

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

*Minutes of Meeting*

Plain Township Board of Trustee Meeting

The Plain Township Board of Trustees met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. at the Plain Township 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, Administrator Ben Collins, Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Ecleberry, Battalion Chief Dudley, Maintenance Supervisor Bob Pharris, and Finance Officer Courtney Rogers. Visitors present: Mike Durik, Deputy Upton, Debra Lowery.

### **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Ms. Mollard stated that she had an update from the Joint Parks District.

Mr. Ferguson requested an executive session to discuss discipline and compensation.

Mr. Collins explained that the May 17, 2023 minutes were not ready and they would be moved to the next meeting.

Chief Connor requested to add Resolution F2 to the agenda.

### **PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

**Mr. Ferguson made a motion to pay the pending warrants in the amount of \$367,293.15.**

**Ms. Mollard seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 23060701)**

Ms. Beckett-Hill asked about the generator repair. Battalion Chief Dudley explained that the exerciser clock was replaced. An engineer is coming to the fire station tomorrow to prepare drawings for a new generator and emergency power hookup.

### **CITY LIASON**

Mr. Durik reported that the New Albany City Council met last night and approved a proclamation declaring June as Pride month. He also reported that the Columbus Metropolitan Public Library is planning a 1.5 mill levy for the November 2023 ballot. The City of New Albany has been receiving complaints from residents of neighborhoods adjacent to Taylor Farms. The construction is stirring up the fields and causing midges to be a nuisance. This land is covered by the EPA as a natural preserve wetland and the city is not allowed to spray to control the midges. The city is looking into a non-hazardous option. Mr. Durik also explained that the city will be having a Juneteenth celebration at the Hinson Amphitheater from 4-8pm on June 19<sup>th</sup>. The City Council also approved the purchase of two dump trucks and a 2-axel tandem truck. Total cost is expected to be around \$500,000.

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY SHERIFF-DEPUTY UPTON**

Deputy Upton reported that there was a theft of a trailer at Walnut Street and Harlem Road. The trailer was recovered. He also reported that there was a self-inflicted gunshot wound from a resident who was cleaning their gun.

## **ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Collins reported that the Senate version of the state operation budget came out and it removes house elimination of replacement levies. He feels that this is important to keep in mind for future Township levy needs. The version proposes raising the zoning referendum percentage from 8% to 25% to undo a rezoning by citizen referendum.

Mr. Collins also reported that opening weekend at the pool was cooler weather which made for a light opening for staff. The following week was very hot and it made for a very busy opening week. Membership sales are ahead of last year and daily gate sales are 270% ahead of last year.

The contractor has scheduled work for the exterior fascia and soffit repairs at the fire station. The county engineer expects to publish a notice for the concrete apron and the parking lot work the first week in July. They expect to have bids by July 18<sup>th</sup>. They must present the award to the Board of Commissioners for approval. They are confident that they can get the front apron work completed by October 1.

Mr. Collins also had an initial meeting with the Engineer's office regarding the Clouse Road project. The county is going to ask for an extension on the timeline. Construction is still expected to begin in 2024.

Mr. Collins also reported that staff had the kick-off meeting with UKG for payroll.

Whitewater is quoting \$110,000 to maintain and rehab the slide, as well as to remove, store, and reconnect the 2 slide entry sections once the slide tower renovations are complete. The project is moving forward with design and engineering.

Ms. Mollard asked if any pool members inquired about the bubblers not being turned in the zero-entry pool. Mr. Collins has not received any feedback or complaints and the pool is not experiencing any water loss.

Ms. Mollard also asked for an update on the proposed roundabout at Walnut Street and State Route 605. Mr. Collins reported that the project is on track to be submitted to OPWC by September for funding request. There is no specific request from Plain Township at this time. The current estimated cost is \$6 million.

