

## **RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

### *Minutes of Meeting*

### Plain Township Board of Trustee Meeting

The Plain Township Board of Trustees met in regular session at 8:00 a.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 and Jill Beckett-Hill. Others present: Administrator Ben Collins, Fiscal Officer Bud Zappitelli, Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Ecleberry, EMS Coordinator Essick, and Administrative and Zoning Coordinator Mary Fee. Visitors present: Mike Durik and Hans Schell.

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

Ms. Mollard requested an executive session for employment.

### **PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

Ms. Mollard made a motion to pay the pending warrants in the amount of \$702,152.46.

Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 25121701)

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Mollard made a motion to approve the December 2, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting minutes with corrections. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye (Resolution 25121702)

### **NEW ALBANY CITY COUNCIL LIAISON – MIKE DURIK**

City Council met last night. Mr. Durik reported that several ordinances were approved. Two acres on Beech Road were annexed into New Albany from Jersey Township and then it was rezoned. 2026 Appropriations were approved. There was a first reading for the expedited annexation of 101 acres from the township. There was also a first reading to amend the zoning for it. There was another first reading for zoning for a property on State Route 605 from rural residential to infill planned unit.

Council also authorized the city manager to renew the health services contract with Franklin County.

## **ADMINISTRATOR**

Mr. Collins explained that the 101 acres on Johnstown Road, currently in Plain Township and being annexed into the City of New Albany. The rezoning would allow for a data center among other uses. Mr. Collins expressed his concern for the rezoning. The Planning Commission is aware of township residents' opposition to the rezoning. Mr. Collins would like to see City Council restrict the rezoning to not permit a data center. Mr. Durik offered that there is no purpose named for this land and he is not aware of a data center. Mr. Durik said that a resident spoke at the council meeting about his concerns over water, electricity, data centers, and emissions. Mr. Durik stated that the development department is not actively looking for more data centers, they are focused on pharmaceutical and other uses. Chief Connor stated that Jerome and Washington townships have moratoriums on data centers. Mr. Collins added that the township had four residents, who attended the planning commission meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup>, voice their concerns. Both trustees shared the resident complaints and concerns with Mr. Durik regarding the noise and light pollution with the data centers. Mr. Schell offered that Google has committed to fixing the problem. Google has slowed down production, which has helped with the noise. They have also hired a sound engineer to help solve the problem. Mr. Durik will report back to City Council the concerns with data centers.

Mr. Collins has requested an updated schedule of appointments from the McCoy Board to clarify the township's appointments and term expiration dates. Based on the information he has, Mr. Collins believes that the township will have one vacancy starting in January 2026.

Mr. Collins discussed a potential parental leave policy for the township. Mr. Collins stated that Franklin County, City of Columbus, Ohio State University, and more local governments are starting to offer parental leave. Mr. Collins provided a comparison of leave policies in the area and said that they average a little over 7 weeks. Ms. Beckett-Hill thanked Mr. Collins for bringing this to the Board's attention. She would like to have a little more time to discuss the policy with the other board members and to do a little more research. Ms. Mollard is in favor of a parental leave policy. However, Ms. Mollard believes that there may be different needs for bonding versus medical leave for the birth mother. Chief Connor offered that it is typically new younger firefighters that are starting families and they do not yet have enough sick or vacation time accrued. Both trustees would like to work through the details further.

Mr. Collins also presented a revised vacation leave schedule. He explained that the township's last vacation leave adjustment happens at 21 years, with a maximum of 5.5 weeks of vacation. There have been requests from staff to have another vacation step at 25 years. Ms. Mollard inquired about the rationale for the vacation steps at 4, 7, 15, and 21 years. Mr. Collins stated that the vacation policy predates his time at Plain Township. Assistant Chief Ecleberry stated that when the township was developing an employee manual, many policies were borrowed from Columbus Fire at the time. Ms. Mollard stated that she is not yet ready to vote on this but wants employees who hit the 25-year mark to feel appreciated and recognized. She brought up the annual payouts that the township provides for sick and comp time. Mr. Collins clarified that there is not a payout for vacation except at separation. Ms. Beckett-Hill would also like additional time to think about it. Mr. Collins would also like to reorient the timeline of the vacation accruals.



Chief Connor discussed the option of making the Assistant Chief and EMS Coordinator positions salaried for 2026. He feels that their schedules are dynamic and that it will be easier to manage their hours.

When discussing the meeting agenda for 2026, Ms. Mollard stated that she will miss the second meeting in June and the first meeting in October.

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217A1.**

**WHEREAS, DAVE FERGUSON has served as a Plain Township Trustee since being appointed in 2008 and having been elected in 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021; and**

**WHEREAS, DAVE FERGUSON has resided in Plain Township since 1998, where he and his wife Kristin have raised their four children; and**

**WHEREAS, DAVE FERGUSON has been an advocate for township residents, ensuring high-quality services while supporting first responders, education, and high school athletics, notably serving as varsity girls lacrosse coach for nine years with seven state tournament appearances; and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PLAIN TOWNSHIP, FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO:**

**That Plain Township Trustees Kerri Mollard and Jill Beckett-Hill would like to extend their gratitude and appreciation to outgoing Trustee Dave Ferguson on behalf of the Township staff and residents, for his many contributions to Plain Township and the entire community.**

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

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217A2.**

**WHEREAS, the Plain Township Board of Township Trustees ("Board") is authorized by Section 309.09(B) of the Revised Code to employ attorneys on an annual basis other than the prosecuting attorney to represent the Township and its officers, boards and commissions in their official capacities and to advise them on legal matters; and**

**WHEREAS, Section 309.09(B) of the Revised Code provides that no such attorney may be employed except on the order of the Board, duly entered upon its Journal, in which the compensation to be paid for the attorney's legal services shall be fixed; and**

**WHEREAS, the Board finds it necessary to appoint attorneys to counsel and represent the Township on an annual basis for calendar year 2026 in such matters as the Board or its designee may refer to them; and**

**WHEREAS, the Board has appropriated \$37,000 for legal services for 2026.**

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Township Trustees of Plain Township, Franklin County, Ohio, that:**

**SECTION 1. Peter N. Griggs of Brosius, Johnson & Griggs, LLC and the law firm of Brosius, Johnson & Griggs, LLC, are hereby employed on an annual basis for calendar**

year 2026 as the Township's legal counsel to represent the Township and its officers, boards and commissions in their official capacities and to advise them in connection with such matters as may be referred to said Counsel by or on behalf of the Board or its designee.

**SECTION 2.** The compensation for such counsel during 2026 shall be paid as follows: \$235.00 per hour partner attorney time; \$215.00 per hour senior associate time; \$190.00 per hour associate time; \$130.00 per hour law clerk time; and \$115.00 per hour legal assistant time; plus out-of-pocket expense reimbursements; provided that the total compensation shall not exceed \$20,000 without further action by this Board.

**SECTION 3.** The attorneys may be discharged at any time by majority vote of the Board.

**SECTION 4.** The Township Fiscal Officer is directed to send a copy of this Resolution to the law firm.

**SECTION 5.** It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements including, without limitation, Section 121.22 of the Revised Code.

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

Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217A3.

WHEREAS, the Plain Township Board of Township Trustees ("Board") is authorized by Section 309.09(B) of the Revised Code to employ attorneys on an annual basis other than the prosecuting attorney to represent the Township and its officers, boards and commissions in their official capacities and to advise them on legal matters; and

WHEREAS, Section 309.09(B) of the Revised Code provides that no such attorney may be employed except on the order of the Board, duly entered upon its Journal, in which the compensation to be paid for the attorney's legal services shall be fixed; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds it necessary to appoint attorneys to counsel and represent the Township on an annual basis for calendar year 2026 in such matters as the Board or its designee may refer to them; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Township Trustees of Plain Township, Franklin County, Ohio, that:

**SECTION 1.** The Plain Township Fiscal Officer or its designee is hereby authorized to engage Peter N. Griggs of Brosius, Johnson & Griggs, LLC and the law firm of Brosius, Johnson & Griggs, LLC, in calendar year 2026 to represent the Fiscal Officer in his official capacity and to advise the Fiscal Officer in connection with such matters as may be referred to said Counsel by or on behalf of the Fiscal Officer or its designee.

**SECTION 2.** The compensation for such counsel during 2026 shall be paid as follows: \$235.00 per hour partner attorney time; \$215.00 per hour senior associate time; \$190.00 per hour associate time; \$130.00 per hour law clerk time; and \$115.00 per hour legal assistant time; plus out-of-pocket expense reimbursements; provided that the total legal



expenses incurred by the Fiscal Officer shall not exceed \$2,500 without further action by this Board.

**SECTION 3.** The Board of Trustees retains authority over employment of the township's attorneys and may amend or rescind this resolution at any time.

