

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Meeting

Plain Township Board of Trustee Meeting

The Plain Township Board of Trustees met in special session at 6:00 p.m. at the Fire Station, 9500 Johnstown Road, New Albany, OH 43054.

Ms. Mollard called the meeting to order. Ms. Mollard led the Trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call: Members Present: Kerri Mollard, Dave Ferguson, and Jill Beckett-Hill. Others present: Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Ecleberry, Fiscal Officer Bud Zappitelli, Administrator Ben Collins, Battalion Chief Dudley and Finance Officer Courtney Rogers. Visitors present: Debra and Rob Lowery

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

The discussion regarding philanthropy was put on hold. Mr. Ferguson would like to discuss a plan to survey the community regarding the strategic plan. Ms. Mollard would like to discuss a survey after the Fire budget and finances are discussed.

Ms. Mollard explained that the forecast for the Fire budget has changed and there is a need to discuss a levy sooner than later.

Mr. Zappitelli explained that the Fiscal Office was able to get the 2025 Tax Budget to balance, if the Board agrees to finance the Ladder Truck that will be delivered in 2025, but there are concerns going into 2026. For this reason, the Fiscal Officer strongly recommends putting a levy on the ballot in November of 2024. Mr. Zappitelli does not like the idea of financing the fire truck, the Township has never done this in the past, but sees it as the Township's only option to have a balanced budget in 2025. Ms. Mollard would like to have a conversation surrounding the potential for corporate sponsorship or a gifting entity at the Township's next meeting.

Ms. Mollard shared that she has continued to have conversations with the City of New Albany regarding TIF money. She has a meeting with the city on May 20th to get more details. Mr. Collins explained that the city is currently reimbursing the Township for all residential TIFs. The Township is not being made whole on the commercial TIFs. Abatements are another source of potential revenue due to the Township.

Mr. Ferguson asked for clarification regarding the real estate taxes. The information shared by the county does not break out the disbursements between commercial and residential. Property values increased an average of 35%. A larger portion of our tax base is residential rather than

commercial, and a large portion of commercial is abated. The Township saw a decrease in Fire Levy proceeds in the first half of 2024. The county said the reason for the lower amount was because of corrections on property tax payments and refunds. Mr. Ferguson reiterated that he does not believe the Plain Township residents should be subsidizing the commercial businesses for fire service.

Additional revenue sources are the Special Duty, Fire Prevention, and EMS billing. The new EMS billing contractor identified that Plain Township has not been charging for transports at the Medicare allowable amount. This should increase EMS revenue for 2025.

Mr. Collins also brought up the possibility of using the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Act funds for the fire department. The Trustees had originally discussed using those funds to pay for the slide tower project, but they could be used for the fire department. The \$202,000 must be encumbered by the end of 2024. Mr. Collins explained that the slide tower project was included in the State Senate's capital budget request. The Township has not yet heard if they will receive any funding.

There was also a conversation about the Township receiving and providing mutual aid.

Conversation moved to fire expenses. Mr. Collins updated the Fire Budget to reflect the receipts and expenses in the Tax Budget. Adjustments were made to Buildings and Additions, transfers, and Capital Equipment. Mr. Collins suggests still allocating enough money to Buildings and Additions in case there are unexpected expenses. For example, the generator project that was already approved is going to cost approximately \$30,000 more than what was budgeted for 2024. The parking lot asphalt replacement has already gone out to bid to the Franklin County Engineer. The project has been awarded by the county commission. If the Township were to delay this project, there is no guarantee that the current price would be honored. Mr. Ferguson thinks that projects should be deferred if they are not absolutely necessary until there is a clearer picture of expected revenues.

The need for a future fire levy was discussed. Ms. Mollard is hesitant to go on the ballot this November because she does not feel that there is enough time to estimate all expenses that will be incurred with building a new substation, as well campaigning for the levy. Mr. Zappitelli does not think it is wise to delay going on the ballot. Land acquisition was discussed, and Ms. Mollard shared that Tom Rubey told her that the Township needs to make a formal request of the New Albany Company. Mr. Ferguson said that he thought that the Administrator should make the formal request. Chief Connor and Assistant Chief Ecleberry have started getting estimates for a new substation. They will also estimate costs to operate an additional station. Mr. Ferguson thinks there is too much risk in not going on the ballot this November, but he is very reticent in trying to include a new fire station. If the levy ask is too large, the Township runs the risk of it not passing and there is a current need to cover operating expenses past 2025. Not all of the Trustees share the same opinions on whether a second fire station is necessary right now.

There was a discussion of possible millage amounts. One mill would cost a property owner \$35 per \$100,000 in value. A levy that passes this fall, would be collected and payable in 2025. If the Township waits until Spring of 2025, the levy will not be collected and paid until 2026. In

planning, Mr. Zappitelli does not want to rely on the additional potential revenue streams from the City of New Albany because there is no guarantee that the Township will be made whole on the commercial TIFs and the abatements.

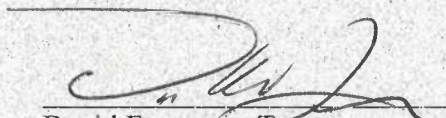
There was also discussion regarding sending out a community survey to gauge support. The Fire department is also going to do an annual report that can be sent out to our residents.

It was decided to move the regularly scheduled Board meeting on 5/15/24 to Tuesday, 5/21/24 to allow more time to gather estimates and talk with the City of New Albany.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:



David Ferguson, Trustee



Kerri Mollard, Trustee



Jill Beckett-Hill, Trustee



Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer