

\*\*\*\*\*

**MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING**

**July 6, 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: Bill Pitman – Director of Public Works; Jeff Forbes - Law Director; Lieutenant Mike Tarr – HCSO, and Captain Bruce Hawk – LSF.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Bryant made a motion to delete Resolution G2020-61 from the agenda because he understands that the nuisance has been abated but there are still some zoning issues on that property that need to be taken care of. Mr. Bryant stated that he also would like to delete item a under other expenditures because there are no changes. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. 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 modified 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 June 1, 2021, and the special meeting minutes for June 28, 2021. Mr. Beck 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 had \$31,390.99 in our HRA Account, \$5,110,323.66 in the checking account, and \$8,102,309.53 in our Meeder Investment account from May. He stated that we have \$2,585,465.53 in the General Fund, \$821,421.85 in the Park Levy Fund, \$942,956.95 in the Road Fund, \$724,958.67 in the Fire Fund, \$568,963.91 in the EMS account, and \$2,132,816.24 in the Safety Services account.

Mr. Grossi stated that we received notification from the Ohio Township Association that townships are now eligible under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) for additional funding. He stated that the Ohio house and Ohio Senate both passed bills accomplishing that. He stated that the next step will be for the governor to sign the bill. He stated that we do not completely know what the money can be used for yet, but it is supposed to be more expansive than the last time. He stated that our share of the money will be in two different phases, but the total will be \$1,569,799.37.

Mr. Grossi stated that we are all aware that Trustee meetings are open to all township residents with the time made available for residents to speak publicly about their opinions, requests, suggestions, complaints, and any questions they have concerning governance of the township. He stated that the Trustees are generous in not restricting time allotted for residents to speak. He stated that on the other side of that coin, in his opinion, is the obligation of the resident speaking to be honest, informative, civil and be willing to listen as well as speak. He stated at the June 1, 2021, Trustee meeting, we were again subjected to another example of Carol Sims misguided expectation that she has veto power over our Trustees in her insistence that the Historical Society can dictate who serves on the Advisory Committee for the Meade Property. Volunteer committee members

serve at the pleasure of the Trustees, not the other way around. He stated that it reminded him of her personal refusal to abide by a resolution unanimously passed by the Trustees to hire Paycor to process payroll for Symmes Township. He stated that she also refused to accept the opinion of our Law Director in support of the Trustees legal right to make that change. He stated that after the change finally occurred, it came to light those 3 months of employee contributions to Deferred Comp were never submitted by Carol Sims and therefore, that employee's money never earned a penny of interest towards retirement. He stated that she simply dismissed the situation by stating that the Administrator was the "Payroll Administrator". He stated that the Trustees never made that decision. He stated that it was Carol Sims giving the middle finger to the Trustees, the Administrator, and most egregiously to the Township employees.

Mr. Grossi stated that at the same meeting, in response to Trustee Jodie Leis contention that the log cabin has not been properly maintained by the Historical Society as the Society is contractually required to do, Carol Sims called Jodie Leis a liar and then she stands at the podium and tells lie after lie about how the log cabin has been taken care of. He stated that anyone visiting the site over the past year knows differently. He stated that her excuses that Covid-19 interfered and that there were no manicured lawns in 1830 do not hold water. Mr. Grossi stated that Carol Sims again complained about an unanswered public document request she made, the substance of which is available on the township website. He stated that the Ohio Revised Code does not require a response for information already available. He stated that spoon feeding is not required by law.

Mr. Grossi stated that Jodie Leis stated that she reached out to CJ Carr in August of 2020 to meet and discuss lack of proper maintenance of the log cabin. He stated that according to her, he never responded. He stated that the first response he saw was CJ Carr announcing at a Trustee meeting that in February 2021 he contacted a roofing company to address the deteriorating roof on the cabin – 6 months after the request by Ms. Leis. He stated that at the same meeting, he complained greatly about the harassment from Luanne Felter relative to violations of property codes dating back to 2013. He stated that the "harassment" he complains about is notification of unresolved violations dating back 8 years. Mr. Grossi stated that he has copies of the notices that were sent to CJ Carr dated 10/29/13 and 11/19/13 relative to the issue. Mr. Grossi read both letters aloud (one referring to the houses he owned on 12027 and 12034 Cedar that were nuisances and the dumpster that he left in the roadway on Cedar as a zoning issue).

Mr. Grossi stated that CJ Carr accuses Phil Beck of trespassing on his property. He stated that he guesses he can say that CJ Carr trespassed on his property when Mr. Carr paid him an unsolicited visit when he was campaigning for Township Trustee in the last election cycle. He stated that he did not ask him to leave and instead invited him into his home for a discussion. He stated that seeing him at every Trustee meeting for the previous 2 years, he was curious why he never once commented on any of the many disturbing problems emanating from the Office of Carol Sims. He stated that he told me he was in the process of collecting facts on those issues. He stated that he told Mr. Carr all the information that was presented at 2 years of Trustee meetings were fact based and that he had the documentation to prove it. He stated that Mr. Carr never asked for any of the proof. He stated that he told Mr. Carr that he could not support him with his vote because it was his belief that in a Trustee position, he would be a mouthpiece for Carol Sims.

Mr. Grossi stated that Mr. Carr whines about being held accountable and calls it harassment. He stated that Mr. Carr never once disputes the validity of the claims being made in what he calls harassment. He stated that in his opinion, the Township has demonstrated patience on all issues.

#### PRESENTATIONS

None.

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

#### APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the warrants from 79589 – 79751 and vouchers 142 – 180 in the amount of \$958,405.28 from the month of June. Mr. Beck 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 had no report.

LIEUTENANT MIKE TARR, HAMILTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT – Lieutenant Tarr had no report.

CAPTAIN BRUCE HAWK, LSF D – Captain Hawk had no report.

BILL PITMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS – Mr. Pitman reported that the Union Cemetery sidewalk project is behind schedule due to the rain delay. He stated that it probably will not be done until the end of August. He stated that the road paving project should start around the first week in August with catch basin work with paving to follow the next week weather pending. Ms. Leis stated that she has talked to a lot of people in the area, and they are all thankful for the sidewalk project on Union Cemetery.

COMMITTEE – None.

OTHER – None.

### HEARING OF RESIDENTS

CJ Carr, 10403 Willow Drive, asked what was changed on the agenda before he got there. Mr. Bryant stated that resolution G2020-61 was deleted from the agenda because he was told that the nuisance had been abated. Mr. Carr stated that he has cleaned up both of his properties 12027 and 12034 Cedar as he stated he would. He stated that he received a letter from Hamilton County zoning and an email from the Administrator concerning a shed on his property and a dumpster. Mr. Carr stated that the shed that the letter refers to is not on his property. Mr. Bryant stated that Mr. Carr needs to contact our Zoning Inspector since he received a letter from her regarding the shed. Mr. Carr stated that he also received a letter from Hamilton County regarding the dumpster and that it needs to be removed. He stated that Bryan Snyder's email states that he can have a dumpster if he has an active building permit. Mr. Carr stated that his building permit is still active for those two sites. Mr. Bryant stated that he should contact the Zoning Inspector and work that out with her. Mr. Bryant asked how long the permit is good for. Mr. Carr stated that he is waiting to hear back from the township stating that everything complies. He stated that he requested that a month ago on the other property on Cedar.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Attached to the packet.