**SECTION 4.** It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the passage of this Resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements including, without limitation, Section 121.22 of the Revised Code.

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

Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217A4. Be it resolved, that expenses incurred for 2026 by the trustees, fiscal officer, and administrator when attending state conferences and membership dues of state associations will be paid from the General Fund.

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

Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217A5. Be it resolved: Regular Board of Trustees meetings for 2026 will be held the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and the third Wednesday of each month at 8:00 a.m. Meetings will be held at the Plain Township fire station located at 9500 Johnstown Road, New Albany, Ohio 43054 unless otherwise noted.

The organizational meeting of the Plain Township Board of Trustees will be held on January 7, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. The second regular meeting of January will be held on January 21, 2026 at 8:00 am.

Notice of special meetings will be posted at least 24 hours in advance on the township's website at [www.plaintownship.org](http://www.plaintownship.org) and at the township office at 45 Second Street, notifying the public of the time, place, and purpose of the special meeting. The media will be notified of special meetings via email, telephone, or fax -- as requested. Notice of emergency meetings will be posted on the township website as soon as possible and notice will be sent via email to local media and any persons who have requested notice.

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

## **ZONING**

Mr. Collins reported that there was one variance request this month. He is still working on finalizing some things for the storage unit project on Walnut Street. The facility is hoping to open within the next 30 days. The Sun Tire Auto project on Johnstown Road is working with the city to finalize the right-of-way. A turn lane will be required for that project.

There is a local individual that wants to develop a recreational soccer field space on Morse Road as a private enterprise. It would require rezoning to exceptional use.

Ms. Fee offered that most variance requests are for pools or accessory structures. A lot of people want to know if they can make a living area in an accessory structure.

### **ROAD/MAINTENANCE**

Mr. Pharris thanked everyone for coming to the Wreaths Across America event over the weekend. Ms. Mollard would like to publicly recognize Scout Master Potter. Mr. Collins thanked the City of New Albany, and Mr. Durik specifically, for the city's financial support and for participating in the event.

Mr. Pharris reported that the maintenance staff completed the NPBS Good Housekeeping training to receive the permit for the year. They have also been busy with the snow and ice events that the township has experienced. The new pickup truck has gone back to the dealership because the headlights were not working right. There have been three funerals since the last meeting and staff updated the backup maps.

Mr. Pharris also shared that the renter at 39 Second Street turned the heat down too low and the pipes froze. Maintenance staff were able to thaw the pipes and there were no leaks.

Mr. Collins reported that Mr. Pharris is working on a plan to replace one of the older dump trucks. Currently, the township has a 2012 and a 2016 dump truck, as well as the new one. The stainless-steel dump beds last much longer than the chassis. Mr. Pharris obtained a quote to replace the chassis and reuse the dump bed, and it appears as though it will save some money. They will bring a resolution to the board in 2026.

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217M1. Be it resolved, to amend the boot reimbursement policy to provide a reimbursement of up to \$250 annually to maintenance staff for the purchase of safety work boots intended to provide protection from typical job hazards. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251217M2. Be it resolved, to pay TruGreen Commercial Services of 461 Enterprise Drive, Lewis center, Ohio 43035 up to \$9,514.20 for lawn treatment and fertilization for 2026 to include services for the following facilities:**

**Maplewood Cemetery: \$6,684.57 (2041-410-58099) Cemetery-Other Expenses**

**Fire Station: \$1,779.21 (2111-220-58099) Fire District-Other Expenses-Misc**

**Aquatic Center: \$1,050.42 (2171-610-58099) Pool-Other Expenses**

**TruGreen Commercial Services**

**461 Enterprise Drive**

**Lewis Center, Ohio 43035**

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



**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Connor shared that a firefighter had to have surgery for a torn bicep tendon. Recovery is expected to take approximately 17 weeks. He is being fitted for a brace and will return to light duty when able.

Mutual aid runs to the City of Columbus are significantly down. Columbus Fire is anticipating opening of Station 36 in May 2026. AC Eccleberry will meet with the CFD Operations Chief to discuss the relationship between the two stations.

PTFD calls to Licking County have increased and calls to Columbus have decreased. Overall, runs are down this year. Ms. Mollard requested a visual, a graph or map, detailing the call volumes and areas. Mr. Collins also noted that the runs to nursing homes are down 23% for 2025.

Chief Connor thanked the board for another great 2025. He appreciates the engagement with the fire department.

