

## 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. Beckett-Hill called the meeting to order. Ms. Beckett-Hill led the Trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call: Members Present: Jill Beckett-Hill and Hans Schell. Ms. Mollard joined the meeting following an interview. Others present: Township Administrator Ben Collins, Fiscal Officer Bud Zappitelli, Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Eceleberry, EMS Coordinator Brad Essick and Township and Zoning Coordinator Mary Fee. Finance Officer Courtney Rogers and Maintenance Supervisor Bobby Pharris were absent. Visitors present: Tim Butsko, Coleen Barber, and Erica Donahoe. Ms. Mollard arrived late.

### ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Mr. Collins noted that Council Member Durik would not be able to attend tonight's meeting.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a motion to approve the March 4, 2026 Board of Trustees Regular Meeting minutes. Ms. Schell seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 26031801)**

### NEW ALBANY CITY COUNCIL LIAISON – MIKE DURIK

Mr. Durik was not in attendance.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Butsko thanked the Township for its gracious contribution to the Veterans Memorial Statue and announced that their financial goals were recently met.

Mr. Butsko raised concerns over the increased traffic on Bevelhymer Road due to the State Route 605 and Walnut Street roundabout construction. He pointed out traffic will increase even more with the upcoming soccer, baseball, and field hockey games and tournaments. He said the road is not wide enough for two cars to pass and that the dirt berms do not prevent cars from sliding into the ditch.

Ms. Erica Donahoe also expressed concerns about the Bevelhymer traffic. She has lived there for 15 years and said residents use the road to walk their dogs, go for runs and ride bikes. She suggested implementing better signage, indicating no through traffic and flashing speed limit

signs. She also recommended that the Metro Parks Department put leisure trails in to provide a safer option for bikers and walkers.

Mr. Collins said speed limit signs are \$5000 each and could be installed before the summer season. He further stated that the Township might be able to partner with the Parks Department to enhance the pedestrian crosswalk. The detour signage can also be changed to deter large trucks from using Bevelhymer. Mr. Collins reported that 3000 vehicles per day use Bevelhymer during tournaments. He thanked the residents for coming to the meeting and sharing their thoughts. He said that residents' testimonies along with documentation of the increased traffic may help sway the Franklin County Engineer's Office to help with improvements to Bevelhymer Road.

Ms. Mollard asked if State funds might be available. Mr. Collins answered that it is possible and these requests are due in September. Mr. Schell asked if the Parks Department might help with the speed limit signs. Mr. Collins advised it would be the Township's responsibility, but he can ask the Parks Department. Mr. Collins will also ask the city of New Albany for help with the crosswalk since it acquired the right of way.

### ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Collins reported that the maintenance staff checked the Township roads for debris and downed trees on Monday. He advised pool sales are down slightly from last year, but there is a sales push on social media, and the city of New Albany is helping.

Mr. Collins has been working with our human resources consultant on a parental leave policy. It would be separate from sick leave or disability leave. The physical needs of a firefighter to return to work versus an office setting should be addressed. Chief Connor believes this will be a great recruitment tool and will allow for greater diversity. Mr. Schell asked if other fire departments offer this and what costs are involved. Chief Connor said that the City of Whitehall offers parental leave and noted that the public sector is following the private sector in providing this benefit. Mr. Schell also asked if the township is legally allowed to differentiate between time off for females and males for this policy. Mr. Collins stated that it would be permissible to have different benefits for the birth parent versus the other parent. Mr. Schell inquired about the cost of this benefit. Chief Connor explained that the cost would be the overtime required to cover the firefighter on leave. Ms. Mollard asked if taking parental leave periodically over time would be more burdensome with regards to overtime than continuous leave. Chief Connor said they would be able to manage this by transferring people around to different units. He noted that FMLA allows for time off to be used at different time intervals.

Ms. Beckett-Hill inquired about the resolution to contract with Sedgwick. Mr. Collins said that the Township had too many Workers' Compensation claims to participate in the traditional group plan. The traditional plan has lower premiums, but no rebates are given. The Township's premiums are significantly higher than two years ago, but the Township may receive some rebates. The goal is to get back to the traditional group plan.

**Mr. Schell made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260318A1. Be it resolved, to pay Sedgwick, Inc., PO Box 89456, Cleveland, Ohio 44101, the amount of \$8,310 (a 5% increase) as a service fee for third-party administration for the group retro rating program and enroll Plain Township in the BWC Group Retrospective Rating Program for the period beginning January 1, 2027, according to the attached agreement, to be paid out of the corresponding fund as a share of total reported payroll. Ms. Mollard seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

## **ZONING**

Mr. Collins reported that there is a resolution to appoint two new board members to the Zoning Commission. A training session with legal counsel will be held in April to establish what the board needs to accomplish this year.