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 230607A1.**

**Whereas, the Plain Township Board of Trustees has approved a pool management contract, including opening and closing, with SwimSafe Pool Management, Inc. for the 2023 pool season, according to an addendum in the amount of \$231,288 out of fund 2171-610-53060 (Pool – Contracts).**

**Be it resolved, to set aside and pay the July pool management payment in the amount of \$46,257.60 from fund 2171-610-53060 (Pool – Contracts) according to the attached schedule.**

**Ms. Mollard seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

## **ZONING**

Mr. Collins reported that there have been complaints about overgrown grass. Staff has been sending out letters and owners have been responsive. There was a report of a visual obstruction at Walnut Street and Johnstown Road. Mr. Collins notified ODOT, however, the maintenance department cut it down for safety purposes.

There is a rezoning application scheduled for a public hearing with the Zoning Commission next Friday at 1:00 pm. It is expected to come to the Board of Trustees at the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. The Board will be asked to schedule a public hearing. The applicant asked for a special meeting since the Board is not meeting the first Wednesday in July.

## **ROAD/MAINTENANCE**

Mr. Pharris reported that there was a leak in the men's shower at the pool. The new restroom partitions have been installed. Mr. Pharris also shared that he is getting quotes for the removal of 2 trees at the fire station.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

There have been 153 EMS runs and 66 Fire runs since the last meeting.

Chief Connor thanked Assistant Chief Ecleberry for all of his hard work since his promotion.

Chief Connor had a meeting with Joe Stefanov on May 17<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the possibility of taking the Township's vehicles to the New Albany City garage for maintenance. Mr. Stefanov seemed responsive to this and thinks that the city garage will be able to handle preventative maintenance, such as oil changes, in January 2024.

Chief Connor also reported that the Westerville Fire Department has borrowed the Township's engine and medic.

PSee Solutions is working on upgrading the phone system at the Fire Station. The current phone system at the fire station is tied to Mifflin Township and Mifflin is changing their phone system.

Assistant Chief Ecleberry updated the Board on the medic chassis. When the Township contracted with Horton for a medic last year, it was going to be an International chassis. There is no timeline for delivery. Chief Ecleberry was able to find a Ford chassis from a local fleet dealer. He has worked with Horton to change the purchase agreement for a Ford chassis. Since

the production of these vehicles are on such a delay, Chief Ecleberry has a hold on 2 Ford chassis.

Chief Connor explained that Image Trend is the EMS reporting software that the Township uses. Currently, the Township is on a different platform for Fire reporting. He would like to use Image Trend for both.

Chief Connor also reported that the fire department is working on the public event fee schedule. He is reviewing how the department staffs those special events. He plans to staff the New Albany/Township events at no charge. Those would be Founders Day, July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations, and Oktoberfest.

Chief Connor also updated the Board on the current MECC dispatching agreement. He explained that all the stakeholders are paying different rates per call volume. MECC brought in a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to analyze costs but Chief Connor was not satisfied with the report. Another concern of Chief Connor's is that all the dispatch employees are Mifflin employees. If an employee is not performing, there is no action that can be taken by Chief Connor. Currently, Chief Connor feels that there are issues with timely call processing and there is no supervisor overnight to address errors. Chief Connor believes Plain Township has other options, Licking County Regional Communications for example. They quoted a price of \$15/run. Licking County is currently using Tyler Technologies and MECC will be moving to Tyler Technologies. There are some local fire departments that dispatch with their police departments. Mr. Ferguson inquired as to why the Township has not investigated that option.

Chief Connor reported that the Safety Trailer is not being utilized. It has fire damage and is very outdated. Chief Ecleberry has directed Fire Marshal Guthrie to ask the manufacturer if they will buy it back.

Chief Connor has spoken with all the Trustees regarding the Strategic Plan draft. No one is happy with the reports that Fitch and Associates prepared. Ms. Mollard has tried to take both reports from Fitch and combine them into one report that makes sense and has very clear goals and objectives. She would then like to align the data with the goals and priorities, as well as develop the Mission, Vision, and Values statement. At that point, she would like to re-engage the community stakeholders with the final report and data. There was also discussion about the growth of New Albany and who is going to provide the safety services and who is going to pay for it. The land that the City of New Albany has annexed is not in the Plain Township jurisdiction.

**Mr. Ferguson made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 230607F1. Be it resolved to offer conditional employment to Firefighter EMT-P Zachary Justice as a full-time Firefighter Paramedic through a lateral transfer at an enhanced pay of step 2 pending results from the background check. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

Chief Connor explained that he feels like Plain Township is an outlier currently for not offering differential pay for out-of-class pay. He explained that there are other departments paying the full differential, which at Plain Township would be 13%. He is asking for 8% differential pay for Firefighters acting as Lieutenants and Captains acting as Battalion Chiefs. Chief Connor feels that there is a substantial increase in responsibility when firefighters or Captains ride up and

they should be compensated for it. He also thinks this will reduce overtime because the Township can have Captains filling in for Battalion Chiefs, versus having Battalion Chiefs cover those shifts which creates overtime at a higher hourly rate. Mr. Ferguson felt that having Battalion Chiefs covering for Battalion Chiefs is more of a policy issue. Currently, Captains are allowed to fill in for Battalion Chiefs but that has not been the common practice within the fire department. Mr. Ferguson feels that the compensation plan should be looked at holistically, and that the Trustees have shown their commitment to the fire department with the recent pay increases, the additional staff and new equipment. Ms. Mollard and Ms. Beckett-Hill both feel that this is a small daily change that will not impact total salaries.

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 230607F2. Be it resolved, that the board of trustees hereby authorizes a pay differential of 8% on top of the employee's base pay rate when a firefighter serves as a designated firefighter in charge riding out of class as a lieutenant and when a captain rides out of class as a battalion chief. This change will take effect for the pay period ending on June 9, 2023. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

### **FISCAL OFFICE**

The 2024 Tax Budget was presented. Ms. Mollard asked about the estimated budget consistently being lower than the actual numbers. This is a common practice to underestimate receipts while overestimating expenses. Ms. Mollard also inquired as to whether the Township can expect to have another positive carryover in the General Fund for 2023, like the Township saw in 2022. Mr. Collins stated that he would not expect it with the anticipated pool expenses this year.

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 230607B1. Be it resolved: to appropriate additional funds certified but not yet appropriated to the following fire funds:**

- **\$2,000.00**      **2111-220-54000 (Fire – Office Supplies)**
- **\$15,000.00**      **2111-220-58018 (Fire – Training)**
- **\$20,000.00**      **2111-220-58099 (Fire – Other Expenses)**

**Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Mollard updated the Board on the Joint Parks District. The Pickleball courts are expected to open at the end of June 2023. The Joint Parks District built 16 pickleball courts and they re-stripped 4 tennis courts, for a total of 20 pickleball courts. They are also building a new shelter in the Blue Zone that will have restrooms. Registrations are going well. The fieldhouse is expected to be completed in 2026. The Joint Parks District will be leasing 30 acres of land from the City of New Albany for the new fieldhouse. They are having issues with people driving golf carts on the walking paths and onto the grass fields, as well as residents are not following dog-leash laws. The Parks District experienced some sponsorship complaints with a religiously-affiliated team

sponsor. They will be updating the sponsorship guidelines. The intersection at Bevelhymer Road and Walnut Street was discussed.

Mr. Durik also added that the city has discussed the use of golf carts in the community. They are looking at what can be enforced based on the restrictions within the Ohio Code. The City will likely be putting up signage that will limit the golf carts to streets and parking lots.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn into executive session at 8:47 p.m. pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22 (G)(1) for discipline. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye**

**Mr. Zappitelli, Chief Connor, Chief Ecleberry, and Mr. Collins attended the Executive Session.**

**Mr. Ferguson made a motion to close out of executive session at 9:12 p.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Ferguson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. Ms. Mollard seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

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David Ferguson, Trustee

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Kerri Mollard, Trustee

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Jill Beckett-Hill, Trustee

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Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer