
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING

October 5, 2021

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

Also, present: Kimberly Lapensee – Township 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 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 September 7, 2021, the special meeting minutes for September 22, 2021, and the work session meeting for September 28, 2021. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. The roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Beck – ‘aye’, Ms. Leis - ‘aye’ and Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’. Motion passes.

FISCAL OFFICERS REPORT

Mr. Grossi stated that we had \$23,411.68 in our HRA Account, \$8,527,436.64 in the checking account, and \$8,137,391.00 in our Meeder Investment account from October. He stated that we have \$3,542,812.75 in the General Fund, \$1,100,120.75 in the Police Levy Fund, \$1,190,369.53 in the Road Fund, \$845,441.69 in the Fire Fund, and \$2,995,285.13 in the Safety Services account.

Mr. Grossi stated that at the September 2021 Trustees meeting, we saw a stark contrast in the way issues were handled in the public segment hearings. Barb Wilson, a Township resident, presented her ideas on enhancing the appeal of part of Symmes Township and volunteering her time to assist in realizing her ideas. It was an admirable example of civic contribution for the betterment of our Township. Mr. Grossi stated that she was followed by the “gotcha” tag team of Carol Sims and CJ Carr whose presentations are designed to make them look good by making others look bad. Usually by presenting partial truths rather than contributing anything positive to address perceived grievances. Mr. Grossi stated that such was the case with CJ Carr’s latest presentation.

Mr. Grossi stated that Mr. Carr applied to Hamilton County for a zoning permit for a front porch addition for 9406 Arnold Lane on September 14, 2020. The permit was issued on September 16, 2020, but the county never sent the paperwork or the \$176.40 check for the permit fee. Mr. Grossi stated that 11 months later, the county found the check they inadvertently filed with their paperwork. He stated that the township never received the \$176.40 fee for the permit that was issued to CJ Carr 11 months previously. Mr. Grossi stated that Mr. Carr correctly points out that there was not a foolproof system of checks and balances to prevent this oversight at the time. He stated that this led to his wild leap conclusion that there is some possibility that perhaps there are hundreds and possibly thousands of dollars of similar missing checks for zoning permits. Mr. Grossi stated that if Mr. Carr had bothered to check, he would have known that such a system was instituted January 1, 2021, replacing a system used by Carol Sims that had a 17% error rate in recording zoning certificates for the first three months of 2020. Mr. Grossi stated that this brings 2 questions to mind: Does CJ Carr reconcile his check book more than once in 11 months and if he does, he understood the township did not receive that check for 11 months and did CJ Carr charge the homeowner for the cost of that permit?

Mr. Grossi stated that as a person seeking election to a Trustee position as he is, he appreciates Mr. Carr's deep concern for protecting Symmes Township resident's tax dollars in this current issue involving \$176.40, but it makes him wonder where his deep concern was at the Trustees meetings in 2018, 2019 and 2020? He stated that he attended most of those meetings as did Mr. Carr. Mr. Grossi stated that he voiced no concern for the \$33,000.00 in late fees incurred on the Duke Energy lighting bills by the previous Fiscal Officer, Carol Sims. He stated that he voiced no concern for the failure of Carol Sims to file lighting district assessments totaling \$167,184.00 in the years 2013 – 2016. He stated that he voiced no concern by a default on a \$109,288.00 bond payment by Carol Sims. He stated that he voiced no concern publicly at Trustees meetings and to him that is troubling behavior in someone running for a Trustees position.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the warrants from 80043 – 80175 and vouchers 223 – 272 in the amount of \$373,321.56 from the month of September. Ms. Leis seconded the motion.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - 'aye'; Mr. Bryant - 'aye', and 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 reminded everyone to again lock their vehicles at night. He stated that they continue to see an increase in vehicle break-ins throughout the area. Ms. Leis asked if this was just local to this area. Lieutenant Tarr stated no, it is happening all over the region. Ms. Leis asked if the trends go up and down. Lieutenant Tarr stated that they have been steady all summer because all the kids are out. He stated that most of the break-ins are because the vehicles are unlocked. Mr. Bryant stated that there was an incident on Steeplechase and wanted to know if the cops apprehended the thieves from last weekend. Mr. Tarr stated no, not to his knowledge. Ms. Leis wanted to know if the break-ins were happening during the day or night. Lieutenant Tarr stated that they are happening at night. Ms. Leis asked if it was mainly car thefts. Lieutenant Tarr stated that it is mainly cars, but they have had some house break-ins. Mr. Bryant wanted to know if this has been showing up in our reports or will show up. Lieutenant Tarr stated that they have been in each month's report.

CHIEF OTT HUBER, LSF D – Chief Huber stated that they conducted their annual fire inspection inside the Meade house and that they have a great structure to work with. Mr. Bryant thanked Chief Ott for his input. He stated that his report will be electronic this month and he will send it later this week.

BILL PITMAN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS – Mrs. Lapensee stated that the contractor will be finishing up concrete work this week in Calumet Farms and hopefully paving next week, weather pending. Mr. Bryant stated that he was glad that we were able to stick to the road plan for 17 years. Mr. Beck asked when the contractor would be finished with the Union Cemetery sidewalks. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they are now working in the S curve of Union Cemetery and are installing the retaining wall. She stated that hopefully they will be finished this month with all the work.

COMMITTEE – None.

OTHER – Mr. Bryant stated that we had a great turnout for the Fall Festival, and he heard no complaints from anyone about not having any food at the event. Mr. Beck stated that the trail was fantastic. Ms. Leis stated that she wanted to thank the employees for making the event fun and entertaining for the community.

HEARING OF RESIDENTS

CJ Carr, 10403 Willow Drive, stated that he disagreed with Mr. Grossi's statement he made earlier during his finance report. He stated that wrote out a check to the county and it was cashed on August 6, 2021. Mr. Bryant pointed out that it was cashed after 11 months. He stated that he does not think Mr. Grossi should be allowed to give commentary during his finance report, that he should be doing it from the podium under hearing of residents like everyone else. Mr. Grossi stated that he guesses it was okay for Mr. Carr to make erroneous allegations against the officials at the last meeting and it is not okay for those officials to respond to those allegations.

CORRESPONDENCE

Attached to the packet.

EVENTS/MEETINGS

- Finance Committee Meeting –Wednesday, October 13, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Safety Center.
- Trustees Work Session – Wednesday, October 27, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in the Administration building.
- Trick-or-Treat – Sunday, October 31, 2021, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Board of Zoning Appeals – Monday, November 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at the Safety Center.
- Regular Trustees Meeting – Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Safety Center.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning no parking on Appleseed from 11582 Montgomery Road to 8757 Appleseed. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we have received a request from the Homeowners Association to see if anything can be done to improve the intersection at Montgomery Road and Appleseed. She stated that the intersection is a bit wide due to the private drive when you enter the subdivision on the left side and because of the wide area there and no pavement markings, motorists are using both sides of the street to turn left out of the subdivision. She stated that Bill met with the county and ODOT and the county has agreed to put some pavement markings down to designate one entry and one exit point. She stated that the HOA is also requesting that we pass a resolution that prohibits parking on both sides of the street at the entrance from 8751, 8752 to 8757 Appleseed. She stated that when cars are parked in front of those houses, it has become dangerous to try and drive around the parked car because the entrance to the subdivision is very close.

Ms. Leis asked if the HOA has met with all the property owners in the subdivision and they are all okay with us restricting parking in that location. She stated that she wanted to make sure that we contact those affected homes and ask for their input. There was a discussion about restricting the hours of parking and/or only restricting parking to one side of the street where the fire

hydrants are not located. Chief Huber stated that they would go out and survey the area and make a recommendation back to the board. He stated that he believes it is more contractors doing work in the neighborhood than anyone else.

