

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 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.

OATH OF OFFICES

Kerri Mollard was sworn in by New Albany City Councilwoman Marlene Brisk.
Hans Schell was sworn in by Plain Township Trustee Kerri Mollard.

WELCOME ADDRESS-REPRESENTATIVE BERYL BROWN PICCOLANTONIO

Representative Brown Piccolantonio started by sharing that she attended the kickoff for America 250 Ohio, the semi quincentennial and it was well attended. She hopes that as the community celebrates the new year, that they reflect on how lucky we all are to live in this country, and to have the opportunity to have free and fair elections where we choose the people who lead our communities. She thanked all of those that serve the community as public servants.

INVOCATION-SONYA HIGGINBOTHAM

Ms. Higginbotham shared a passage from Philippians 2, verses 3-4. She finished with a prayer.

ELECTION OF 2024 OFFICERS

Ms. Mollard made a motion to appoint Kerri Mollard as Chair and Jill Beckett-Hill as Vice Chair. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye (Resolution 26010701)

TOWNSHIP LIAISON APPOINTMENTS

Joint Parks District – Ms. Mollard
New Albany Community Foundation – Ms. Mollard
McCoy Center for the Arts – Ms. Beckett-Hill
New Albany Plain Local School District – Ms. Beckett-Hill
New Albany City Council – Mr. Schell
MECC Regional Council of Governments – Mr. Collins
New Albany Sustainability Stakeholders – Ms. Mollard
New Albany Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Collins

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn the administrative meeting at 6:46 p.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

Ms. Mollard made a motion to open the regular trustee meeting at 6:49 p.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

Roll Call: Members Present: Kerri Mollard, Jill Beckett-Hill, and Hans Scheli were present. Others present: Fiscal Officer Bud Zappitelli, Township Administrator Ben Collins, Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Ecleberry, Maintenance Supervisor Bob Pharris, and Finance Officer Courtney Rogers. Visitors present: Mark Wilson, Jay Herskowitz, and Michael Chappellear.

ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Chief Connor added Resolution F1 to the agenda. Ms. Mollard requested an executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss employment.

PAYMENT OF THE BILLS

Ms. Mollard made a motion to pay the pending warrants in the amount of \$393,809.26. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 26010702)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Mollard made a motion to approve the December 17, 2025 Board of Trustees Special Meeting minutes. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 26010703)

NEW ALBANY PLAIN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LIAISON-MARK WILSON

Mr. Wilson shared that the school board had an organizational meeting on Monday night. The Board passed a resolution for the guaranteed maximum prices for the construction of the new school building. The board also updated the House system, which this year will include all grades Kindergarten through 12. It is part of the district's commitment to helping students feel a sense of belonging at school. Mr. Wilson also shared that if community members cannot attend board meetings, they can watch the video the following day and all handouts are available on the school website.

ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Collins thanked the board and all the township trustees for making the township and New Albany a great place to live, learn and work. Mr. Collins presented Battalion Chief Pabst and Ms. Rogers with 2025 Wellness awards for earning the most wellness points.

Mr. Collins mentioned that a few townships in Franklin County have signed up for the America 250 event that Representative Brown Piccolantonio discussed. It is something that the board could consider participating in. Mr. Collins also mentioned that the Ohio Township Association conference is scheduled for February 4th through the 6th.

Mr. Collins noted that one of the township's goals for 2026 is to update the zoning resolution and land use plan. Currently, the township only has 3 of 5 active regular members on the zoning commission. Mr. Collins would like all positions filled before the township begins working on those items. He will publish a public announcement asking for candidates. This is only for unincorporated residents.

The township contribution to the McCoy center is divided by ownership share. The township's portion increased from \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Ms. Mollard suggested that the township stop using the paper board packets. She would like a printed agenda but otherwise will use her laptop. The other trustees agreed.

Discussion continued regarding the vacation accruals. Currently, the township has an escalation at 4, 7, 15 and 21 years. There was a request to add a bump at 25 years and to even out the steps. Ms. Mollard likes option 2 which gives bumps at 4, 7, 10, 15, 20, and 25. The other trustees and Mr. Zappitelli agreed that it makes sense to even it out and give an additional bump at 25 years. This would offer a maximum vacation allowance of 6 weeks. Since the state has changed the retirement schedule, employees must work more years to receive their full benefits. Mr. Collins will present a formal resolution at the next meeting.

