
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING

February 2, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Elected officials present were Mr. Phil Beck, Mr. Kenneth Bryant, Ms. Jodie Leis and Mr. Joe Grossi.

Also, present: Kimberly Lapensee - Administrator; Jeff Forbes - Law Director; Lieutenant Mike Tarr – HCSO, and Chief Ott Huber – LSFD.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the Agenda. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - ‘aye’, Mr. Beck - ‘aye’, and Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’. Motion passes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the regular minutes for January 5, 2021. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Mr. Bryant stated that he had some corrections to the minutes that he viewed prior to the meeting that he worked out with Mrs. Lapensee. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - ‘aye’, Mr. Beck - ‘aye’, and Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes for January 19, 2021. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - ‘aye’, Mr. Beck - ‘aye’, and Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’. Motion passes.

FISCAL OFFICERS REPORT

Mr. Grossi stated that we were unable to balance the books for 2020 and that we have hired an accountant to help with that issue. He stated until that time, there is no way for us to report to the board accurate fund balances. He stated that we have a meeting next week with the Forensic Auditor and she is wrapping up her work on that issue. Mr. Grossi stated that the UAN conversion is complete and can be accessed from 3 computers now.

Mr. Grossi stated that we have \$1,776,297.11 in our checking account and \$28,841.23 in the HRA account at PNC, \$890,775.09 in our checking account and \$26,412.53 in our HRA at Fifth Third Bank. He stated that we no longer have a credit card account and the money market funds from PNC were blended into the checking account at Fifth Third.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the warrants from 78933 – 78987 in the amount of \$710,953.95 from the month of January. Ms. Leis seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

REPORTS

JEFF FORBES, LAW DIRECTOR – Mr. Forbes stated that he had no report.

LIEUTENANT MIKE TARR, HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT – Mr. Tarr stated that they now have a new records management system and that the officers will be able to enter their reports from the field. He stated that they will be able to analyze their crime stats better. Mr. Bryant asked if we would have any access to the system. Mr. Tarr stated that we would still ask them for the data but it will be quicker.

CHIEF OTT HUBER, LSF D – Chief Huber stated that the board received their written report prior to the meeting and that their Safety Camp will be from June 14-17 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Home of the Brave Park. He stated that there is a link on their website and the township website to sign up. He asked the board if they had any questions concerning the pre-emption devices and how he should proceed with that request. He stated that the City approved their portion. Chief stated that we should be receiving a bond for the Daniels Street fire. Mr. Bryant asked if that is in regard to a bond we hold in case of a rebuild. Chief stated that yes, we would hold a bond so that in case the owners do nothing, we would have the money to raze the building. Mr. Bryant stated that he wanted to thank him for the list of answers to their questions he provided for the preemption devices.

BILL PITMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS - None.

COMMITTEE - None.

OTHER – None.

CORRESPONDENCE

Attached to the packet.

HEARING OF RESIDENTS

Mr. Bryant recognized Mr. Carr trying to speak over the zoom call, but we were unable to hear him. He stated that he is going to move forward with the meeting and circle back after CJ reboots his computer.

EVENTS/MEETINGS

- Presidents Day Holiday – Building closed Monday, February 15, 2021.
- Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting – March 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.
- Regular Trustees Meeting – March 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.
- The Great Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday, March 27, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. at HOB Park. Mrs. Lapensee asked if we wanted to still hold that event.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-02, a Resolution Approving an Independent Contractor Agreement with Mike Howell as Custodian for the Camp Dennison Nature Trail and Dispensing with the Second Reading. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued. There was none.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning Seven Gables park play structure and trail replacement. Ms. Leis stated that she wanted to start talking about replacing the play structure in Seven Gables now so that we can get something going before fall. She stated that she also wants to start removing invasive species along Montgomery Road. She stated that the play structure is old and she wants to replace the trail and concrete around the parking lot. She stated that she wants to start working on that. Mr. Bryant stated that he would like her to bring that back to a work session to discuss. He also asked if anyone would object to checking with Matthew 25 Ministries to see if we can donate it. Ms. Leis asked if anyone has any ideas about the park. Mr. Bryant asked if there was money set aside for the replacement of the play structure. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes.

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning removal of invasive species at Meade Historic Preserve. Ms. Leis stated that she wrote up a paragraph about removing invasive species and why its important. She stated that she wants people to understand why we are doing it and that we do a little bit at a time so that it does not scare everyone. She stated that it is bad for our environment. Mr. Bryant stated that we should check with ODNR and get some guidance on removing it. Mr. Beck asked that we put the paragraph in the newsletters as well. Mr. Bryant stated that it sounds like we are all interested in proceeding forward in small steps while letting the residents know what is going on.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to accept the donation of \$3,000.00 from Energy Alliances and Constellation for the Yoga Program. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis stated that she wanted to thank them for their donation. Mr. Bryant asked if there was any other way, we recognize them. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we make up signs that Jodie and Luanne put out during the Yoga program. Ms. Leis stated she announces it when they have Yoga every Saturday and Wednesday.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to allow the Administrator to advertise for the Road Paving Project for 2021. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant wanted to know if we were still in the multi-year contract for paving and if so, which are we paving this year. Mrs. Lapensee stated that this year will be Calumet Farms and Kemperwoods. Mr. Bryant asked how much we will be spending. Mrs. Lapensee stated that if we just do those two areas, it would be around \$350,000.00 to \$400,000.00. She stated that we would like to include Kemper Road in our paving list which would add \$300,000.00 to the total. Mr. Bryant stated that Kemper is a county roadway. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she is still waiting on an answer from the county engineer if we are going to include it or not. Mr. Bryant stated that he lives on Calumet Way and the last time they paved it was 2005. He stated that we are in a 17-year cycle for paving. Ms. Leis stated that we will move streets up or down the list depending on the severity of the pavement. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we are right on schedule.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-12, a Resolution Approving an Employment Agreement with Kimberly A. Lapensee as Township Administrator Pursuant to ORC Section 505.031 and Dispensing with the Second Reading. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Mr. Bryant made a motion to table this resolution until they had time to discuss it in executive session. Mr. Beck seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-13, a Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of Grass Mowing Bids and Awarding Contracts to River Oaks in the amount of \$65,850.00, ProWorx in the amount of \$18,600.00, Tindles Lawn in the amount of \$39,000.00

and Brian Christian in the amount of \$28,500.00. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant asked about how we decided on which contractor got what work. Mrs. Lapensee stated that Mr. Pitman grouped like areas together based on who received the lowest bid in some instances. She went over the groupings. Mr. Bryant stated that we have several new vendors than what we are used to. He asked if we have standards so that they know what needs to be done. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes. She stated that he called all their references to make sure they have experience. She stated that we wanted to make a change from our last contractor. Mr. Bryant stated that he has concerns over the cemeteries. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they have explained that care to the new contractor.

Ms. Leis stated that she brought up concerns over cost in December when we first started talking about this. She thinks it is too expensive. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we advertised it and kept it going with a contractor because we do not want to add to our employee list which would put us over the 20-employee mark for insurance. She stated that if we terminate their employment at the end of the season, then they could file for unemployment. Ms. Leis stated that she realizes it is too late to change any of this, but she would like for us to investigate cost cutting measures for next year. Mr. Bryant suggested that we look at a cost benefit analysis going forward to see if it is any cheaper for us to go back to cutting the grass or keep a contractor.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-14, a Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of Turn-Out Gear and Various Other Equipment from Honeywell and other Vendors in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant asked if this is the same order of magnitude that we do every year and are we still in the collaborative. Chief Huber stated that yes, this is the same amount we always purchase, and we are working with the collaborative to rebid the cost with another vendor. Mr. Grossi asked if Chief could define turn-out gear. Chief Huber stated that it would include boots, hoods, coats, pants, gloves, helmets, etc. Mr. Bryant asked if we are still maintaining two sets of gear for everyone. Chief Huber stated yes. He stated that once the gear is contaminated, it is brought back to the station for cleaning and the second set is used.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-15, a Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to enter into a contract with Fraunfelter Accounting Services to Perform Accounting Services not to exceed \$5,250.00. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis asked if this was to balance the books for the Fiscal Officer. Mr. Grossi stated yes. Mr. Bryant asked in the work session to provide a ceiling for the work and this amount is the ceiling.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-16, a Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to enter into an agreement with Team All Sports to treat Stonebridge Park and the ballfields at Home of the Brave Park and install limestone screening materials in the warning track in the amount of \$46,443.87. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant asked when we say treatment what do we mean. Mrs. Lapensee stated that it would be fertilization and aeration for the ballfields. She stated that we would also be replacing the warning track with limestone to eliminate the drainage problems there as was discussed last year.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-17, a Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to enter into an agreement with River Oaks Services LLC. for the lawn treatment and insect control in various locations in the amount of \$17,337.50. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant asked which parks that this would be done? Mrs. Lapensee read off the list of parks for insect control and the other parks for fertilization (that do not have ballfields). Mr. Bryant asked why Seven Gables was not included. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would ask Mr. Pitman and report back. Mr. Bryant stated that he walks that park quite a bit and there are dandelions all over the park.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-18, a Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to purchase security cameras for the Home of the Brave Park in the amount of \$17,481.07. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis asked if we are slowing adding cameras to all the parks. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes. She stated that we will put cameras on the maintenance building to get the ballfields and memorial wall area. She stated that we would also put cameras on the shelter near the playground.