Mr. Collins reported that data centers were discussed at the Ohio Township Association Conference in February. Mr. Collins and Mr. Schell met with the city of New Albany to discuss the residents' concerns over the nearby data centers. Mr. Collins noted that other townships are limiting the number of data centers in their territories. Mr. Collins continues to receive questions about additional dwelling units on properties. Ms. Mollard advised that a resident told her that the data centers are taking over valuable farmland. Ms. Mollard asked if she should comment on this to the Franklin County Farm Bureau. The Bureau invited Ms. Mollard to a luncheon but she is unable to attend. Mr. Collins advised that so much land is available.

Mr. Collins received a call from an environmental crime detective at the Franklin County's Sheriff's office concerning demolition materials that were dumped in the front yard of a township property. Mr. Collins notified both the owner and the tenant of the property to remove the materials by the end of the month.

There is interest in developing an athletic field within the township. Mr. Collins advised it would require rezoning for exceptional use.

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260318Z1. Be it resolved, that the Plain Township Board of Trustees hereby appoints Dustin Pargeon, a resident of the unincorporated territory of Plain Township, to serve as a member of the Zoning Commission for a term ending on December 31, 2030. Ms. Beckett-Hill seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260318Z2. Be it resolved, that the Plain Township Board of Trustees hereby appoints Ali Behaein, a resident of the unincorporated territory of Plain Township, to serve as a member of the Zoning Commission for a term ending on December 31, 2027. Mr. Schell seconded the Motion. Vote: All Aye.**

## ROAD/MAINTENANCE

Mr. Collins reviewed the resolution to pay for repairs to the pool, cemetery and township office parking lots. He noted that it has been ten years since the pool parking lot was sealed and striped. He advised the repairs need to be done at some point, but it could wait until Fall or next year. Ms. Beckett-Hill asked if the construction company is currently using any of the pool parking lot for their equipment and was advised that they are not. Ms. Beckett-Hill recommends doing the repairs now to avoid a price increase later. Swickard Woods is still the property of the Parks Department, and it needs to be transferred to the City of New Albany.

**Ms. Mollard made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260318M1. Be it resolved, to authorize and pay J Kuhn Enterprises, Inc. doing business as AJ Asphalt & Concrete, 2210 McKinley Ave, Columbus, OH 43204, an amount up to \$34,254 for pavement repairs and maintenance out of the following funds:**

\$3,537	1000-120-55030 (Twp - Improvement of Sites)
\$12,897	1000-410-58030 (General - Cemetery - Improvement of Sites)
\$17,820	2171-610-58023 (Pool - Repairs)

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

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Connor thanked the Trustees for their support in securing the SAFER grant that helped fund the hiring of six new firefighters. Chief Connor reached out to his contact at SAFER to update him on the new hires, but the contact is not responding to emails since FEMA is currently part of the government shut down.

Chief Connor reported that there were 23 runs over the weekend. Chief Ecleberry and EMS Coordinator Essick were also taking runs due to the increased activity.

Assistant Chief Ecleberry reported that repairs to Engine 122 have been completed and the department will have the truck back tonight or tomorrow. They plan to take it to Heritage in a week or so for the remaining issues. The primary medic unit was out of service for a few days because of electrical issues. The repairs were covered under warranty, and an alignment was also completed.

Assistant Chief Ecleberry attended the quarterly school safety committee meeting and reported a power outage occurred at the Early Learning Center when a custodian was electrocuted. The generator did not come on, so the halls were pitch black. Assistant Chief Ecleberry recommended the school switch to emergency exit lights that include a battery back-up. Thankfully the custodian is doing well. Renovations for the high school library will begin in June and items from the building will be placed in storage units in the school parking lot. The Church of the Resurrection's building addition will take up parking spots used by the high school students. There was discussion about asking the township to allow students to park in the pool parking lot.

Assistant Chief Ecleberry reported there was a cardiac arrest at the Heit Center and believes the man who administered CPR had been trained by EMS Coordinator Brad Essick. Chief Connor said the EMS training is having a great impact on the community, and he receives a lot of positive feedback. Essick recently had two training sessions with new employees of the New Albany Country Club. Ms. Mollard suggested listing the groups that have received EMS training in the annual report to raise awareness. She will inquire at the next Joint Parks District meeting if the volunteer coaches would like CPR training. EMS Coordinator Essick is working with Denise Johnson from the new athletic facility to make CPR training available for those who are interested.

