

Minutes
Regular Meeting – September 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
Lafayette Township Board of Trustees & Lafayette Township Fire District

The Lafayette Township Board of Trustees and Lafayette Township Fire District, Medina County, Ohio met in regular session, September 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Lafayette Township Safety Services Building, 6367 Technology Lane, Medina. Notice was given consistent with the Lafayette Township public body rule for the notification of meetings to the public and news media and ORC Section 121.22.

Trustee Costello called the meeting to order followed by roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance

Members present: Trustees Costello, Bowers, Warchola & Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal.

Also present, Law Director Thorne

Trustee Warchola made a motion second by Trustee Bowers to accept the reports of the Police, Fire, Service and Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal's finance reports. All voting in favor.

Minutes: Trustee Warchola verified some minor corrections he had asked for had been included. Trustee Bowers made a motion second by Trustee Warchola to approve the minutes of August 16 and August 27, all voting in favor.

Fiscal Officer report: Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal reported responding to five public record requests. She reported the Audit for 2018 and 2019 (years before she was elected) was completed June, 2021. It is available on the Auditor of State website for viewing. She reported the errors found were fixed, clarifying the errors were coding and misassigned appropriations. She has also reconstructed the records correctly from the end of the audit period to ensure accuracy moving forward. Noting the Fiscal Officer is an independent elected official responsible for the books, Trustee Bowers thanked her and Montville Fiscal Officer, Mary Pawloski, for working so many hours, often until well after midnight, correcting books from the close of the audit period to when she took office on April 1, 2020, reviewing transactions, completing and verifying corrections to ensure that time gap was also corrected. Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal also thanked Mary Pawlowski and the Board of Trustees for their assistance.

Trustee Costello made a motion second by Trustee Bowers to approve Resolution 25-2021, end of the year adjusting appropriations, reallocations within the same accounts. All voting in favor, motion passed.

Service Department: ODOT salt contract came in lower than last year. He's been reviewing crossovers for applications for stimulus funds. He changed the dumpster pickup at the townhall to pick up once a month and moved it to the stone yard. Cloverleaf is requesting use of the township ball fields for four years. Cloverleaf will provide the maintenance. The board and Fiscal Officer Ruebensaal felt there should be a more formal agreement, suggesting a memorandum of understanding, especially to ensure the local ball clubs can still use the fields. Law Director Thorne agreed. Service Director Evans said he didn't want to be involved in that. Trustee Costello requested

the contact information for who he is talking to at Cloverleaf. Trustee Bowers reported she discussed the snowplow contract rate at \$55 per hour with Councilman Riedel. He indicated that seemed reasonable and expected the Chippewa Council to approve. One contractor has looked at the townhall to estimate repairing dry rot damage in the south and west walls and replacing seven windows. Service Director Evans recommends drywalling the kitchen, changing some cabinets and installing a residential grade refrigerator and stove for convenience. The goal is to get two more estimates but contractors are a bit hard to find right now. Also working to find a solution for the roof repair.

Fire Department: Chief Winkler reported 9-11 memorial events in which Lafayette participated. Calls are up about 12% and mutual aid given about 50% ahead of last year. Trustee Warchola made a motion second by Trustee Bowers to approve \$2,160 to replace vacuum splints. All voting in favor, motion passed. Responding to Trustee Warchola, Chief Winkler indicated he hadn't broken it down specifically but if he had to guess, there is more of a call increase on the medical side. Trustee Bowers reported that because residents are asking questions about a Firemen's Association event it is important to explain the Firemen's Association is a private organization. It is not the Township or the Township Fire Department. She read from an email received by Chief Winkler on September 12, 2021 from the Medina County Health Department regarding the event using the Fire Station as a venue as follows: *"By design, this event places your crew members in close contact with several hundred members of the public. Since it is a meal and social event you will have everyone unmasked and gathering, which opens your department to COVID-19 infections."* As a result, the Chief determined it not appropriate to use the Fire Station at this time. Learning this, Trustees offered to discuss replacing the anticipated income for the association with recovery funds. Chief Winkler sent Trustees information on the amounts raised in the past which the board anticipated discussing tonight. The Association decided to hold the event at another venue. That is their right so replacing funds is a moot point. Some are still questioning why the township or fire department is allowing it; and others, why the township or fire department is not allowing it at the station. Just to be clear, neither the township or fire department have any authority over the Association's decisions. She added she appreciated that people inquiring were very reasonable on both sides even though it is a heated issue. She told Chief Winkler; she had shared the health department email with a resident who inquired.

Jo Fullerton asked so we don't need to do a record request? Trustee Bowers responded no, if she has something that is public record, anyone can have it. She said they do it all the time. The only thing she can't give is something not public record because of confidentiality requirements or something requiring redaction of confidential information. Law Director Thorne explained the difference. Jo Fullerton asked, isn't it hard to be transparent to know when something like that is sent out or do you keep track of it. Trustee Bowers responded anybody can ask for anything, it's public record "If I've got it, you can have it. It's not a matter of not being transparent, it is being transparent. If a resident wants something, you give it to them."

Trustee Warchola reported on a CPR class the Fire Department provided for a search and rescue team and he wanted the Chief and department to know several emails came back expressing gratitude. He stated the department did a great job on that class.

Police Department: Lt. Marcum commented on the report (attached). He also reported September 1, 2021 was 3 years that Medina PD is serving Lafayette and it seems to be going pretty smooth. Trustee Costello commented that it has gone very smooth from the residents he's talked to with very positive feedback. It was noted two more new officers just came in on field training now and another yet to swear in.

Correspondence

Medina Fiber sent a notice they are going to be installing fiber in the northern area subdivision and part of Ryan and part of Wedgewood. It gives our residents a second option for cable and internet. She also reported the township still has areas that are underserved or not served at all that she has been working on getting service for several years. She indicated she is in touch with Armstrong and Medina Fiber almost every month. Medina Fiber's goal is to serve the whole county. Lafayette's formal build out, if they can do it, is probably 3 – 4 years away. Armstrong is now saying it may be able to cover the underserved areas in 2 – 3 years.

The language on the snowplow program, reinforcing that it is for emergencies has been done and will also be included in the newsletter.

Halloween Trunk or Treat is scheduled for Saturday, October 30, from 10 to noon collaborating with the Lafayette Methodist Church, the Police and Fire Department and Emergency Management. It will be in the Township Hall parking lot and we are working on a coloring contest to send out ahead of time. Trustee Warchola advised he would bring down some therapy dogs. Someone in the audience expressed a COVID-19 concern. The board addressed the concern including noting that is the reason it is being held outside this year. The coloring contest is being done at home and turned in instead of during the event. Protocols will be observed. Trustee Costello also commented that as the event gets closer, the Township will look at where the COVID-19 numbers are and consult with the Health Department. Trustee Bowers made a motion second by Trustee Costello to Two allocate \$500 for the Trunk or Treat event. All voting in favor, motion passed.

Two residents have requested a speed reduction on Lake Road, a county maintenance road. The board authorized by consensus requested the county engineer do the speed study required for consideration of a reduction.

Old Business Ryan flooding, north of 162. Discussed with Dan Becker and Rick Evans regarding the issue. Supervisor Evans believes there may be some benefit to looking at the Bennington Point detention area, there may be too much vegetation around it for it to function properly.

New Business: Trustees discussed a resolution regulating the storage of junk motor vehicles subject to 505.173. Should tighten up the language on vegetation, maybe read designed to conceal to be clearer. The board agreed the language could be amended. Trustee Bowers moved the adoption of Resolution 26-2021, second by Trustee Costello **A RESOLUTION REGULATING THE STORAGE OF JUNK MOTOR VEHICLES ON PRIVATE OR PUBLIC PROPERTY IN LAFAYETTE TOWNSHIP MEDINA COUNTY, OHIO.** All voting in favor, motion passed.

