

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

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

Present for the meeting were Chairman Schwegmann, Vice Chairman Weidman, Trustee James, Fiscal Officer Deters, Law Director Barbieri, Administrator Kellums, Planning & Zoning Administrator Uckotter, and Lt. Tarr from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Superintendent Reutelshofer and Fire Chief Penny were absent.

The invocation was read by Mr. Kellums.

Pledge to the Flag.

#### **Approval of the October 3, 2023, Public Hearing Minutes**

The October 3, 2023, Public Hearing minutes were presented for approval. Mr. Weidman made a motion to accept them, seconded by Mr. James.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

#### **Approval of the October 3, 2023, Trustee Meeting Minutes**

The October 3, 2023, Trustee Meeting minutes were presented for approval. Mr. Weidman made a motion to accept them, seconded by Mr. James.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

#### **Presentation – Natalie Fields, Branch Manager, Deer Park Library**

Ms. Natalie Fields, Branch Manager, Deer Park Library, addressed the board. Ms. Fields stated in 2021, a renovation of the Deer Park Library, located in Sycamore Township, was completed. She reported the Deer Park Branch was the most-visited branch in Hamilton County in 2022 and is on track for that distinction in 2023 as well. She thanked the Sycamore Township community for using the library, noting that use of all library services has greatly increased. She reported the old Deer Park location had only four computers with some waiting up to two hours to use them; the new branch has more computers, and no one has had to wait to use one since the new branch opened.

Ms. Fields went on to describe new ways the library has been able to serve the community in this expanded space including job fairs, Hamilton County Developmental Disability Services workshops and office hours, and, beginning this week, senior lunch events every Wednesday at noon. She pointed out the senior lunches, sponsored by Episcopal Retirement Services and the Council on Aging, will also support small local restaurants by contracting with them to provide the food.

Ms. Field described county-wide initiatives by the library including progress on the facilities master plan that began in 2019 which include the addition of much needed meeting and study spaces. She emphasized that the library serves everyone from babies to senior citizens, holding

5,000 story times last year and delivering 155,000 items to senior facilities. Ms. Fields thanked the Board for allowing her to speak, saying she wants the Township to know how our tax dollars are making an impact on the community.

The Board thanked Ms. Fields for coming to the meeting to present.

### **Public Comments**

No members of the public signed up to speak.

### **Sheriff Patrol Report**

Lt. Tarr reported late Saturday night, Car 79 was struck while it was on the highway assisting with a car crash that occurred. He stated luckily no one was injured and the driver had insurance. He stated he will keep Mr. Kellums updated on this.

### **EMS/Fire Report**

Mr. Kellums stated he did not have a report on behalf of Chief Penny.

### **Planning & Zoning Report**

Mr. Uckotter reported he spoke to the property owner of the property located at 12093 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue that was the subject of a public hearing regarding an unsecure/unsafe structure on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. He said the property owner noted he is under contract with Wayne Contractors to remove the building and they are in the process of applying for demolition permits.

Ms. Schwegmann asked about the fence situation to secure the property.

Mr. Uckotter answered the owner installed a better fence.

Mr. Weidman asked if Mr. Haigh, a resident who spoke at a recent meeting, had obtained the necessary zoning permits.

Mr. Uckotter answered Mr. Haigh did reach out to the Township and the documents are available for him to pick up at the front desk. He said Mr. Haigh also made some public records requests that are being fulfilled. He said the ball is in Mr. Haigh's court to pick up the applications and then apply for zoning certificates. Mr. Uckotter described conditions on Mr. Haigh's property and discussed a shed and other accessory structures on the property and whether or not zoning certificates could be issued for those items.

### **Roads, Maintenance & Recreation Report**

Mr. Kellums reported on behalf of Mr. Reutelshofer that curbside leaf collection for residents has begun, and all road projects have finished for the year.

Mr. Kellums stated Mr. Reutelshofer and Mr. Gould are in Columbus attending the Ohio Transportation and Engineering Conference and will return to the office on Thursday.

Mr. James asked Mr. Kellums the status of the road project in Sturbridge. He noted Mr. Kellums had previously reported the project was to be inspected by ODOT and said residents in Sturbridge are unhappy with the project.

Mr. Kellums answered the contractor was to bring in a third party to inspect the project also. He said two hours before ODOT was scheduled to inspect the project, the engineer called the Township and said they would not get involved. He said the Township is looking for a third party willing to inspect the job. Mr. Kellums said he thought ODOT would be in the Township's corner, but apparently, someone decided they weren't going to do that.

Mr. James asked when Mr. Kellums learned ODOT would not inspect the project.

Mr. Kellums answered he did not have the exact date, but it was since the last Trustee meeting.

Mr. Kellums reported he had a meeting scheduled on Thursday with Parks Supervisor Jason Petty and a group of residents from Sturbridge to talk about the playground at Bob Meyer Park.

### **Law Director Report**

Mr. Barbieri reported the decision on the Landmark case was set for some time around October 13<sup>th</sup> but he hasn't gotten it yet. He said he expects it any day and would let the Board know as soon as he gets it.

### **Administrator Report**

#### **Station 93 HVAC**

Mr. Kellums reported on the fire station 93 HVAC. He reminded the Board the Township had gone out to bid for it and the only bid received was twice the engineer's estimate, so it was not awarded. He said in the meantime, Mike Gould has done a good job working with Bachman and BME on a resolution. He reported Bachman conducted an inspection and found some issues, including undersized ductwork, with the system; they recommended that we install a one-and-a-half-ton split system for the locker room and a three-ton split system for the fitness room. This would allow air to be redirected into the bunk area, kitchen, and living area to increase airflow to those areas. Mr. Kellums noted there is a complex building automation system in that building that would be replaced with standard controls and dampers. He said we have spent \$58,000.00 on repairs to the current system, and it is still not working properly. Mr. Kellums reported both Bachman and BME submitted bids. He recommended contracting with Bachman, who submitted the lower bid at \$73,460.00. He explained why he thinks Bachman would do a great job.

Mr. Weidman asked about the HVAC and duct work in the Schuler Community Room.

Mr. Kellums answered Schuler would have its own controller, but it would also be getting more air from the split systems being put in the other two rooms and undersized duct work there would also be replaced.

Mr. Weidman asked if the geothermal portion would be abandoned.

Mr. Kellums answered no, the geothermal portion will still run the rest of the system.

Mr. James made a motion to accept the bid from Bachman and award them the contract for repairs to the Station 93 and Schuler Community Room HVAC. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion.

Mr. Kellums noted the bid amount is \$73,460.00.

Ms. Schwegmann asked if a motion was needed for the electric component.

Mr. Kellums answered the need for the electric component would be determined later.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: All Aye.

### **Fiber Repair**

Mr. Kellums reported fiber was damaged that runs from the box on Kugler Mill Road into the control room in the basement of the Administration Building. He said it is working now but there are no redundancies so if something happens, we will be out. He stated he had received two bids for this project, one from Atkins and Stang for \$17,900.00 and one from ADB for \$18,629.50. Mr. Kellums commented that Atkins and Stang has done a lot of work for the Township and is very dependable.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve payment to Atkins and Stang for the Fiber Repair Project in the amount of \$17,900.00. Mr. James seconded the motion.

Mr. James asked Mr. Kellums what caused the damage to the fiber.

Mr. Kellums answered that is a good question saying we think it was a contractor for Duke Energy that was trimming limbs. He said we have fought with the contractor and Duke Energy, who states it was not their contractor, it was squirrel damage. Mr. Kellums said he does not believe that's what it was, and he could talk to Mr. Barbieri about getting money back from Duke, but this has to be fixed.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: All Aye.

### **Administration Building Repair**

Mr. Kellums reported the front of the township Administration Building has water damage and said work needs to be done to the soffits, trim, and columns, and the siding will be replaced with Hardie Board. He requested a motion to award the project to Schrudde & Zimmerman in the amount of \$29,400.00.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to hire Schrudde & Zimmerman for the repairs to the Administration Building in the amount of \$29,400.00. Mr. James seconded the motion.

Mr. James commented that the competing bid was \$43,370.00. Mr. Kellums said that was correct.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: All Aye.

### **Resolution – Property & Casualty Insurance**

Mr. Kellums reported the Township went with Ohio Plan for property and casualty insurance last year and we have gotten great customer service from them. He said we met with them, and this year's proposal has an increase in the premium of 1.64%. He explained the reason for the increase, noting it is pretty reasonable in today's market. He said the amount not to exceed is \$144,222.00.

The resolution "Authorizing the Township Administrator to Approve a Contract for Property and Casualty Insurance, Dispensing with a Second Reading and Declaring an Emergency" was presented by Mr. Kellums. Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. James.

Mr. James asked if other bids were solicited.

Mr. Kellums answered there are not a lot of options as private insurance will not insure the sheriff's vehicles because we own the vehicles, but they are not our employees. He stated the only other real option is OTARMA and we left OTARMA because we did not like their contract.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye  
Resolution 2023-082 passed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2023

**Resolution – Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission & Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the County Auditor**

Mr. Kellums reported the next resolution for consideration is from the budget commission which sends the Township millage amounts. He pointed out we are at 8.75 mills which is the lowest millage of any township in Hamilton County.

The resolution "Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission & Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying Them to the County Auditor" was presented by Mr. Kellums. Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. James, dispensing with a second reading.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye  
Resolution 2023-083 passed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2023

**Purchase Orders Over \$5,000.00**

Mr. Kellums presented the following purchase orders over \$5,000.00 for approval:

23-59-5	Blanket Vendor	Fire Utilities	\$10,000.00
23-160	Pacewell 3 LLC	11500 Northlake Drive	\$57,153.89
23-161	Pacewell 2 LLC	7450 Keller Road	\$96,565.21
23-163-1	US Bank	Tax Increment Revenue Note	\$208,456.25
23-165	US Bank	2014 TriHealth Infrastructure Bond	\$141,462.50
23-166	US Bank	Various Purpose Refunding Bonds	\$569,950.00

Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the aforementioned purchase orders. Mr. James seconded the motion. Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Mr. James asked Mr. Kellums if we have gotten any new applicants for the finance committee, saying the resumes Mr. Kellums sent were all from 2022 or earlier. HE said he thought we had re-advertised.

Mr. Kellums answered we have not gotten any new applicants since then. He said we did re-advertise and we can do so again.



Mr. James requested Mr. Kellums to re-advertise and then gave Mr. Kellums a copy of Resolution 2022-075 which created the new finance committee. He pointed out the resolution does not make Mr. Deters the Chairman of the committee as Mr. Kellums had said, he is the Board's liaison to it. He said the resolution states Mr. Deters is a non-voting sixth member of the committee, the finance committee members nominate the Chairman, and it says the Trustees, not the Fiscal Officer, appoint the committee members who are to be nominated by the Administrator. Mr. James said Mr. Kellums had not nominated anyone. He requested Mr. Kellums get moving on this so the committee may keep an eye on Mr. Deters as an extra check on behalf of the voters and so that things can be vetted.

Mr. James went on to describe issues with bond documents last year that he said a finance committee could have helped with and pointed out it is extra protection in place for taxpayers.

Mr. Kellums said we will re-advertise for the finance committee.

Ms. Schwegmann stated it is great to put together a finance committee as a collective body, but she would not like to see the committee reconstituted when we have had so many changes to our finance operations from our Fiscal Officer to our internal staff.

Mr. Weidman added not to mention our accounting software.

Ms. Schwegmann said from her perspective, she would like to see the committee constituted but she does not want to set up another board for failure through all these transitions. She said it is not imprudent to wait until we have a more stable environment to guide a team. Ms. Schwegmann noted she has been on plenty of committees that were not well-guided, and they were pointless and a waste of time.

### **Fiscal Officer Report**

#### **Pay Bills and Read Receipts**

The receipts in the amount of \$504,012.14 and disbursements in the amount of \$1,640,152.18 for October 17, 2023, were read by Mr. Deters 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: 

Jonathan T. Deters, Fiscal Officer

Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the receipts and disbursements. Mr. James seconded the motion. Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

### **Trustees Comments**

Mr. Weidman encouraged residents to keep leaves out of the street during curbside leaf pickup season. He also noted Halloween Trick-or-Treat will be October 31<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. He said he spoke to Chief Penny and confirmed the fire department will be in the neighborhoods passing out candy again this year.

Ms. Schwegmann said we are back on a regular brush drop-off schedule for the first Saturday in November for those who missed it due to the date being changed in October.

Mr. James thanked Natalie fields from the library for bringing the Board up to speed on what's going on. He said the library is a great location, the best in the library system, and it's in Sycamore Township.

### **Announcements**

Ms. Schwegmann said the next Trustee Meeting will be Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, due to election day on November 7<sup>th</sup>, she then encouraged people to see the website calendar for other meeting and event information.

### **Executive Session**

Ms. Schwegmann requested a motion to adjourn into executive session as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1) to consider the employment and compensation of public employees. Mr. Weidman made the motion and Mr. James seconded the motion.

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

Ms. Schwegmann requested a motion to adjourn into executive session as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(8) to consider confidential information relating to specific business strategy and to discuss negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance. Mr. Weidman made the motion and Mr. James seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Deters, Mr. Barbieri, Mr. Kellums and Andrew Brossart from Bradley Payne Advisors were invited into the executive session with the three Trustees.

End Regular Session: 7:42 p.m.

Begin Executive Session: 7:45 p.m.

End Executive Session: 8:20 p.m.

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

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

Mr. James made a motion to adopt the renewal plan provided by Jefferson Health Plan effective January 1, 2024. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion. Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to hire Mary Tenorio as Assistant Finance Director. Mr. James seconded the motion. Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

Mr. James made a motion to elevate Amy Able to a full-time position. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion. Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye

The resolution "Setting the Rate of Pay for a Newly Hired Township Employee" was presented by Mr. Kellums. Mr. Kellums stated the resolution is for Mary J. Tenorio at a rate of \$85,500.00 per year and she will receive all applicable benefits. Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. James, dispensing with a second reading.

Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye  
Resolution 2023-084 passed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 2023

The resolution "Setting the Rate of Pay for a Township Employee" was presented by Mr. Kellums. Mr. Kellums stated the resolution is for Amy Beth Able at a rate of \$22.00 per hour and she will receive all applicable benefits. Mr. Weidman made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mr. James, dispensing with a second reading.

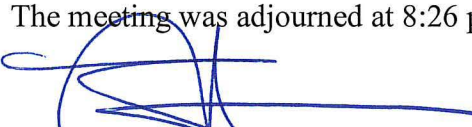
Mr. Deters called roll. Vote: James: Aye; Schwegmann: Aye; Weidman: Aye  
Resolution 2023-084 passed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 2023

Ms. Schwegmann welcomed Mary and Mr. Kellums noted Amy is doing a great job.

Mr. James congratulated Sharon Johnson on her retirement and Mr. Kellums noted Sharon has been great and will be missed.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. James. Vote: All Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

  
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Tracy Schwegmann, Chairman  
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Thomas J. Weidman, Vice Chairman  
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Thomas C. James, Jr., Trustee  
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Jonathan T. Deters, Fiscal Officer  
Regular Meeting 10/17/2023