### EVENTS/MEETINGS

- Zoning Commission – Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Safety Services Center.
- Storytime with the Library – Monday, July 26, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. at Meade Historic Preserve.
- Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting – Monday, August 2, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. via zoom.
- Regular Trustees Meeting – Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Safety Services Center. Ms. Leis wanted to point out that all trustees' meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month and have been scheduled a year in advance.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning the request from the Loveland Youth Baseball Association regarding the field improvements at Home of the Brave for fields 7 & 8. Mr. Pitman stated that the Loveland Youth Baseball approached the township and asked that we make the improvements to the smaller fields at Home of the Brave and that they would pay for the improvements. He stated that they want to make the infields larger so that the fields can be used by all players instead of just the smaller kids. Ms. Leis stated that she is all for the improvements. Mr. Bryant stated that he is in favor of the improvements because it does not exclude any children, it only enhances what it can be used for. He asked Mr. Forbes if they could go ahead and approve it via vote.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the request from the Loveland Youth Baseball Association to scrape the infield to allow for expanded use of the fields for older children with the provision that the Director of Public Works approves of the work being done. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Beck wanted to know when the work would be done. Mr. Pitman stated this year at the end of the spring/summer season.

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

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion regarding becoming a member of the Cincinnati Community Improvement Corporation. Ms. Leis asked that this be put on the agenda so that we can find out more information. Mr. Bryant stated that his memory serves that we would have more grants available to us if we joined. Ms. Leis stated that we can talk about this more in a work session.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to not request a hearing for a liquor license renewal for RT S Tavern LLC dba Remington Tavern, 8892 Glendale Milford Road, Symmes Township, 45140. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to set a public hearing date of Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at 7:05 p.m. for a zone change request from "OO" Planned Residence with subservient office/Major Revision to an existing EE Planned Residence district for 9365 Fields Ertel Road. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to schedule a special meeting July 20 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the health insurance changes at the Safety Services Center. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-56 – Resolution Approving the Submittal of the Annual Tax Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 to the County Budget Commission. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-57 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Enter into a Joint Agreement between Hamilton County and the Board of Township Trustees of Symmes Township for the Construction of Improvements to Kemper Road. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis stated that we will also be getting a new bridge over I-275 at Hopewell that will include sidewalks on the bridge.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-58 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Sign a Community Event License Agreement with Loveland School District for Use of the Home of the Brave Park and Symmes Park for their Labor Day Weekend Cross Country Race on September 4, 2021. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis stated that we should notify the public about the fireworks. Mr. Pitman stated that they were told not to light off any fireworks this year.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-59 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Enter into an Agreement with Completely Clean for Cleaning Services for the Safety Center not to exceed \$26,400.00 for Two Years. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant stated that we had switched cleaning services last year because there were issues, but we are good this year.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-60 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to sign an Agreement with Hardlines Design Company for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Meade House Restoration Project in the amount of \$36,000.00. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant stated that we did have a work session with Hardlines to discuss the project and he was not present.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-62 – Resolution Authorizing the Fiscal Officer to Hire a Records Retention Assistant Pursuant to Section 507.021 of the Ohio Revised Code. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Grossi stated that we have lots of records that need to be inventoried so that we can fill out the necessary forms to destroy the records we do not need. Mr. Bryant asked what the timing on this will be. Mr. Grossi stated that whenever it will be done. Mr. Bryant stated that he did not know anything about it. Mr. Grossi stated that he sent emails to all 3 Trustees asking to hire Megan Lapensee and knew that there might be a potential nepotism issue, so he contacted that Ethics Commission and sought legal advice before he asked the Board. He stated that both the state and our legal person told him that if Mrs. Lapensee is not hiring her or managing her, that Joe could hire her and there would be no violations. Mr. Bryant asked if the salary had been set. Mr. Grossi stated that he would like to hire her for \$15.00 an hour. Ms. Leis asked for how long. Mr. Grossi stated that it would probably be for a year at least but intermittent. Ms. Leis and Mr. Bryant asked if we had advertised it yet? Mr. Grossi stated that he had not. He stated that he is okay with hiring anyone. Mr. Beck stated that he thinks we should advertise it too.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to table Resolution G2021-62 pending advertising the position. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', Mr. Beck - 'aye'. Motion passes.

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

- a. Expenditures: NTE \$900.00 for Will Burns to attend the Ohio Association Emergency Vehicle Technicians Inc. Training in Columbus.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth N. Bryant, President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jodie L. Leis, Vice-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip J. Beck, Trustee