The fiscal officer's assistant thanked Service Supervisor Evans for installing the security light at their office entrance of the town hall.

Trustee Bowers explained that she and Trustee Costello both maintain trustee facebook pages. She said for her, it is to share information of general public interest, both township and not township business. She explained recently someone commented on her page that included information about a neighbor's private matter that may become the subject of litigation. The neighbor agreed her attorney would have concern about the comment. Since it wasn't township business, it could be taken down. But it begged the question, what if it had been township business and detrimental to the public interest in a similar way. For that reason, and the purpose of the page being to provide information, no comments of any kind can be posted.

Public Participation:

Employee Kim Buell stated that after 8.5 years of being an administrative assistant she is now not going to be paid to attend trustee meetings anymore. The response was the fiscal officer is responsible for the minutes and has taken that responsibility back into her office. Since she, Kim, no longer takes the minutes, it is not necessary for her job for her to attend or be paid to attend meetings. She complained about being asked to provide the password to the office computer for the Fiscal Officer to have access to public records. She objected to taking the mail into the offices and delivering it to the fiscal officer. After some personnel discussion, Trustee Bowers explained the fiscal officer just wants to do her own job and we need to respect that. She stated that Trustee Mike Costello came to her house on Saturday, Trustee Costello corrected that statement, and made it clear that he was in his car on the street since they live on the same street and rolled the window down to ask her for her password since the password, she gave him the day before on Friday did not work. She argued with him and just finally said she was not going to argue the point.

Lee Lipka, Palker Road, commented on an ongoing zoning complaint. The alleged commercial use of the property is still under investigation. He was encouraged to pursue a civil remedy of the concerns expressed over which the township has no authority.

Justin Peroli, Birchwood Lane, stated that since we are addressing issues that have come up online, there have been several comments about cameras in the fire station. Can you give some insight on where those cameras are, why they were installed and what the status is now? Trustee Costello responded the new building has many security cameras; the Chief could help him with that. In the old station the township purchased a new ambulance that a few firemen did not want, they wanted a different manufacturer. That ambulance kept experiencing suspected vandalism. Part of a criminal investigation of that and missing EMS supplies, cameras were installed focused only on the back of the ambulance, the EMS supply closet and the outside door into the station. Jo Fullerton asked if anyone was caught? Trustee Bowers responded there were no incidents before the cameras were discovered and damaged. There was no reason to review footage before the cameras were damaged. Jo Fullerton asked where exactly the cameras were focused. Trustee Bowers stated "Let's just put it out there. No, there were no cameras in any of the dressing areas or where anybody should have been dressing, because that's what I read online and that didn't happen." Jo Fullerton said that's what she read

online too. Trustee Costello noted there have been no more issues with the ambulance since the investigation became known.

Al Johnson, Ryan Road, complained about people harassing him about his yard signs, yelling profanity and throwing things at them and wants to know what the township is going to do about it. There was a discussion about what PD can and cannot do and the zoning violations of the signs. Lt. Marcum reviewed complaint activities. Trustee Warchola advised if his cameras produce evidence of an offender, he can take that to police and they can do something about it.

An unidentified person in the audience asked what police response time is like. Lt. Marcum responded that they have a southwest car out at all times. That is all of Lafayette, south of Smith Road and West of Route 3. Any emergency call should get a response within five minutes. Trustee Bowers advised trustees review response times and usually it is 2 – 3 minutes. Especially for fire and EMS calls, Medina PD is almost always there first, within 2 – 3 minutes ahead of the squad.

As there was no further business to come before the board, Trustee Costello made a motion second by Trustee Warchola to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.

Approved: _____
Laura Ruebensaal, Fiscal Officer

Lynda Bowers, Trustee

Michael Costello, Trustee

Marty Warchola, Trustee