

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Meeting

Plain Township Board of Trustee Meeting

The Plain Township Board of Trustees met in special session at 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Station, 9500 Johnstown Road, New Albany, OH 43054.

Mr. Ferguson called the meeting to order. Mr. Ferguson led the Trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call: Members Present: Dave Ferguson, Kerri Mollard and Jill Beckett-Hill. Others present: Fiscal Officer, Bud Zappitelli, Ben Collins, Battalion Chief Dudley, Battalion Chief Ecleberry, Lieutenant Herren, Captain Pabst, Acting Lieutenant Zierk, Firefighter Cantrell, Captain Reasoner, Firefighter Yutzy and Courtney Rogers.

PAYMENT OF THE BILLS

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to pay the pending warrants in the amount of \$268,618.95.

Ms. Mollard seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 22083101)

ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Mollard inquired as to why Firefighter Houseberg had a credit card. It was decided to remove him from the credit card policy.

Mr. Ferguson made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 220831A1. Be it resolved, to amend Exhibit A of the Plain Township Credit Card Account Policy first adopted on January 23, 2019 in order to: update the Home Depot card by adding Michael Bullard for Maintenance and removing Dave Thatcher for Maintenance, and adding a Huntington National Bank card for Assistant Fire Chief Pat Connor. Ms. Mollard seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Rupp indicated that the fire department wants to discuss the succession and promotion process as well as a revised staffing model and budget.

Ms. Mollard inquired as to what contributed to the increase in property taxes. Mr. Collins responded that property taxes are a function of valuation. It could be that more occupancy permits have been issued and that increases the Township's tax duplicate which increases valuation. Tri-annual re-evaluation will occur in 2023 and typically there is an increase in property values and tax proceeds following that.

Assistant Chief Connor started the discussion with the promotional process changes that he would like to see in anticipation of Chief Rupp's January 27, 2023 retirement date. Currently, there is a set timetable which includes a 2-week period to declare that someone wants to sit for the test, a 90-day study period, and then the test is taken. Results are released and there is a 5-day protest period. Currently, this would put the Township testing at the end of January or beginning of February 2023. AC Connor would like to schedule with Ohio Fire Chief's Association as soon as possible for interviews.

The Township's current rules for promotion have certain requirements. Current Lieutenants and Captains do not meet those requirements to test for Captain or Battalion Chief. However, AC Connor believes that the Township has the talent available to promote from within. The fire department is working on professional development and is making it a priority to send their employees to the necessary training classes. However, there is not enough time for these classes to be completed before Chief Rupp's retirement and the necessary promotion timetable.

AC Connor would like the Board to remove the promotional requirements from the Employee Handbook and to reference the job descriptions which are easier to manage and change. Mr. Ferguson inquired as to how our standards compare to area fire departments and it was reported that Plain Township's standards are much higher. AC Connor reported that during the testing, they will assess the candidate's people skills, communication skills, administrative and organizational skills.

Ms. Mollard asked if the expectation was for the Employee Handbook to state a broad reference to the job description. AC Connor would like the Board to trust the Fire Chief in determining what is best for the Fire Department.

AC Connor would like multiple candidates sitting for a test, not just one candidate. AC Connor believes the Township has the talent internally to promote from within. Mr. Collins elaborated on the ability to bring in external candidates for officer positions. Previous Board members have addressed external candidates within the job descriptions. For example, for Captain, the candidate would need 1 year of experience at Plain Township. Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief and Battalion Chiefs would be open to external candidates. Mr. Collins feels that the proposal to remove the promotion qualifications from the employee manual is reasonable. Mr. Collins cautions the Board on adopting a job description that allows the appointing authority to make decisions between the qualifications of candidates. His preference would be to have the qualifications in writing so that all candidates know the expectations. Mr. Ferguson would like to see that the job descriptions still have the minimum requirements and then the "preferred" qualifications.

AC Connor commended Battalion Chief Dudley on the time and effort he spent on the staffing model. The Township's current staffing level is 12 employees per shift and there are 3 shifts. This is not enough in order to cover Kelly Days, vacations, and training. Therefore, there is an overtime situation almost every day.

The new plan will help with service and employee satisfaction. The new staffing model would have 13 employees per shift and it would get rid of the 2 peak-time firefighters. This would reduce overtime by approximately 86%. This model will also allow the Fire Department to run 3 units per shift. Ms. Mollard asked if the Township has ever operated on this plan or if there has always been peak-time firefighters. It was reported that the Township went to peak-time employees in 2014. This was to meet the increased needs of the business day.

Mr. Ferguson is not concerned with adding one more firefighter to the department. He wants to know how it fits into our strategic plan and how the department is going to staff in the future. He wants to know how the growth of the community and other fire departments adding stations will affect Plain Township's call volume and mutual aid runs. He wants to know what the future part-time staffing looks like. He would also like to see how Plain Township staffs their trucks, for example 2 versus 3 firefighters per truck. Also, how does the Township address overtime for officers? AC Connor reported that their recommendations are based on what they know the Strategic Plan is going to say. The Fire Department is finishing Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan and they have a Zoom meeting with Fitch and Associates on Friday. He is hoping after Friday, things will move quickly into the next phase. He would like to be finished with the Strategic Plan by the end of the year. AC Connor reported that the department is bringing on 9 new part-time firefighters, 5 are EMTs and 4 are paramedics. These new part-time firefighters will be working 24-hour shifts. One problem with the peak-time firefighters is that they are not assigned to a unit and do not have steady leadership. This also negatively affects their professional development because there is no consistency with the officers on a specific unit. AC Connor expects that the strategic plan is going to say that Plain Township needs a second fire station. That would require a levy and additional hiring. Mr. Ferguson asked Mr. Zappitelli's opinion on the new staffing model. Mr. Zappitelli said he understands that the peak-time position has run its course and agrees that it makes sense to add a full-time firefighter to each unit but would like to see the Strategic Plan before making these decisions.

Ms. Mollard asked if there are any other open positions that the Fire Department is looking to fill. AC Connor said that he would like to add an EMS Coordinator position. He feels that EMS is what the community is asking for and it is 85% of their business. He feels that the department is large enough now that the Township needs this position to keep track of EMS supplies, EMS equipment and replacement, training and certification, and compliance with the State Board of Pharmacy. This would be different from a Community Paramedic role. Conversation started around the need for a Community Paramedic because of the increase in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in New Albany and the surrounding area. Mr. Ferguson would like to see if the department could bundle the EMS Coordinator and Community Paramedic roles together. Firefighter Essick is currently going through the Community Paramedic program. It is a 200-hour program and he has completed approximately 20-30 hours. Mr. Ferguson thinks that it would be helpful for the Trustees to see the statistics on how many runs the fire department is making to the nursing homes and the costs associated. Chief Rupp stated that currently there is no way to charge

the nursing homes for the Community Paramedic. The fire department can only charge for transporting a patient, not for the call/run.

Mr. Ferguson started a discussion on how Plain Township is going to provide service to the "growth corridors." He has had conversations with the City of New Albany to discuss Plain Township's role. Mr. Ferguson wants to find an optimal solution for all departments servicing this area. AC Connor indicated that he can provide the areas that he feels Plain Township can cover. There is concern with the delay in getting the Strategic Plan from Fitch and Associates when decisions have to be made regarding servicing the Intel growth.

Assistant Chief Connor brought up the topic of soliciting external dollars to fund some of the capital expenses to alleviate the burden on the Fire Department's budget. Ms. Mollard asked Mr. Collins what his reservations are in asking local businesses for donations. Mr. Collins explained that our most recent partnership was with Discover Card and they had a set amount of money each year that they donated. Twenty-two years ago, there was collective support to help set up the Fire Station. Abercrombie and Fitch, the New Albany Community Foundation, as well as other supporters were a part of that effort. Mr. Collins' preference would be to work on building relationships instead of one-off requests. The largest tax abatement currently is the old Thirty-One gifts building which Lower.com is occupying. Mr. Ferguson recommended that the Fire Department develop a list of items that they would like to purchase. Ms. Mollard recommends that the Trustees continue this conversation amongst themselves at future meetings to figure out how to proceed. Ms. Beckett-Hill commented that the time to be thinking about the partnerships is now because of the time of the year. Businesses will either have dollars left to spend for 2022 or will be budgeting for 2023.

Ms. Mollard asked about the delay in getting the Strategic Plan completed with Fitch and Associates. AC Connor reported that although there have been some delays on Plain Township's end, responses from Fitch and Associates are taking too long. There is a scheduled Zoom meeting this Friday. Mr. Collins reported that the Township has paid \$9,999.00 to date. Chief Rupp's concern is that because runs were down in 2020 due to Covid, Fitch and Associates is trending the runs down for Plain Township which is not accurate. Mr. Ferguson requested an update at the next meeting.

FISCAL OFFICE


Mr. Ferguson made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 220824B1. Be it resolved, to amend Exhibit A of the Plain Township Credit Card Account Policy first adopted on January 23, 2019 in order to: update the Home Depot card by adding Michael Bullard for Maintenance and removing Dave Thatcher for Maintenance, and adding a Huntington National Bank

card for Assistant Fire Chief Pat Connor. And Remove Fred Houseberg. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye

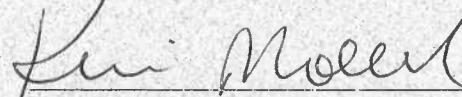
ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 a.m. Ms. Mollard seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:




David Ferguson, Trustee



Kerri Mollard, Trustee



Jill Beckett-Hill



Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer