

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
Minutes of the Trustees of Sycamore Township Meeting
Sycamore Township, Hamilton County, Ohio
November 17, 2020

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 197) which permits Ohio governments to meet remotely during this time, this meeting was held without members of the public physically present. Video of the meeting was live streamed to the public on the internet.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman LaBarbara, Vice Chairman James, Trustee Weidman, Fiscal Officer Porter, Law Director Desai (*Mr. Desai joined remotely for Executive Sessions only.*), Administrator Warrick, Superintendent/Assistant Administrator Kellums, Planning & Zoning Administrator Miller and Fire Chief Penny. Lt. Tarr from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office was absent.

Approval of the October 21, 2020 Special Trustees Meeting Minutes

The October 21, 2020 Special Trustees Meeting Minutes were presented for approval. Mr. LaBarbara made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weidman, to accept them. Mr. LaBarbara called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Approval of the November 5, 2020 Trustees Meeting Minutes

The November 5, 2020 Trustees Meeting Minutes were presented for approval. Mr. LaBarbara made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to accept them. Mr. LaBarbara called roll. Vote: All Aye.

FISCAL OFFICER ITEMS

Pay Bills and Read Receipts

The receipts, in the amount of \$168,359.98 and disbursements, in the amount \$340,683.19 for November 17, 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 called roll. Vote: All Aye.

SHERIFF PATROL ITEMS

Lt. Tarr was not present to report.

EMS AND FIRE ITEMS

Chief Penny reported there was a house fire in the early morning hours in the Township. He stated the cause of the fire is still unknown and no one was hurt.

COVID-19 Update

Chief Penny reported there have been 84 additional COVID-19 cases quarantined in their residences in Sycamore Township since the last Trustees Meeting. He noted the Fire Department's runs have been on the rise with more high fever runs. Chief Penny reported there are a couple firefighters being tested for the virus.

Mr. Warrick stated he had a resolution for the Board's consideration to set the rate of pay for the recently hired firefighters.

The resolution "Setting the Rate of Pay for Newly Hired Full Time Employees in the Sycamore Township Fire Department" was presented by Mr. Warrick. A motion was made by Mr. Weidman, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the resolution and dispense with the second reading. Mr. LaBarbara called the roll. Vote: All Aye.

Resolution No. 2020-86 passed this 17th day of November, 2020.

Mr. James asked if the firefighters who are out being tested for COVID-19 are ill.

Chief Penny answered yes.

ROADS, MAINTENANCE & RECREATION ITEMS

Mr. Kellums reported he had done a final walk through with the State on the Sycamore Road Project noting they were very impressed with the project. He stated there are just a few minor items to wrap up at which point this project will be closed.

Mr. Kellums reported leaf pickup continues saying it has been very busy and is going smoothly.

Mr. Kellums stated he is putting together a package for the 2021 paving projects.

Mr. Kellums reported crews are still working in the parks and cutting grass due to the mild temperatures.

Mr. LaBarbara commented Sycamore Road looks great.

Mr. James asked if the stop signs had been installed on Wetherfield Lane.

Mr. Kellums answered they should be going in as we speak.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

Mr. Miller reported the nuisance resolution for 6460 Euclid Avenue may be removed from the agenda as the property was checked this morning and has been abated.

Mr. Miller reported he and Steve Reutelshofer met with Raj Chundur, from CAGIS to discuss a new unified application process for an applicant to go in and see all the agencies they need to apply to for different projects. He said other new features of the application include new public reporting and better reports for him to generate to keep the Trustees informed. Mr. Miller said maps for the

comprehensive plan will reflect text amendments as soon as he gets this software update. He stated work is being done on text amendments for the Zoning Resolution such as how we define yards; area allowances for fences; landscaping buffer yards; clear sight triangle language; and site lighting standards. He noted he will be taking these items to Zoning Commission for discussion.

Mr. James said when the Zoning Commission was previously going through the flawed redline version of the Zoning Resolution, there were a lot of public comments and asked Mr. Miller if he is taking those into account.

Mr. Miller answered he has seen some of those, but staff is looking at it with fresh eyes first.

Mr. James requested he look at public input because there was valuable commentary.

LAW DIRECTOR ITEMS

Mr. Desai was not present but will be joining by phone for executive sessions.

ADMINISTRATOR ITEMS

Mr. Warrick reported he had a purchase order for consideration for the Larchview/Plainfield Road Project which would have taken up our entire road project for next year. He said now that we are able to use 25% of unencumbered TIF for other road maintenance projects, we can move forward with this comfortably. He said the following purchase order is for the engineering portion of the project and asked Mr. Kellums if we have matching funds for this.

Mr. Kellums answered there are matching funds for construction but not for engineering. He noted the Board has already approved a resolution for the engineering contract.

Mr. Warrick stated this will be paid for with JEDZ funds.

Mr. Warrick presented the following purchase order for approval:

Choice One Engineering Larchview & Plainfield Rd. Improvements \$246,700.00

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve this request. Mr. LaBarbara called roll. All Aye.

TRUSTEE ITEMS

Mr. James asked Mr. Weidman if the Hamilton County Township Association will be meeting this year.

Mr. Weidman answered HCTA will probably have a remote meeting in December depending on legislation allowing remote meetings.

Mr. James said there are a few other County boards requiring appointments.

Mr. LaBarbara asked if there will be an election of officers.

Mr. Weidman answered yes, as soon as the HCTA has new by-laws, there will be an election of officers.