There was additional discussion regarding a parental leave policy. Ms. Mollard made the distinction again about the caring and bonding with the child for both parents versus the recovery time needed for the birth mother. Ms. Beckett-Hill stated that she is still researching it and gathering information. Ms. Mollard also brought up the fact that the township offers short-term disability. However, this would only benefit the birth mother. She offered that her company currently makes up the difference of what short-term disability pays out to the mother. Chief Connor's concern with short-term disability is that the employee must pay the insurance premium and he's not sure if this affects the pension. He would like to see a parental leave policy implemented to help with recruitment. Mr. Zappitelli noted that most of the benchmarking was larger cities and government entities, there were very few townships offering this. Mr. Collins indicated that it is a fairly new benefit being talked about and offered to employees. Mr. Schell asked how this new policy could impact staffing and overtime. Chief Connor acknowledged that it could create a staffing situation. Mr. Zappitelli asked how many firefighters had babies in 2025 and was informed that there were three.

Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260107A1. Be it resolved: To set the 2026 mileage reimbursement rate at \$0.725 in accordance with IRS allowances and any subsequent changes thereto. Ms. Mollard seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.

Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260107A2. Be it resolved, that the Plain Township Board of Trustees hereby designates the township administrator as the board's designee for public records and open meetings training in compliance with Ohio Revised Code § 109.43. Mr. Schell seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.

Mr. Schell made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260107A3.

WHEREAS, Ohio Revised Code § 510.707 authorizes a board of township trustees to appropriate from the township general revenue fund moneys not appropriated for any other purpose to an organization that the board determines serves a community purpose and that is exempt from federal taxation under subsection 501(a) and described in subsection 501(c)(3) of the "Internal Revenue Code of 1986," 100 Stat. 2085, 26 U.S.C. 1, as amended; and

WHEREAS, Plain Township has entered into the Second Amended and Restated Joint Operating Agreement for the New Albany Community Arts Center (hereinafter referred to as the "Operating Agreement"), which provide in Section 8.3 that each Owner shall annually deposit in the same proportion as their ownership provided in Section 3.2 the dollar amount necessary to fund the Capital Repair and Replacement Fund of the McCoy Center for the Arts; and

WHEREAS, Section 8.3 of the Operating Agreement provides that the Capital Repairs and Replacements funding from each owner will be deposited into a separate Capital Repair and Replacement Account maintained and managed by the New Albany Community Foundation; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 6.6 of the Operating Agreement, the Board of Education of the New Albany - Plain Local School District has, in cooperation and consultation with the City, the Township, the community Foundation and the Board of Directors, prepared a Five-Year Capital Repairs, Replacements, and Improvement Plan, which includes, by category, budgeting for Capital Repairs/Replacements and for Capital Additions or Improvements; and

WHEREAS, the Owners have reviewed and approved the Five-Year Capital Repairs, Replacements, and Improvement Plan as presented.

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

Section 1. That the New Albany Community Foundation is determined to be an organization that serves a community purpose and is exempt from federal taxation under subsection 501(a) and described in subsection 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended; and

Section 2. That the funds contributed to the New Albany Community Foundation for the Capital Repairs/Replacements of the McCoy Center for the Arts will serve a community purpose; and

Section 3. That the amount of \$39,600 be set aside and paid to the New Albany Community Foundation from fund 1000-610-58003 (NA Comm Fdn-Perf.Arts-Capital Fund Donation), for the purpose of funding Plain Township's proportionate share of the McCoy Center for the Arts Capital Repairs and Replacements according to Section 8.3 of the Second

Amended and Restated Joint Operating Agreement for the New Albany Community Arts Center.

Section 4. That 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 5. That this Resolution is declared to be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

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

ZONING

Mr. Collins introduced the township representatives on the Rocky Fork Blacklick Accord (RFBA), Jay Herskowitz and Michael Chappellear. Mr. Collins explained that the township invites the representatives to attend the board meetings on a semi-annual basis to share what they are hearing or seeing, or any concerns. There was a lot of activity this year for the RFBA, mostly from the city of Columbus. The RFBA has been in existence since 1998 and the township joined in 2008. Mr. Herskowitz noted that at the last meeting, a developer said that it is going to be harder to maintain rural corridors because everything is changing. Mr. Collins feels like some of the RFBA guidelines, such as setbacks and density limits, are being dismissed in development application. Mr. Zappitelli asked if they knew anything about development on Walnut Street. He stated that a lot of homes between Mr. Herskowitz and State Route 605 are under contract with contingencies by Don Kenney.

