

**UNION TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
October 19, 2020**

The Union Township Trustees met in regular session via zoom on October 5 19, 2020, at 7:00 pm with Trustee Charlie Prince opening with the pledge of allegiance. Roll call by Fiscal Officer Jessica Slater showed Trustees Charlie Prince, John Slater, and Randy Weekly present. Township Administrator Paula Greene and Road Supervisor Dave Cable were present. Guests via Zoom: Rick Black, Martha Cable, Traci McMillen, Bill McWilliams, Lindsey McCutcheon, Shaney Lynde, Tom Esh, Patty Costello, Dean Gibson, Jennifer Kurkowski, and other unidentified zoom callers.

Minutes

Mr. Prince said he had not reviewed the October 5 minutes.

Bills

The clerk certified the money to pay the bills was in the treasury or is in the process of collection. Mr. Weekly motioned to pay the bills. Mr. Slater seconded. Motion carried.

Road & Bridge

Dave reported the Case Front-Loader continues to have mechanical issues but will continue to operate the loader for the time being.

A Squire Lane resident has contacted Dave several times requesting the road be repaired. Dave has viewed the road and did not find any issues with the road and advised her as such. Dave verified with the Trustees that there are no scheduled road repairs. Mr. Prince said he recently traveled Squire Lane and felt no repairs were needed. Mr. Slater said Squire Lane is the only concrete road in the Township, which required different repair techniques. Dave will advise the resident.

The tractor/mower has transmission issues, and Dave discussed the problem with Brent McDonald. Mr. Slater will meet with Mr. McDonald. The tractor is not scheduled for replacement until 2023. A new tractor would cost between \$120,000 - \$140,00. The tractor and long arm mower are necessary for mowing in the Township.

Fire/EMS

The apparatus building structure is now complete and approved by Township employee Pat McKinley, who oversaw its construction. The arrival of the roofing material has been delayed. The Licking County Building Code Department inspected and approved the frame and foundation. Mr. Weekly and Mr. Slater have viewed the structure and agreed they did not see any building issues. The Refugee Canyon Fire Board purchased the building doors and will be installed by Wednesday when the concrete floors will be poured.

Administration

Energy-Cooperative – Thursday, October 19, will hear Energy Cooperative's application to

increase building wall sign size and add a second wall sign at its location in the Newark Industrial Park.

Map Amendment – The Union Township Zoning Commission will meet on October 27 to hear a request to rezone a ten-acre parcel from Agricultural to Rural Resident 4.

Brewer – Roy Brewer, National Road, burned a single wide house trailer on his property. Firefighter Culley (RCFD) advised Paula that they were unaware of the fire but would check the area and have Captain Wyse, contact Paula the next day. As of today, Captain Wyse has not made contact. Paula notified Jason Fister, Ohio EPA, who will investigate the complaint. Paula will follow up on zoning violations for the storage of junk vehicles. A complaint was also filed on a parcel that adjoins Brewers for storing junk vehicles, but the vehicles are not visible from the road.

Cares Act Funding (CAF) Update – On October 9, the Township received \$142,989.83 additional funding. Estimates are being obtained for touchless bathroom fixtures, new HVAC system with an air purification system at the Township garage, and medical grade flooring for the complex. At the Ohio Township Association recommendation, Paula contacted Attorney Marc Fishel with Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff LLP of New Abany for Cares Act Funding advice. There are no retainer costs; a signed retention letter is required, and a fee of \$190.00 per hour. The fee is refundable to the Township as a CAF approved expense.

Mr. Prince said he believed Ken Oswalt, the CAF compliant officer for Licking County, was advising townships. Paula said Mr. Oswalt could only answer questions and not provide a written opinion. Mr. Fishel can provide written opinions regarding CAF purchases.

Mr. Prince questioned Attorney Fishel's letter of intent as he believed the letter did not cover liability. Mr. Prince asked for a monetary limit to be placed on Attorney Fishel's expenses. Mr. Weekly asked to be notified before contacting Attorney Fishel and felt some CAF funds could be used at the satellite station. Mr. Prince would like to see the HVAC system at 6265 evaluated County Commissioner Black said Ken Oswalt can advise the townships or villages but cannot represent them and recommend the Township retain Attorney Fishel.

Mr. Prince moved to retain Attorney Fishel with a limit of \$5,000.00; the limit could be increased if needed. Mr. Slater seconded. Motion carried.

Paula said a Special Meeting via Zoom may be necessary to approve the estimates for CAF purchases before the next regular Trustees meeting.

Fire District Resolution – Mr. Prince said he prepared a draft Resolution regarding the Satellite Station transition of 6265 Lancaster Road property to the Refugee Canyon Fire District. The Resolution addresses responsibility for the payment of utility bills, repair to building cost, and property maintenance (mowing). Mr. Prince wanted the Trustees to review the Resolution before sending it to the Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Prince explained the contents of the draft Resolution. Mr. Prince said the Fire Districts' attorney bills the Township received were the

District's responsibility. Their fiscal officer has been trying to get the bills redirected to the district. Mr. Weekly said he wanted the Prosecutor's Office to review the Resolution.

Tracy McMillen asked why the Township was paying the Fire District's utility bills and why they were "giving away" the building. Mr. Prince said the Fire District resolution turns the station over to the district in the draft resolution. A discussion was held regarding transferring 6265 property to the District, funds, and paid utility expenses.