Mr. Bryant asked if we are at capacity for monitors. Chief Huber stated that we purchased a wall monitor so that many cameras can be monitored at one time and they have plenty of space to add more. He stated that we are able to put an app on the boards phones so that they can viewed at any time.

Ms. Leis asked if we could put the cameras back up along the Meade Trail. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would pass that along to the parks department and have them put back up. She stated that she noticed that there is a window broken at the log cabin and would like them back up. She stated that she is concerned about vandalism. Mr. Bryant asked where again. Ms. Leis stated that it was the log home, but she was not sure if it was vandalism or not.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye' and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the following amendments, expenditures, and authorization for the Township Administrator to sign any necessary contracts/agreement or paperwork:

- a. Amend the following:

Fund Acct #	Fund	Add	Final Appropriation
2021-330-360-0000	GAS	+5,000.00	\$25,000.00
2172-610-360-0000	ROZZI PARK	+41,675.00	\$81,675.00
2041-410-360-0000	CEMETERY	+14,400.00	\$69,170.00
1000-110-311-0000	GENERAL	+5,250.00	\$55,250.00

- b. Expenditure/then and now: \$1,342.97 JR Grundy Plumbing.
- c. Expenditure/then and now: \$798.76 Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission.
- d. Expenditure/then and now: \$255.00 Burnham and Flowers.
- e. Expenditure: \$1087.92 (\$90.66 per month) Pitney Bowes machine rental.
- f. Expenditure: \$1,200.00 Choice One Engineering for a landscaping plan for Blong Park

Mr. Beck seconded the motion.

Ms. Leis stated that the bank is willing to pay for a portion of the new landscaping for Blong. She stated that we are trying to get an idea of what it will cost first and then we will talk to them.

Mr. Bryant asked that we find the agreement with them to see what the split would be. Ms. Leis stated that she will talk to them, but they did agree to pay for a portion of it. Mr. Bryant stated that in the past, Union Savings has always used that parking lot to full capacity, and he knows that they moved their headquarters over to Governors Hill.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye', and Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

HEARING OF RESIDENTS

Mr. Beck asked if we wanted to talk about the Easter Egg Hunt while we are waiting on the documents to be emailed. Ms. Leis stated that we probably would not be able to pull it off so we should just save our money for another event. Mr. Bryant agreed. Ms. Leis stated that we used the candy for Halloween and saved the toys. Mr. Beck agreed that the timing is not right.

Mrs. Lapensee asked about the Memorial Day event. Mr. Beck stated that he is worried about that event as well because it draws an older crowd. Mr. Bryant agreed that we should put off any high attendance events until COVID is under control. The board discussed still having the Fourth of July fireworks with Loveland like last year.

CJ Carr, 10403 Willow Drive, stated that the log house was vandalized, and the tool shed was broken into and rocks thrown through the windows. Ms. Leis stated that there are other windows that have been broken in the past. She is asking the historical society to come up with a plan to take care of the house. She stated that many people have made comments about the condition of the log house since it is located in Meade Historic Preserve. She stated that she reached out to CJ and the historical society last year to come in and discuss the log home and no one ever replied. CJ stated that it never happened with everything going on.

