

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Meeting
Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio
June 30, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman LaBarbara, Vice Chairman James, Trustee Weidman, Fiscal Officer Porter, Law Director Desai, Administrator Warrick, Superintendent/Assistant Administrator Kellums, Planning & Zoning Administrator Miller, Fire Chief Penny and Lt. Smith from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office.

Mr. LaBarbara noted seats in the meeting room had been spread out and temperatures of attendees had been taken to help avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Proclamation – Sons of the American Revolution Day

The proclamation "Declaring July 4, 2020 to be Sons of the American Revolution Day in Sycamore Township" was read by Mr. LaBarbara. A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. James to pass the Proclamation. Mr. Porter called Roll. All Aye.
The Proclamation passed this 30th day of June, 2020.

Approval of June 4, 2020 Trustees Meeting Minutes and June 16, 2020 Trustees Workshop Meeting Minutes

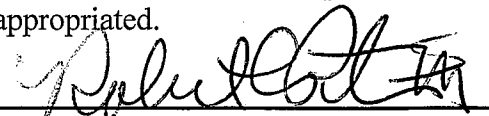
The June 4, 2020 Trustees Meeting Minutes were presented for approval. Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept them. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

The June 16, 2020 Trustee Workshop Meeting Minutes were presented for approval. Mr. LaBarbara made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept them. Mr. Porter called roll.
Vote: All Aye.

PAY BILLS AND READ RECEIPTS

The receipts, in the amount of \$379,556.18 and disbursements, in the amount \$317,540.93, for June 30, 2020 were read 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

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept them.

Mr. LaBarbara inquired about a disbursement to Paran Consulting for 8622 Plainfield Road.

Mr. Kellums explained that was for the asbestos study necessary prior to the demolition of the building on that property.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

SHERIFF PATROL ITEMS

Lt. Smith reported he had been promoted to Captain on June 25th; therefore, he will be moving on from his current role. He stated his likely replacement will be Lt. Mike Tarr. He noted he will introduce Lt. Tarr at the next Trustees Meeting.

Lt. Smith reported the district has been fairly quiet except for the assault incident which occurred at Kenwood Towne Center. He noted this was the first assault in Sycamore Township in 2020.

The Board of Trustees congratulated Lt. Smith on his promotion.

COVID-19 Update

Chief Penny reported there are currently 32 active COVID-19 cases in the Township and 25 expired cases. He noted the Fire Department's supply of PPE is in good shape but that he will take advantage of any opportunity to stock up.

Chief Penny stated he is working on another application for CARES Act relief in the amount of \$297,000.00.

AED Purchase

Chief Penny requested approval from the Board to purchase an AED (automated external defibrillator) device to have available in the Trustees Meeting Room in case of an emergency. He stated the cost would be \$1,884.00.

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to authorize Chief Penny to purchase an AED device to be installed in the Trustees Meeting Room.

Lt. Smith noted his deputies are all trained on the use of AED devices. Chief Penny stated they are designed for a lay person's use.

Ms. Kathy Kugler, 7106 Tenderfoot Lane, addressed the Board suggesting a sign be placed in the green space behind the building indicating an AED device is available inside.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. James asked Chief Penny if COVID-19 testing at Jewish Hospital is free of charge.

Chief Penny answered he believes so, but a doctor's note may be required there.

Mr. Weidman asked if Chief Penny had received the filters for the respirator masks obtained from Hamilton County EMA. Chief Penny answered no, and Mr. Weidman said he would check on them at the next EMA Board Meeting.

He noted the Hamilton County Building Department is currently closed due to an employee diagnosed with COVID-19.

ROADS, MAINTENANCE & RECREATION ITEMS

Mr. Kellums reported the Document Shredding event held June 20th for Sycamore Township residents was a success with 15,000 pounds of documents shredded.

Mr. Kellums requested a motion from the Board to allow him to advertise for an RFQ for engineering services for the Larchview Drive/Plainfield Road Reconstruction Project. He noted this project will be done in conjunction with Hamilton County and will be funded partially through a grant.

Mr. Weidman made a motion to advertise for an RFQ for engineering services for the Larchview Drive/Plainfield Road Reconstruction Project, seconded by Mr. James.

Mr. Weidman inquired about the details of the grant money. Mr. Kellums answered the grant will pay 50% of the cost to the Township which will be \$1.6 million, therefore, the Township would pay \$800,000.00 and the grant would pay \$800,000.00.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Standish Fortin, of 12137 McCauly Road, addressed the Board asking Mr. Kellums about the process for determining which roads to repair.

Mr. Kellums answered the roads are checked each year and there is usually a 20-year paving cycle with preventative maintenance in between paving.

Mr. Kellums reported there were approximately 50 people in attendance for the Jump 'n Jive Show Band concert at Bechtold Park that took place on Saturday, June 27th.

Mr. Kellums stated everything is set for the Trash Bash events which are rescheduled for September 18th and 19th at McDaniel Park and September 25th and 26th at Bechtold Park.

