

REGULAR MEETING
UNION TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
April 15, 2019

Present: Charlie Prince, Trustee
John Slater, Trustee
Randy Weekly, Trustee
Paula Greene, Administrator
Jessica Slater, Fiscal Officer
Dave Cable, Road Supervisor

The Union Township Trustees met in regular session at 7:00 pm on April 15, 2019, at the Union Township Complex. Roll call showed the following trustees present: Trustee Charles Prince, Trustee John Slater, and Trustee Randy Weekly. Jessica Slater, Fiscal Officer, was present. Trustee Prince led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Guests: Rich Moore, Deena & Bob Seaton, Tonya Painter, Leslie Herro, Dan Van Ness, Mike Bishop, Gregg Painter, Jack & Marsha Justice, Ken Kerns, Penny Slater, Matt Ladzinotes, Hebron Fire Chief Cliff Mason, Granville Fire Chief Casey Curtis, Ed Parrish, Chris DeMent, Ken and Nancy Johnson, Elliot and Margie Davidoff, Bill McWilliams and Valerie Mockus.

Tax Foreclosures - Bill Hayes, Licking County Prosecutor, gave an update on the County's foreclosure process. Mr. Hayes gave the trustees a list of delinquent taxes in the township and Hebron. Townships now have the opportunity to purchase a property not sold through the Sheriff's sale. Mr. Hayes explained the county's foreclosure process which could take up to one year to complete.

Water Issue – Ken Kerns of 19 Bending Oak Drive expressed concerns of water laying on his property from a waterway on an adjoining property in the Grandview Crossing subdivision. This has been an ongoing problem which is becoming more serious. Mr. Kerns presented photos and a layout of the property. Mr. Kerns said the waterway had not been maintained since it's an installation in 2003 during the construction of the development. Trees and yard waste are now in the waterway, impeding the water flow. Mr. Kerns located the subdivisions covenant which state the property owner must maintain the waterway. The Trustees advised they are not responsible for the upkeep but will contact someone who could address the issue.

Buckeye Lake Water Level – Ed Parrish spoke to the Trustees regarding Buckeye Lake's elevated water level. The water is cresting at the emergency spillway which it had not done so frequently before. Mr. Parrish questioned the level that the lake has been maintained at recently, stating that the level should be six inches below the top of the Seller's Point Spillway.

Mr. Parrish said seven square miles of water detention had been lost and every gallon of water that goes into the lake when it is at the top of the spillway means a gallon must come out resulting in water coming down the South Fork of the Licking River which increases flooding for residents, agricultural property and highways.

Mr. Parrish asked the Trustees to send a letter to ODNR, asking the lake height return to the 891.5 level and be maintained at this level to avoid flooding. Mr. Parrish said a Village of Hebron and the Conservancy District are willing to send letters in support of this change.

Mr. Parrish feels by not using the AMILgate at the other outlet; water is forced down the channel to the bridges at Interstate 70 & State Route 79. Mr. Parrish said each bridge headwall is now smaller and narrower than the channel resulting in the water becoming deeper in the channel.

Mr. Slater said the water level needs to be consistent and the former water level was to be maintained below the height of the emergency spillway and that the Lake is not being maintained that way.

Mr. Weekly asked if the spillway was in use. Mr. Parrish said the spillway has not been in operation due to the spillway levers have blocks on them.

Mr. Prince said stop blocks were installed at the AMIL spillway approximately four years ago when the dam reconstruction project was starting. Mr. Prince said ODNR told him the Lake would be at traditional summer pool of 891.63 and the top of the spillway is 892.21. He agrees that the water level has been high so far this spring.

Mr. Parrish said before today's major rainwater was lapping over spillway with wind and feels some of the water needs to go out old the old spillway to avoid the bridges. Mr. Prince. feels when the dam was rebuilt the spillway lacked water capacity and would not protect the residents that live along the dam.

A discussion was held on the new lake gauge at the AMIL spillway which can be viewed in real time online. It was noted Ridgely Tract Road had been closed due to high water which is a result of the log jams in the Licking River.

Minutes - The April 1, 2019 minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

Road and Bridge

Complaints – Several subdivision residents have complained of loose stone on their roads. The loose stone is the top layer of Dura-patching potholes, which has been explained to those voicing a concern.

Mowing – Ted Copeland is expected to begin mowing along township roads April 29.

Mr. Slater asked Brandon Daubenmire be contacted to mow 6265 Lancaster Road.

Administration

Spring Clean Up – The Spring Clean-Up will be on April 27th from 9am to 1pm.

Zoning – Two map amendments and a variance application are pending submittal.

Health Insurance – Jim Organ of One Source (Township Health Insurance) contacted the Administrator and Fiscal Officer. Mr. Prince said he is inquiring about health insurance due to his wife’s impending retirement. Mrs. Slater noted BeniStar Health Plan continues to bill the township for the Weekly’s health plan though they are receiving insurance benefits from Medical Mutual.

Trustees

Mr. Prince updated the Trustees on the status of the litigation with OPEC-HC.

Purchase of Property

Mr. Slater announced the trustees closed on the property at 6265 Lancaster Road for the purpose of a fire/ems satellite station. The trustees will take possession of the property on May 1.

Fire District Committee Discussion

Mr. Prince announced the next Fire District Committee meeting would be held Thursday, May 2 at 9:00am at the Hebron Fire Department Training room. The discussion will be held on a draft “Where are we now.” and Chief Mason will present a draft budget.

Fire Discussion

Chris DeMent asked the status on Dr. Kramer’s report and why the trustees were moving forward with future fire department changes. Mr. Prince reminded Mr. DeMent that the trustees were fulfilling the obligations of the contract with the Village of Hebron. It is believed Dr. Kramer’s final report would be submitted soon and Dr. Kramer would return to for a township meeting.

Chief Mason said the fire engine damaged during a fire in October is now operational. Hebron Village has authorized the purchase of a new fire engine that is expected to be delivered in March 2020. Mr. Prince said the Village of Hebron purchased the new fire engine with funds from the Village’s Capital revenue and the cost of the new engine would not be an expense of the fire district if the township forms a district.

Tonya Painter asked if Chief Mason’s budget presentation would be for a fire district or to operate a satellite station including millage. Chief Mason said his presentation would be a combination of both and would include proposed millage.

Bob Seaton said he feels the trustees are planning to discontinue their contract with Granville Twp. Fire. Mr. Prince said he was not that was not the case but said the boundaries would likely change with the addition of the satellite station and response times would be reduced by half. Mr. Weekly said the Fire District could contract with Granville Twp Fire.

Mr. Seaton asked if the Township entered into a Fire District would a new Fire Chief be appointed. Mr. Weekly said the Fire District Board would decide.

DanVanNess asked if Chief Mason’s report would show the new coverage area and funding model and it’s effects to Granville Twp. Fire’s service area. Mr. Prince said

Chief Mason's report might not be that detailed at this time. Mr. Slater said they are working towards determining the information Mr. Van Ness is requesting.

Casey Curtis asked the trustees what they felt was the advantage to the residents of Union Township are by creating a fire district with the Village of Hebron when all of the Village of Hebron is within Union Township.

Mr. Prince said he believes the Trustees would have more control than they do now.

Mr. Curtis disagreed as the Trustees could form their own fire department and have complete control of fire/ems for less money.

Mr. Prince disagreed stating the Township does not own any fire equipment.

Mr. Slater said to improve fire service funding would need to be increased.

Chief Curtis said during the previous township trustee meeting he provided the trustees with an alternative for fire/ems services that would provide the trustees with additional input for an additional .3 mills.

Mr. Slater agreed with Chief Curtis' statement adding with Chief Curtis' plan there would be a response time concerns to a different area of the township.

Chief Curtis said the Trustees could contract with the Village of Hebron to respond to the areas of the township where response times fall in the appropriate time range, and revenue could be adjusted.

Mr. Prince said Chief Curtis' plan eliminated all of the Township's funding to the Village of Hebron.

Chief Curtis said this was not the plan and there were no questions from the trustees after his presentation to address any concerns they may have. Chief Curtis said he had had several meeting with Mr. Slater, Mr. Prince said he would meet with him, and Mr. Weekly said he did not want to meet with Chief Curtis.

Mr. Weekly said he did not refuse to meet with Chief Curtis, but that he understood Chief Curtis presentation from his experience as Hebron Fire Chief. Mr. Weekly said as there is a contract with Granville Twp. Fire and the trustees are in negotiations with Hebron he is not prepared for further discussion at this time. Mr. Weekly said he feels there are too many other options to consider at this time and would meet with Chief Curtis when he needed more information. Mr. Prince told Chief Curtis that the discussion did not need to become combative.

Ken Johnson asked why the Fire District Committee Meetings were held in the morning as most people are working and not available to attend. Mr. Prince said the committee members (Village of Hebron Council and Chief Mason and the Township Trustees) are available during the morning and the meetings are for discussion only and no decisions are made.

Mr. Johnson asked if Union Township residents are aware the previous property owners own the mineral rights and can drill on the 6265 Lancaster Road parcel.

Mr. Slater said no one could drill for minerals on the property nor conduct any service activities there. He acknowledged that the Gulick retained mineral rights which was reflected in the purchase price. Mr. Johnson believes township residents are unaware that the Gulicks retained the mineral rights. Mr. Prince reminded the audience that the building and property needed only minor changes before opening as a satellite station, at a very significant cost saving to the residents.

Mr. DeMent asked if the residents would vote for the creation of a Fire District.

Mr. Slater said they would not and explained the Ohio Attorney General's findings on creating a Fire District and that the District would need to fund it'self, by possibly adding levies, or cease to exist.

Mr. Prince said the Ohio Revised Code addresses dissolving a fire district. Mr. Prince believes there is information that can be presented to the residents so they recognize the benefits of a Fire District and will support additional levies.

Mr. DeMent said as a long time business owner in the township a tax increase of 60% would greatly impact his business.

Mr. Prince said Mr. DeMent had received a bargain being in Union Township.

Mr. DeMent said it was easy for Mr. Prince to say, but he would move his company with the attitude being shown to him.

Mr. Prince said fire levies are higher in other portions of the county and in surrounding counties, resulting in Mr. DeMent paying higher taxes there than in Union Township. Mr. Prince said they are not trying to increase taxes to the residents and estimates the Trustees have already saved the taxpayers an over a million dollars by purchasing 6265 Lancaster Road and not building a new station.

Valarie Mockus asked what would happen if a new fire/ems levy did not pass. Mr. Prince said the current levies would continue.

Mr. Slater said current fire/ems levies would need to be renewed and if there was opposition regarding a Fire District, those renewal levies could be in jeopardy of not being renewed.

Elliot Davidoff feels a Fire District creates another layer of government and questioned adding another layer of government with the creation of a Fire District. Mr. Slater agreed this is a topic for discussion.

Jack Justice said Dr. Kramer previously stated the Trustees had more control by contracting with fire departments than by participating in a Fire District and feels the current issues with the fire department has gotten out of control during the past two years.

Mr. Seaton agreed with Mr. Justice and asked how the Fire District Board would be formed.

Mr. Prince explained the Township and the Village of Hebron have contracted with Fire Chief and Attorney Chip Comstock to assist with the creation of a resolution for a Fire District. Mr. Prince said Attorney Comstock has considerable experience in creating Fire Districts. There could be two representatives each from Hebron Village Council and Union Township Trustees, and those members would select a fifth member at large. The second option is one representative from Hebron Village and Union Township Trustees, and who would choose three at large representatives.

Mr. Seaton said his concern is the residents of Hebron are residents of Township and can run and vote for Township Trustee allowing Hebron residents to have additional representation than a someone residing outside of the Village in Union Township.

Mr. Prince said he did not believe the Ohio Revised Code recognizes this issue.

Mr. Seaton asked if it was rare for a village to be within the boundaries of a township.

Mr. Slater said a few of these situations exist.

Chief Curtis said the Village of Granville is within Granville Township and supersedes the Village and the two entities would not attempt to create a Fire District.

Trustee VanNess said the Village of Granville is not involved with the Fire Department and there are no additional Village taxes.

Mr. Seaton said he was trying to keep an open mind, but feels the Village of Hebron will have double representation on the Fire District Board.

Chief Curtis asked if there is a precedence for a fire district to be made out of a township and a village that is part of the township. He feels the Township is making a fire district with its self.

Mr. Prince said this would be a question for Mr. Comstock. Mr. Prince said Hebron would be making a large investment as they own all the fire/ems equipment.

Mr. Seaton said a Fire District gives the residents of Hebron the power to vote for all four representatives of the Fire District (Trustee/Council) which he feels gives him, a township resident less of a voice. Mr. Seaton said now if a trustee is doing something he does not like he will find someone to run against them.

Mrs. Painter asked the term limit of a Fire District Board member. Mr. Prince said the terms could be set up as two or three-year terms.

A discussion was held on the Fire District Board. The residents do not vote for a Fire District representative, only the Trustee or Council person who could then be appointed

to the Fire District Board.

Mrs. Mockus asked when was the last time a resident of Hebron was a Township Trustee. Virgil George was a resident of Hebron and a Union Township Trustee in the late 1980's to 1993. Mrs. Mockus said she understood Mr. Seaton's concerns.

Mr. Seaton is extremely concerned with the Village of Hebron voters ability to vote for Council and Township Trustee which gives the voters of Hebron say on all elected positions of the Fire District Board.

Executive Session

Mr. Prince asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Slater moved to enter into executive session at 8:32 pm. Seconded by Mr. Weekly. Mr. Weekly moved to return from executive session at 8:48 pm. Seconded by Mr. Slater.

Bills

The Fiscal Officer certified that the money to pay the bills was in the treasury or the process of collection. There were no questions regarding the bills. Mr. Slater made a motion to pay the bills. Mr. Prince seconded. Motion carried.

There being no further business Mr. Slater moved to adjourn at 9:55pm.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, May 6, 2019, at 7:00pm at the Union Township Complex.



Mr. Charlie Prince



Mr. Randy Weekly



Mr. John Slater



Jessica Slater Fiscal Officer