He said with the list of checks the Board currently receives, there is no backup paperwork.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to go back to signatures on Township checks from this point forward.

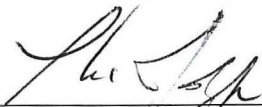
Ms. Schwegmann seconded the motion saying it adds to the checks and balances.

Mr. James agreed he does not have a problem with that saying if he ever had a question about a check on the list in the past he had always asked and gotten the information immediately. He agreed having the check and paperwork in front of you is more convenient.


Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: Mr. James: Aye; Ms. Schwegmann: Aye; Mr. Weidman: Aye

Mr. James made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

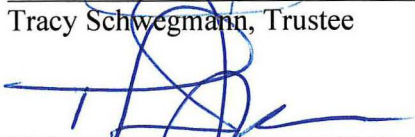
The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.



Thomas C. James, Jr., Trustee



Tracy Schwegmann, Trustee



Thomas J. Weidman, Trustee



Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer
Special Meeting 01/04/2022