Russ Ginise expressed several concerns regarding the Township paying the Fire District's utility bills, the significant increase in Union Township residents' taxes (excluding Hebron), the loss of rollback funding, and the increase of cost per run. Mr. Ginise said Mr. Prince and Chief Mason complained about the cost per run of \$3,000 to \$3,600 for Granville Twp. Fire.

If the 8.5 mill levy passes, the cost per run will increase to approximately \$5,000 per run. Mr. Ginise said this is not saving money, adding the Fire District's budget included a 14 percent pay raise for Chief Mason.

Mr. Ginise addressed Mr. Prince and Mr. Weekly's statement in a Fire District flyer that states passing the levy would save Hebron residents money when it will not. Hebron residents will save money if the leadership in Hebron conforms their boundaries. Mr. Ginise also claimed that a flyer under-estimated the levy's cost and asked that it be corrected.

Rick Black asked why there was an overage of \$618,000 in the Township's fire fund. Mr. Prince explained these funds accumulated before the last fire contracts, as fire levy revenue exceeded the contracts' cost. A portion of the revenue included the sale of the Township owned fire equipment to the Village of Hebron.

Mr. Slater said in response to Mr. Ginise's question, he knew opening an additional fire station would not save funds but was not intended to increase the millage to 8.5 and has stated in public that he is not in favor of the 8.5 mills. Mr. Slater said he wanted the Fire District to take more cost-saving measures, and now it appears we have created two departments.

From the beginning, Mr. Prince and Mr. Weekly intended to reduce lengthy response times, and it has done that up to 50 percent or greater in some areas. Mr. Prince said he knew costs would not decrease and Chief Mason was the lowest-paid full-time Fire Chief in central Ohio. Mrs. McMillen said this was not the residents' problem. Mr. Prince said when Chief Mason retires, a new Chief's salary would need to increase significantly.

Mr. Esh asked why a Fire District cost increase from having a Fire Department. Mr. Prince said additional staff and stations had been added. Mr. Prince said entering into the District has saved the Township over two million dollars in equipment costs alone. Mrs. McMillen said Granville Township offered to assist at a much lower cost. Mr. Prince said Granville's proposal required the Township to provide an EMS unit and engine quickly.

Granville Twp. Fire Chief Casey Curtis said his proposal did not include the Township purchasing equipment. Chief Curtis said Mr. Prince wanted to reduce the amount of money paid to Granville Fire, which he has done but increased the resident's cost per run to \$6,500

with the 8.5 mill levy's passing. Chief Curtis agreed the run times have decreased with the addition of the Satellite Station. Mr. Prince said he was glad Chief Curtis acknowledged the decreased response time. Mrs. McMillen said the residents are concerned about what they can afford to pay. Mr. Prince said he was ending the questions.

The visitors became upset when they were cut off from asking questions. Ms. Costello asked Trustees Prince and Weekly if their fiduciary responsibility was to the District or the residents. Mr. Weekly said his responsibility as a Township Trustee and a Fire Board member was to everyone in Union Township, including the people residing in Hebron.

Mr. Ginise asked if Mr. Prince or Mr. Weekly would correct the statement to the residents. Mr. Weekly wanted to see the letter first. Mr. Prince said his information was provided by Brad Cottrell, Licking County Auditor's Office.

Mr. Prince asked Mr. Ginise if the information on the "Union Township for Public Safety was accurate. Mr. Ginise said he believed the site's information was correct as his information provided by Brad Cottrell, Licking County Auditor's Office. Mr. Ginise said Mr. Prince's numbers were incorrect and that he (Mr. Prince) signed the letter.

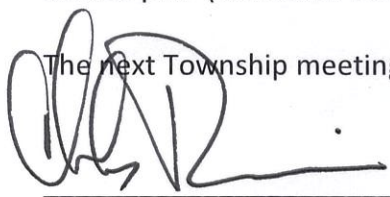
Mr. Prince was asked how they will operate the Fire District if the levy fails. Mr. Prince said there is funding through 2021. Residents will see improved services and support the levy.

A Deeds Road resident voiced concerns of EMT staffing at 6265, water trucks responding to fires, back-up services, and response times from the Hebron station when 6265 responded to other runs. Mr. Prince said if a fire were to occur, West Licking Fire District would respond.

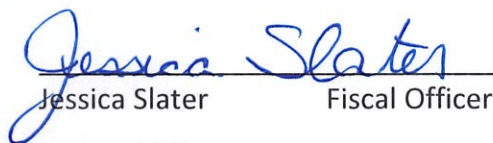
Earlier in the meeting, Ms. Costello requested Mr. Prince and Mr. Weekly to resign from the Fire District's Board and the Board of Trustees. Ms. Costello said citizen representation is low, and there is a conflict of interest by Mr. Prince and Mr. Weekly.

Mr. Weekly moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Prince seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm. (Mr. Slater lost his zoom connection just before the end of the meeting).

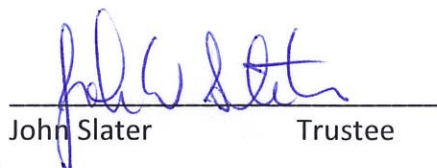
The next Township meeting will be held via Zoom on November 9, 2020, at 7:00 pm.



Charles Prince Chairman



Jessica Slater Fiscal Officer



John Slater Trustee



Randy Weekly Trustee