Mr. LaBarbara stated he spoke with Representative Bill Seitz and he seemed confident there would be an extension of the allowance for remote meetings. He said it would probably be a six-month extension and asked Mr. Weidman if that is what he has heard.

Mr. Weidman stated he suggested to Rep. Seitz that, instead of being tied to the health emergency, the extension should have a finite end date.

Mr. Weidman reported he is on the Hamilton County COVID-19 Defense Team which had a meeting yesterday. He stated there has been an increase in COVID case and also an increase in testing. He noted the increase in cases has been attributed to COVID fatigue and people increasing the size of their bubbles, for example with kids coming home from college or having friends over. Mr. Weidman noted the Wednesday before Thanksgiving is one of the largest bar nights and encouraged precautions if participating in that. He reported COVID-19 has struck our Sycamore Township staff and urged employees to work from home if they feel the need to do that. He encouraged the Board, if the virus stays at this level, to meet remotely the first two meetings in December.

ANNOUNCEMENT CHANGES

Mr. LaBarbara referred people to the website calendar for events noting the next Trustees Workshop will take place December 1st at 9:00 a.m.

A motion to adjourn into Executive Session with Law Director Deepak Desai as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 - Preparing for, conducting, or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees concerning their compensation or other items and conditions of their employment was made by Mr. LaBarbara and seconded by Mr. James.

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

Mr. LaBarbara invited the following people into the Executive Session with the Trustees: Rob Porter, Ray Warrick, Chief Penny, Skylor Miller, Tracy Kellums and Beth Gunderson

End regular session: 9:19 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 9:20 a.m.

End Executive Session: 9:54 a.m.

Back in regular session: 9:55 a.m.

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

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to proceed with the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the conditions proposed by Mr. Warrick. Mr. LaBarbara called roll. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Weidman made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to proceed with the HRA and HSA options for health insurance as proposed by Mr. Warrick. Mr. LaBarbara called roll. Vote: All Aye.

A motion to adjourn into Executive Session with Law Director Deepak Desai as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 to discuss ongoing litigation was made by Mr. LaBarbara and seconded by Mr. James.

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

Mr. LaBarbara invited Administrator Ray Warrick into the Executive Session with the Trustees.

End regular session: 9:57 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 9:58 a.m.

End Executive Session: 10:04 a.m.

Back in regular session: 10:05 a.m.

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

Mr. James made a motion that the Board approve the Settlement Agreement in the case involving the Fiscal Officer and Trustees which is currently pending in Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas. Mr. Weidman seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Warrick stated the resolution is to participate in UAN and he also has the UAN participation agreement for the Board to sign noting the Township will not go live with UAN until April 1, 2021.

“A Resolution to Participate in the Uniform Accounting Network Established by the Auditor of the State and to Enter into a Participation Agreement with the Auditor of the State” was presented by Mr. Warrick. A motion was made by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. LaBarbara, to approve the resolution and dispense with the second reading.

Mr. Weidman stated he will vote no on this as CPA Mark Hurst said this is a step backward for the Township and had suggested three other software packages that were more robust. He said it appears none of those three were considered and this was a very binary decision between BUCS and UAN. He said he is not sure that's what is best for the Township.

Mr. James stated the Finance Committee examined all of these options and spoke to Mr. Hurst and unanimously voted to recommend the Township move to UAN. He said UAN will enable additional reporting which is a step forward.

Mr. Weidman stated what Mr. James said is incorrect, the other three options were not considered or studied in any detail whatsoever. He reiterated this was a binary decision and said unfortunately, for

some unknown reason, the Finance Committee Meeting in which it was discussed with Mr. Hurst was not recorded.

Mr. James stated he had a conversation with Mr. Hurst as well and was assured UAN was not a step backward.

Mr. Weidman stated Mr. Hurst told him twice UAN is not robust enough for Sycamore Township and said it to Mr. Porter. He suggested bringing Mr. Hurst into a Trustees Meeting for discussion.

Mr. James stated we have just entered into a Settlement Agreement indicating we are moving forward with UAN; therefore, we should vote on this.

Mr. LaBarbara called the roll. Vote: James: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: No
Resolution No. 2020-87 passed this 17th day of November, 2020.

Mr. LaBarbara stated UAN is used by 94% of Townships in Ohio, is designed by the Auditor's office for a reason and is inexpensive. He said the County Auditor said he has never seen anything like the lawsuit we just settled in 30 years.

A motion to adjourn into Executive Session with Law Director Deepak Desai as permitted by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 to consider the compensation of a public employee or official was made by Mr. LaBarbara and seconded by Mr. James.

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

End regular session: 10:16 a.m.

Begin Executive Session: 10:17 a.m.

End Executive Session: 10:34 a.m.

Back in regular session: 10:35 a.m.

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

Mr. LaBarbara said the Trustees had a discussion and he has a resolution authorizing a new contract with the Township Administrator.

"A Resolution Authorizing a Contract for the Township Administrator and Dispensing with a Second Reading" was read by Mr. LaBarbara. A motion was made by Mr. LaBarbara, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the resolution and dispense with the second reading.

Mr. James affirmed his support of Mr. Warrick who he said has been beaten up by some people who have misrepresented his past in many ways. He stated Mr. Warrick's performance as Administrator has been exemplary and he would like him to continue opening things up, digging things out and ensuring that we have a smoothly and efficiently run Township.

Mr. LaBarbara called the roll. Vote: James: Aye; LaBarbara: Aye; Weidman: No
Resolution No. 2020-88 passed this 17th day of November, 2020.

Mr. LaBarbara said he backs Mr. Warrick 100%.

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


End regular session: 10:39 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 11/17/2020