Mr. Collins reported that the township has \$54,000 in opioid settlement funds. He is working with Chief Connor, Assistant Chief Ecleberry and EMS Coordinator Essick to improve the township's ability to respond to drug overdoses. Essick suggested purchasing another heart monitor for the additional engine rescue. Mr. Collins submitted a letter to legal counsel to make sure this purchase would be covered under the settlement. He estimates the cost to be \$45,000.

Chief Connor thanked Ms. Beckett-Hill for her input on the design of the new fire station. Ms. Beckett-Hill reported the new flooring will be concrete with a matte finish. She had a meeting today regarding the design selections and plans to have a 3-D sample made so everyone can see what the fire station will look like. Chief Connor said the project will go to bid in mid-April, and 3 to 4 weeks later the Board will select the contractor. The groundbreaking ceremony will follow. Chief Connor advised the build time is ten months, but it is subject to weather and the supply chain. A tentative groundbreaking date was set for June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Collins reported the tentative date to close on the bonds is June 10<sup>th</sup>. He also reported the lot split was finalized and the deed was transferred to Plain Township. Ms. Beckett-Hill said they are working on a new address for the fire station.

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a Motion to pass Resolution No. 260318F1. Be it resolved to pay the MECC Regional Council of Governments \$25,000 for 2026 EMS Medical Director share, out of fund 2281-230-58099 (EMS-EMS-Other).**

**Jason Nicodemus  
MECC Regional Council of Governments  
P.O. Box 647  
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068**

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

### **FISCAL OFFICE**

### **PAYMENT OF THE BILLS**

**Ms. Beckett-Hill made a motion to pay the pending warrants in the amount of \$495,336.83.  
Mr. Schell seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye. (Resolution 26031802)**

The February 2026 credit card statements were presented.

Ms. Mollard asked how the paperwork is going for the bond sale. Mr. Zappitelli reported there is a bond rating meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Collins reported the paperwork appears to be coming together. He said the bond advisors refreshed the preliminary offering statements by pulling 2025 data from county sources. The 2025 Financial Statement that was submitted to the state and the recent 2023-2024 Financial Audit will be available for investors to review. We will need to decide what amount to request. A scenario for \$8 million is under consideration, but we can go up to \$12 million without altering our agreement with Baker-Tilly. Ms. Mollard inquired about private placement versus bank sale. Mr. Collins recommended going to market first to see what is available.

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

The Joins Parks District is having a topping out ceremony on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. for the last beam that is going into the field house.

#### **THE NEW ALBANY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

No updates

#### **NEW ALBANY SUSTAINABILITY STAKEHOLDERS**

Ms. Mollard and Mr. Collins will attend the upcoming meeting.

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

Ms. Beckett-Hill and Ms. Barber reported that a fourth-grade student recently passed away from a brain tumor. Her mother is a teacher in New Albany. There is a GoFundMe for the family. Ms. Beckett-Hill reported on the school district's master plan. The tech hub will begin in June, and moving sports off campus will have two phases. Ms. Barber shared that the baseball and softball fields may not be completed until 2028. Ms. Barber reported that the Soaring Eagles program will allow for naming rights opportunities for sports complexes. The school board approved a memorial to be named after a previous NAPLS Superintendent Dr. Rob Johnson.

#### **MCCOY CENTER FOR THE ARTS**

It was noted that the township paid \$30,000 for the capital repair fund.

#### **NEW ALBANY CITY COUNCIL**

Mr. Schell was unable to attend the meeting but reported the city had declarations recognizing Women's History Month, and city council had a badge pinning ceremony for the new police sergeant and 6 new police officers.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Schell attended the Planning Commission meeting on Monday for the new food pantry location. Rachel, the executive director, spoke and forty volunteers who deliver food were there to support it. Mr. Schell reported he and Mr. Collins met with three employees from Google and Ms. Jennifer Chrysler to discuss the data center noise. Google has spent millions of dollars trying to figure out the noise issue. They have replaced fans and will plant trees as barriers.

**NEW BUSINESS**

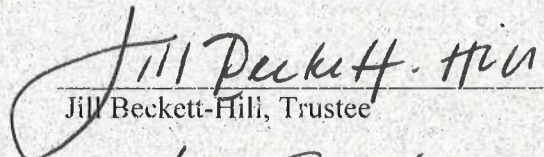
Rumpke is having a tour on March 31<sup>st</sup>, but Ms. Mollard is unable to attend. Ms. Beckett-Hill is also unable to attend but saw a virtual tour through the city council meeting.

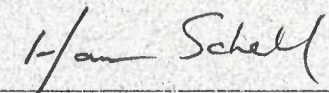
**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Beckett-Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Ms. Mollard seconded the motion. Vote: All Aye

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

  
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Kerri Mollard, Trustee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Beckett-Hill, Trustee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hans Schell, Trustee

  
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Bud Zappitelli, Fiscal Officer