AC Eccleberry reported that the new engine-rescue is close to being in service. There is equipment that is new to the staff, so the department is still training the firefighters. There are also some valves and pumps that need adjustments.

AC Eccleberry also commended the Fire Prevention department for all their hard work. Ms. Mollard inquired about the need for additional help for Fire Marshall Sponaugle. AC Eccleberry thinks the best way to alleviate the workload is to collaborate with another agency versus hiring an additional employee. He is meeting with Chief Krauss at West Licking Fire District to discuss options for a shared position. Monroe township has three full-time plans reviewers. Chief Connor also mentioned the possibility of hiring a part-time employee.

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 251119F1.**

**WHEREAS, the Plain Township Fire Department has received a new battalion command vehicle and placed it into service, and is ready to dispose of the 2013 Chevy Tahoe battalion vehicle; and**

**WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Plain Township is authorized by Ohio Revised Code 505.101 to contract, without advertising or bidding, for the sale of motor vehicles to any political subdivision of the state; and**

**WHEREAS, the Bladensburg Fire District, a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, has expressed interest in and desire for this vehicle, which would be utilized by the Fire District for public use; and**

**WHEREAS, the Plain Township Board of Trustees has agreed to the sale of the 2013 Chevy Tahoe to the Bladensburg Fire District by private sale under the authority of Ohio Revised Code § 505.101.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLAIN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

**Section 1. The 2013 Chevy Tahoe is declared to be surplus equipment no longer needed by Plain Township.**

**Section 2. The 2013 Chevy Tahoe is authorized to be sold to the Bladensburg Fire District for the price of \$7,500.**

**Section 3. This Board of Trustees finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning this legislation were taken in an open meeting of this Board, all in compliance with Ohio law including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.**

**Section 4. This Resolution is declared to be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.**

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

### **FISCAL OFFICE**

The November 2025 Bank Reconciliation and Month-End reports were presented, as well as credit card statements.

### **NEW ALBANY JOINT PARKS DISTRICT**

Ms. Mollard could not attend the meeting

### **NEW ALBANY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

Remarkable Evening was a success

### **NEW ALBANY PLAIN LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD**

Board member Debbie Kalinosky is rolling off and the school board did a nice job of thanking her for her 11 years of service.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn into executive session at 9:15 a.m. pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22 (G)(1) for compensation. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion.  
Vote: All Aye**

**Mr. Collins and Mr. Zappitelli joined the Executive Session.**

**Ms. Mollard made a motion to close out of executive session at 9:57 a.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye**



**ACTION:**

Ms. Mollard made a motion to approve Resolution 251217A6.

WHEREAS, pursuant to ORC Section 505.031, the Board of Trustees may appoint a Township Administrator who shall be the administrative head of the township under the direction and supervision of the Board and who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board; and

WHEREAS, Benjamin C. Collins is, by reason of his education, training, and experience, qualified to act as Township Administrator and shall perform the duties outlined in ORC Section 505.032.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Plain Township, Franklin County, Ohio, pursuant to Chapter 505 of the Revised Code, that:

**Section 1.** Benjamin C. Collins will continue as Township Administrator pursuant to ORC Section 505.031 and shall serve as such pursuant to the terms of the "Township Administrator Employment Agreement" attached hereto and incorporated as Exhibit "A".

**Section 2.** The Board hereby authorizes the Board President to enter into an Employment Agreement with Benjamin C. Collins, which agreement fully defines the terms and conditions upon which Benjamin C. Collins shall serve as Township Administrator, a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit "A" and the approved salary increase shall commence on and be effective January 1, 2026 for the first pay date in January 2026.

**Section 3.** The Board of Township Trustees hereby authorizes and directs the Township Fiscal Officer to expend such funds in accordance with the terms as set forth in the agreement.

**Section 4.** Finds and determines that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the passage of this resolution were taken in open meetings of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were taken in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including (without limitation) Ohio Revised Code §121.22, except as otherwise permitted thereby.

**Section 5.** This Resolution shall take effect and be enforced from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

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

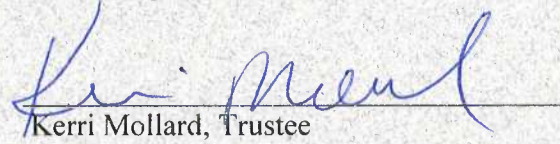


**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 a.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

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David Ferguson, Trustee

  
Kerri Mollard, Trustee

  
Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer

  
Jill Beckett-Hill, Trustee