ROAD/MAINTENANCE

Mr. Pharris reported that there were 30 funerals and 15 cremations in 2025. He is also working on estimates for a new dump truck. He is looking at a trade-in for a new truck or buying just the chassis and reusing the dump bed off the old truck. There have been a couple of snow events since the last meeting. Renovations are almost completed for the 45 2nd Street rental space. Mr. Collins will get new photos and re-list the space for rent.

Included in the board packet are metrics on cemetery sales and usage. The cemetery has 79 years of useful life left. In 2025, 33 percent of burials were cremations. Ms. Fee is going to work on updating the pricing metrics and will include niches. Mr. Schell inquired about lots that were purchased a long time ago but have never been used. Mr. Collins explained that there are 884 lots that would potentially be available to be reclaimed. The township sponsored legislation years ago to give the township the right to reclaim these graves. There is a public notice process that needs to be followed.

Mr. Schell made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260107M1. Be it Resolved, to set aside and authorize payment to the City of New Albany up to \$12,000 for 2026 Road Salt purchases out of fund 2141-330-54090 (Road District – Material). Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Connor thanked the trustees, Mr. Collins, and the maintenance team for all their hard work, engagement and support for the past couple of years.

Chief Connor shared that there are three people off on injury leave right now. There were two off-duty injuries and one Bureau of Workers Compensation claim for an on-duty injury.

2025 call volumes were down. Chief Connor believes this is a direct result of Columbus handling more of their own runs. Chief Connor and Assistant Chief Ecleberry had a meeting with a couple of Columbus fire chiefs to discuss the relationship between the two stations when Station 36 opens at Central College and Harlem Road.

Prevention invoices for 2025 totaled \$173,924, not all have been paid to date. Chief expects to review and adjust the fees structure for plan reviews and permits.

The hiring process has started with a March 31st hire date. The department received 32 applications. Twenty-one have been invited to take the physical ability test. Interviews will take place between January 26th – 28th.

The awards banquet is February 6th from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Assistant Chief Ecleberry is working on an inventory list of obsolete equipment. He expects to have that prepared for the next meeting.

Ms. Mollard asked if there was an update on the new station. With the holidays, not much progress has been made. The architect is still going back and forth with New Albany Company on the requested changes. Mr. Collins offered that with the 2023-2024 audit complete and 2025 books closed, the first order of business will be to update the preliminary offering statement with the updated information.

Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260107F1. Be it resolved to pay MES for annual SCBA preventative maintenance services in the amount of \$6,878.47 out of Fund 2111-220-53023 (Fire-Repairs – Maintenance Agreements).

**MES Service Company
PO BOX 851792
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55485-1792**

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

FISCAL OFFICE

December 2025 Bank Reconciliation and Month End reports were presented, as well as the December 2025 credit card statements.

Mr. Zappitelli reported that Ms. Rogers and Ms. Frye worked very hard the past week to get 2025 closed and 2026 opened in time for the board meeting tonight.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn into executive session at 8:06 p.m. pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22 (G)(1) for employment. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

Mr. Collins, Mr. Zappitelli, and Chief Connor joined the Executive Session.

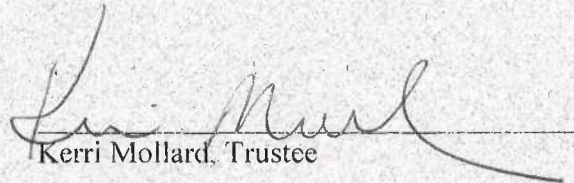
Chief Connor left executive session at 8:37 p.m.

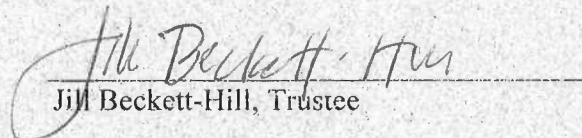
Ms. Mollard made a motion to close out of executive session at 9:01 p.m. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

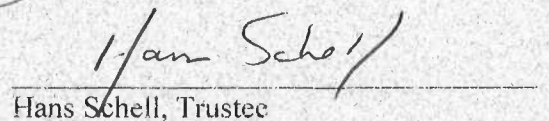
ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Mollard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Mr. Schell seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:


Kerri Mollard, Trustee


Jill Beckett-Hill, Trustee


Hans Schell, Trustee


Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer