

Minutes
LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Special Meeting
Monday, October 12, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

The Lafayette Township Board of Trustees, Medina County, Ohio met in Special session on Monday, October 12, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. at the Lafayette Township Hall, 6776 Wedgewood Road, Medina, OH. Notice of this meeting was consistent with ORC 121.22 and the township's open meeting policy.

The meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m. followed by roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Trustee Lynda Bowers, Trustee Michael Costello, Trustee Martin Warchola and Fiscal Officer Laura Ruebensaal

11:32 a.m.: Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Warchola to recess into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel employment consistent with ORC 121.22G(1). Invited into the executive session with the board, Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal, Law Director Thorne, Fire Chief Winkler and Attorney Kristopher Immel. Roll call vote, Bowers – yes, Costello – yes, Warchola – yes.

Executive Session held. Regular session resumed at 11:52 a.m.

Ms. Bowers reported that Fire Department member Joshua Noftz has requested reimbursement for paramedic school which has yet to be reimbursed. After a brief discussion, Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Costello to approve the request if it is determined to be consistent with the Township policy. All voting in favor, motion passed. Mr. Noftz submitted documentation of the expenses for which reimbursement is requested.

The board discussed renewal of the EMS drug license. It was explained that the license had expired just before transitioning to the new safety services building. While there is some discrepancy as to the sequence of events, it is believed fire and rescue personnel responsible for the renewal understood med control to have instructed them to wait until the move was complete. As a result, the license expired and the township incurred a \$600.00 fee. The license is now renewed but settlement of the fee remains. Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Costello to pay the \$600.00 fee associated with updating the drug license. All voting in favor.

11:55 a.m.: Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Warchola to recess into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel employment, compensation and discipline consistent with ORC 121.22G(1). Invited into the executive session with the board, Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal, Law Director Thorne, Fire Chief Winkler

Executive Session held. Regular session resumed at 12:20 p.m.

Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal reported that she believes it is no longer necessary to delay hiring an assistant fiscal officer. The temporary assistant has done an excellent job but does not wish to continue any longer than it takes the township to make an appropriate hire. The board discussed it would be an appropriate time, prior to advertising, for the board chair to meet with the fiscal officer and township administrative assistant to work together updating job descriptions for the administrative assistant, fiscal officer assistant and zoning secretary. Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Costello to approve the request to advertise for the hire a part-time assistant to the fiscal officer suggesting a compensation range from \$15 - \$17 per hour based on qualifications. All voting in favor, motion passed.

The board received a notice from the Auditor of State advising that the Lafayette Township Fire District is required to have a separate accounting system and audit services. Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Warchola to approve both the Uniform Accounting Network agreement to add a Lafayette Twp. Fire District system and to amend the Audit agreement to add the Lafayette Twp. Fire District. All voting in favor. Agreements were signed.

Ms. Bowers explained that while the board had approved transferring zoning fees to the general fund during our last regular meeting, the Ohio Department of taxation has asked for that documentation. Ms. Bowers feels it would be better to reduce it to a written resolution rather than sending the minutes. Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Warchola to set out the September 28, 2020 motion into a written resolution form. All voting in favor. Motion passed. Law Director Thorne was requested to assist in obtaining other information requested, ORC authority for establishing the fund.

Trustees discussed the annual employee appreciation event usually held in December. The consensus was that due to COVID-19 nothing would be scheduled during the remainder of the year.

Ms. Bowers made a motion seconded by Mr. Costello to accept the amounts and rates for tax levies as determined by the Medina County Auditor. All voting in favor, motion passed. The fiscal officer will file with the County Auditor.

Trustees discussed the addition of yet another park (former Chippewa Lake Park) along with the rail trail, Buckeye Woods, etc. in the township. The discussion included the challenges of access for fire, rescue and police and the benefits of a law enforcement equipped ATV type vehicle. Mr. Costello made a motion seconded by Mr. Warchola to approve the purchase of such a vehicle consistent with the state purchase bid as submitted by Medina PD at the trustee's request, not to exceed \$50,000. All voting in favor, motion passed. To be paid from the fund restricted for law enforcement use.

Ms. Bowers reported County Administrator, Scott Miller, requested permission to use one of the township meeting rooms for an event. Trustees approved the training room of the Safety Services Building.

Trustees discussed finalizing walk-through details still incomplete by the contractor for the Safety Services building. Law Director Thorne will send a finalizing letter.

Mr. Costello re-visited the continuing problem of a resident causing an emergency ambulance response for non-emergency issues and the inappropriateness of taxpayers bearing the cost. Trustees previously adopted a resolution establishing a charge to reimburse for misuse of emergency services. The fire chief was instructed to work the law director to issue an invoice consistent with that resolution.

Trustees discussed the Heather Hedge fire station facility. Chief Winkler reviewed information previously shared with the board and the Chippewa Lake Village Counsel – that the staffed response, which is not available from the Heather Hedge facility, continues to provide a higher quality response, as much as 35% faster, even into the Villages. Revisiting a volunteer response from that facility makes no sense. The board reaffirmed they believe it can and should be used for safety services to benefit the township the Villages of Chippewa Lake, Gloria Glens and the County housing Medina County Emergency Management Services. Ms. Bowers reported that after trustees last meeting where they discussed the benefits of MCEMA using the building, she shared the information discussed with the safety services liaison for Chippewa Lake, Councilman Alan Robbins, who on the same date, September 30, 2020, issued a full-page email to the Mayor, Village Council members and others outlining the discussion trustees had. She also reported that the press reported on it the same morning she contacted Mr. Robbins and then later that evening, Chief Winkler posted information on the Fire Department Facebook page due to the press coverage. She stated that a Village official has expressed disappointment trustees did not discuss it with them first. She said she didn't know how that would have been legally possible. The facility is physically situated in the township, owned by the Township and the responsibility of the Township. Trustees had to have a discussion at the board level first in order to even have something to discuss with the Village. And, that first discussion had to be done consistent with Sunshine law, in an open and public meeting. Law Director Thorne indicated he had also discussed the information with the Village's legal counsel, Alan Michaelson, following the meeting. Mr. Warchola made a motion seconded by Mr. Costello to offer the Heather Hedge facility to the Medina County Commissioners to be used by Medina County Emergency Management Agency with a deed restriction that the building revert back to the township should that use be discontinued. All voting in favor, motion passed. Law Director Thorne will work with the County Prosecutor's office on the appropriate paperwork.

Ms. Bowers explained dispatch fees for fire and rescue charged to the township by the County Commissioners is an amount costing more than an entire month of full-time staffing of EMTs and Paramedics. She explained when the charge was first implemented, Sheriff Hassinger spoke against it, calling it double taxation because township taxpayers pay taxes collected by the county to pay for the services the county is responsible to provide; i.e., the operations of the Sheriff's Office. She stated that for many years, with Sheriff Hassinger's support while he was in office, Lafayette did not pay the fees – but has been paying them for the last 5-6 years. She discussed the issue with Law Director Thorne who has done some research. There is good reason to believe the dispatch fees being charged are as Sheriff Hassinger believed, not appropriate. She asked the board for support to send a letter to County Prosecutor, Forrest Thompson, requesting an opinion as to the legality of the charge to Lafayette taxpayers. The board agreed. Trustees will sign a letter drafted by Law Director Thorne.

Trustees agreed that, as they do every election, they would hold a special meeting on November 3, 2020 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in an open house format at the service department building in order to greet residents to discuss any issues they may wish to discuss. Provision is approved to serve coffee, hot chocolate, donuts and cookies. Due to this special meeting and the November 3 special meeting, the regular October meeting is cancelled.

Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal reported that additional Cares Act Funds (to be used for Covid-19 relief) in the amount of \$217,261.32 were received on October 9, 2020. Trustees agreed to consider encumbering the funds as necessary at the special meeting on November 3, 2020.

As there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1: 15 p.m.

Approved:

Lynda Bowers, Trustee

Laura Ruebensaal, Fiscal Officer

Michael Costello, Trustee

Martin Warchola, Trustee