Mr. Kellums reported on the Sycamore Township Car Show which will take place on August 1st. Considering the current public health crisis, he suggested installing a tent in the parking lot for the awards distribution portion of the event instead of holding the awards ceremony indoors in the Schuler Community Room. The board agreed with his suggestion.

Mr. Kellums stated the Parks Advisory Committee met for the first time on June 29th and Chairman Jason Petty is encouraged by the committee's participation and enthusiasm. He said James T. Riley will be the Vice Chairman of the committee and the meeting minutes will be posted on the Township website.

Mr. James inquired about the status of on-going projects. Mr. Kellums answered current projects are on schedule.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

Mr. Miller reported the Planning & Zoning Department has seen an increase in violations which is common this time of year when grass is growing. He gave the Board an update on the nuisance property on Quailhollow Road noting the immediate danger had been abated and the contractor is preparing to pour the foundation.

Resolution – Nuisance Property 12087 1st Avenue

Mr. Miller stated he had a nuisance resolution prepared for a property on 1st Avenue with tall grass and garbage on site. The Board asked questions of Mr. Miller about the property and process.

“A Resolution Providing for and Authorizing Removal of Vegetation, Garbage, Refuse and Other Debris and Declaring a Nuisance for the Property Located at 12087 1st Avenue, Sycamore Township, Ohio 45249” was presented by Mr. Miller. A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the resolution, and dispense with the second reading. Mr. Porter called the roll. Vote: All Aye.

Resolution No. 2020-48 passed this 30th day of June, 2020.

Mr. Fortin commented there is a property on Fields Ertel Road with tall grass in the rear yard. Mr. Miller explained to Mr. Fortin the options for submitting a property maintenance complaint noting residents may do so anonymously.

Mr. Miller concluded his report by noting the Land Use Steering Committee has been on a hiatus due to COVID-19 and would resume meetings in July.

LAW DIRECTOR ITEMS

Mr. Desai stated he had nothing to report.

Mr. James asked Mr. Desai about setting up a code of regulations for the Township similar to the system the City of Cincinnati uses.

Chief Penny asked Mr. Desai about the contract for the Fire Department Medical Director.

Mr. Desai stated he has finalized that contract noting no further action is needed from the Board because a motion was made and unanimously approved on March 3rd for Chief Penny to enter into the contract.

Ms. Kugler asked Mr. Desai about the possibility of another organization installing more bat houses in the park similar to the Eagle Scout presentation at a previous meeting.

Mr. Desai responded there would have to be insurance and a release from liability.

Mr. LaBarbara reminded the audience that public comment during the Workshop Meetings should be in regard to agenda items noting other items may be presented during the public comment portion of the evening Trustees Meetings.

ADMINISTRATOR ITEMS

2021 Budget Process

Mr. Warrick reported on the process for establishing an operating budget for 2021 noting he had met with Chief Penny and Mr. Kellums to get them involved with the development of the budget. He then explained how he would like to handle the JEDZ income differently. He discussed the road maintenance budget, a core government service, and said the Planning & Zoning Department would also have a subset in the operating budget.

Mr. Fortin asked when Mr. Warrick would have the operating budget completed.

Mr. Warrick answered the final operating budget would be ready in December. He pointed out the 2021 Tax Budget is different and must be approved in July.

Mr. James noted the 2021 Tax Budget Public Hearing is set for 6:45 p.m. on July 14th and asked if 15 minutes is enough time for it.

Mr. Porter explained the Township will report the actual expenditures for 2018, 2019 and the first six months of 2020. He said the estimated expenditures for the last six months of 2020 and 2021 will also be reported. He noted this is not an operating budget, the purpose is to let the Hamilton County Auditor know that the Township needs the money from the tax levies that are in place and this has to be done in July. He noted he is fine with tweaking what we can.

Mr. Warrick added the tax budget is largely ceremonial stating it is his hope to tie it closer to the operating budget.

Purchase Order over \$2,500.00: Hamilton County Treasurer; Real Estate Taxes

Mr. Warrick presented the following purchase order for approval noting, due to the acquisition of the PEP Boys property, additional funds are needed to pay the Township's real estate tax bills. He stated there are certain government owned properties that do not qualify for exemption:

Robert A. Goering, Treasurer	Real Estate Taxes	\$50,000.00
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Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve this request. Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

There was then a discussion about which properties owned by the Township on Montgomery Road are taxable. Mr. Desai noted a property must be used for a public purpose to be exempt from property taxes.

Mr. Porter called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. James inquired about the results of the Center for Local Governments survey mentioned at the last meeting.

Mr. Warrick answered there were only two responses submitted.

FISCAL OFFICER ITEMS

Mr. Porter read a communication from residents Elizabeth and James Stanley praising Dennis Ziccardi for his professionalism in connection with easement issues.

TRUSTEE ITEMS

Mr. Weidman reported on House Bill 481 which is the vehicle to provide CARES Act funding to local municipalities. He stated the bill includes a number of amendments the legislators came to an agreement on including allowing municipalities to divert up to 25% of unencumbered TIF funds to be used for police and fire services or road maintenance for up to two years from the effective date of the bill; temporarily removing the threshold for competitive bidding for PPE; and requiring a transportation improvement district to comply with prevailing wage law.

Mr. Weidman stated allowing the use of unencumbered TIF funds could be really significant to the Township especially as it relates to roads. He suggested that the Township explore this to ensure that we have the ability to use unencumbered TIF funds for major projects such as the Larchview Drive/Plainfield Road Reconstruction Project and still complete our other road maintenance projects.

He noted there is some opposition to this, but he has gotten assurance from the Governor's office that Governor DeWine will sign it, and if not, there is a veto proof majority in the house and senate. Mr. Weidman suggested putting a plan together in short order to use up to 25% of unencumbered TIF funds for roads and safety services.

Mr. Warrick said it will be part of the 2021 budget.

Mr. James asked what the arguments are against the use of unencumbered TIF funds.

Mr. Weidman answered there is opposition from people who oppose TIF in general, often due to abuse of TIF funds.

Mr. James noted each Trustee signed off on letters to the legislature encouraging that this change occurs. He said the change in the TIF law does allow the 25% of unencumbered TIF funds to be used for a limited time subject to reimbursement out of the CARES Act. Whether our Township needs to do that or not, he said, is a question for the future.

Mr. Weidman said there will be no CARES Act reimbursement for roads, although there could be for police and fire.

Mr. Warrick stated it is confusing, pointing out the funds Chief Penny is receiving are tied to a different program in which the Fire Department can get reimbursed straight up for COVID-19 related expenses. He stated being able to use the 25% of unencumbered TIF funds will make it pretty easy to achieve the road budget.

Mr. Weidman stated the deadline for the use of the unencumbered TIF funds was extended to two years after the bill is signed.

Mr. James thanked Mr. Weidman for his efforts. He then encouraged people to respond to the 2020 Census stating it is important to have an accurate count in the Township to ensure local funding.

Mr. James also encouraged residents to patronize local businesses who may be struggling due to COVID-19.

Mr. James stated the 4th of July is this Saturday celebrating our Nation's birthday. He noted several people in the Township have arranged for a ceremony at our cemetery, which we commemorated at the start of this meeting with a proclamation, through which the headstones of some Revolutionary War heroes will be put in their proper place. He thanked organizers of that event.

A member of the public requested to address the Board saying the topic is not on the agenda, but it was about the 4th of July. Mr. LaBarbara told her to go ahead with her comments.

Ms. Barbara Holwadel, of 6022 Cherokee Dr., Madeira, OH, addressed the Board requesting an explanation as to why her request to use the concession area refrigerator and electricity at McDaniel Park for a private event on the 4th of July was denied.

Mr. Warrick explained the concessions area has not been in use and its Health Department permit has expired. He stated the permit issued to use the park did not include concessions and he was not aware of the request to use electricity.

There was a discussion about these requests, and it was decided to allow the use of the refrigerator for storage only and suggested that organizers rent a generator to provide electricity.

ANNOUNCEMENT CHANGES

Mr. LaBarbara noted the July 2nd Trustees Meeting is cancelled, the 2021 Tax Budget Public Hearing will be July 14th at 6:45 p.m., and the next Trustees Meeting will be held on a special date and time on Tuesday July 14th at 7:00 p.m.

A motion to adjourn into **Executive Session** with Law Director, Deepak Desai, to discuss pending litigation as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G) was made by Trustee LaBarbara and seconded by Trustee Weidman.

Vote: James: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: Aye.

Mr. LaBarbara invited the following people into the Executive Session with the Trustees: Ray Warrick, Tracy Kellums, Skylor Miller, Deepak Desai, and Rob Porter.

End regular session: 10:20 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 10:25 a.m.

The topic of imminent/threatened litigation was discussed.

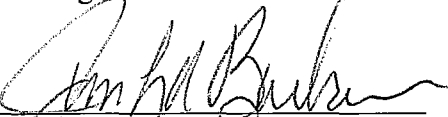
End Executive Session: 10:36 a.m.

Back in regular session: 10:38 a.m.

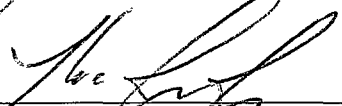
Mr. Porter called roll. The three Trustees all indicated they were present.

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Weidman and seconded by Trustee James. Vote: All Aye.

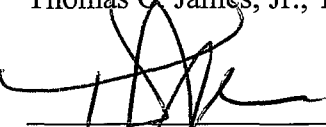
End regular session: 10:38 a.m.



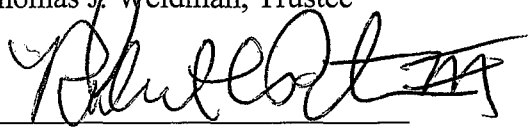
Jim LaBarbara, Chairman



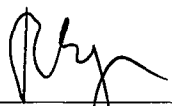
Thomas C. James, Jr., Trustee



Thomas J. Weidman, Trustee



Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer



Ray Warrick, Administrator
Workshop Minutes 06/30/2020