Mr. Carr stated that the roof is a warranty issue, and they will most likely have to file an insurance claim to get it fixed. Ms. Leis stated that the roof has been in that same condition now for over two years. He stated that those shakes were supposed to last 50 years and they are going back and forth with the contractor and the supplier as to who was responsible. Mr. Carr stated that the windows have been replaced several times and every time they are broken and they have replaced them.

Ms. Leis stated that the Historical Society has yet to clean up around the log cabin (weeds, etc.) and nothing is being maintained. She stated that the log house is not being taken care of. She stated that she wants to sit down with the members and see how the house can be taken care of. She stated that she wants to work with the Historical Society but no one ever responds. She stated that there is also termite damage there. She stated that everyone loves that house, and it is not being taken care of. She stated that they could have taken temporary measures to fix the roof in the meantime. She stated that the bushes were also not being maintained. CJ stated that he will send them an email to set something up in the next week or two.

Mr. Bryant stated that they need to put together a plan and we need their input.

Mr. Carr stated that he received a letter from the Hamilton County Engineer's Office that the Knights of the Golden Trail have filed a vacation petition for a portion of Willow Road. Mr. Bryant stated he vaguely remembers that being asked but does not know the disposition of that. Mr. Carr stated that he received a letter in the mail from the Hamilton County Engineer's Office asking if he had any objections to the vacation request and if that he did, he needed to send them in before February 26th or they would proceed with the vacation request. Mr. Bryant stated that he remembers that we received an email from the county regarding the vacation, but he does not remember what our response was.

Mr. Carr asked what the position of the board is on this issue. Mr. Bryant stated that before he takes a position, he wants to know the facts first. Ms. Leis wanted to know how the neighbors feel.

He stated that he has talked to many of the neighbors and they object to the vacation for multiple reasons. Mr. Bryant suggested that he poll the neighbors and get their written statements and

send them to the township so that a position can be taken from the township. Mr. Carr wanted to know if a letter or recommendation from one trustee was the same as a letter or recommendation from the board of trustees to the commissioners. He stated that if the trustees doing it individually, is it the same? Mr. Bryant stated that it takes a majority, but they would need the information in a timely manner to make that date. Mr. Bryant stated that we are not in a position to just vacate streets (dedicated or undedicated) just to do it. He stated that there has to be some logic behind it or be beneficial to the township or understand any detriment before we would take action.

Mr. Carr stated that he believed that the vacation process started with the township. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the vacation process begins with the County Engineer and ends with a decision from the County Commissioners. Ms. Leis stated that we could send a letter to the county opposing it, but it does not necessarily mean that the county will listen. She stated that all comments need to go to the County Engineer's office. She suggested that the residents write letters to the county if they are all opposed to the vacation of the street. Mr. Bryant stated that if they want the board to take a position on it, then they need to have all the input from the residents. Ms. Leis stated that it is the county making the decision.

Mr. Carr stated that he wants the board to stand behind him and back the residents on this issue. He stated that he understands that the county has the final approval but believes that the township has a say too. Mr. Beck asked him if he knew what is behind the request to vacate the paper street? He stated that both sides of the street are owned by the Knights of the Golden Trail. He stated that last year they consolidated a large portion of the property which gives them 4.95 acres. He stated that there is no other reason to vacate it other than to make the property larger so that they can bring in another private driveway/roads that will increase traffic on Willow with more buses. He stated that it is a vacant wooded area.

Ms. Leis stated that if anyone needs any help with anything to contact the township.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bryant made a motion to move into executive session at 8:27 p.m. to consider the compensation and employment of a public employee or official. Mr. Beck seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye', and Mr. Beck - 'aye'.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to return from Executive Session at 9:07 p.m. Ms. Leis seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye', and Mr. Beck - 'aye'.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Beck seconded the motion, and the roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye', Mr. Bryant - 'aye', and Mr. Beck - 'aye'.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Approved:

Kenneth N. Bryant, President

Jodie L. Leis, Vice-President

Philip J. Beck, Trustee