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning the cannon area in Camp Dennison. Ms. Leis stated that she had asked to put this on the agenda. She stated that she met with Barb Wilson, and she has formed a small committee for the beautification of Camp Dennison. She asked Barb to get up and explain what they have talked about. Mrs. Wilson explained she would like to see a larger sign for Camp Dennison like what the township has for their other township buildings, and she would like to see some signage for the bike trail letting them know they have entered Camp Dennison. She stated that some of the dead trees have been cleared out in the triangle area and they would like to see additional landscaping. She stated that they would like to ask ODOT/Hamilton County to abandon that portion of Kugler Mill where the right turn is located so that they can increase the landscape area. She stated that some of the signs in that area need to be relocated away from the roadway. Ms. Leis asked that we get a price to do a landscape plan for that area.

Mr. Bryant asked if we owned the property. Mrs. Lapensee stated no, the Hamilton County Commissioners own the property, and we would have to provide them with a plan and get their permission to landscape the area. Mr. Beck stated that he is working on that and that we would have to get a maintenance agreement with the county to do that. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we may have to check with ODOT on what we plant because of their rules concerning the heights of the plants/trees in their limited access ROW.

Ms. Leis stated that she spoke with Bill about buying flowerpots and flowers for the area and then the residents would water the plants once they are planted. She stated that Mrs. Wilson gave us a honey do list for the winter.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she also talked to ODNR about clearing out the dead trees along the bike trail and planting new ones. She asked the township to do this for them.

Mr. Bryant asked for discussion concerning mowing contracts for 2022. Mr. Bryant stated that we had tabled this discussion from a previous meeting to give him the opportunity to discuss this more with Bill. He stated that he has discussed it and Bill was willing to mow the areas around the park maintenance building, but those areas are the cheapest areas to mow (by an outside contractor) so it would not make sense to have the employees do the work where they could be working on other areas. He stated that he recommends we just hire the same contractors for next year as long as they keep the same pricing and look harder in year 2023.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to appoint Michael Tranter to the Finance Committee for a term of 7/19/21 to 12/31/25. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussed continued.

Ms. Leis stated that Mr. Tranter does a great job on the committee and asks hard questions. She wanted to thank him for his service to the community.

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 G2021-71 – Resolution Approving the 2021 Street Lighting Assessments. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis stated that we are on top of it now. Mr. Bryant stated that these expenses are from the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-82 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Sign an Amended Agreement with Hardlines Design Company for Architectural/Engineering Services for the Meade House Restoration Project in the amount of \$2,820.00. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bryant stated that these additional costs will be to do testing on the mortar on the outside of the building to find suitable matches if we must replace stones on the outside of the building.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-83 – Resolution Accepting the Amounts and Rates as Determined by the Budget Commission and Authorizing the Necessary Tax Levies and Certifying them to the County Auditor. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that the commission only certified up to 97% of what we received last year.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-74 – Resolution Providing for the Declaration of Nuisance for the Property Located at 9303 McKinney Road and Authorizing all Necessary Steps for the Abatement of the Nuisance. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that there was no change in the property today.

The roll call vote was as follows: Ms. Leis - ‘aye’; Mr. Bryant - ‘aye’. Motion passes.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-84 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Change Health Reimbursement Account Providers and to Sign an Agreement with Chard Snyder for HRA Benefits for the Elected Officials and Employees of Symmes Township. 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 Resolution G2021-85 – Resolution Declaring the Intent to Conduct Internet Auctions for the sale of Unneeded, Obsolete or Unfit Personal Property of Symmes Township. Mr. Beck seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that we would sign up for GovDeals to try and sell the remains of the truck that was used by the fire department. She stated that they charge an administration fee when you sell something, but we could charge that admin fee to the buyer at the end

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve Resolution G2021-86 – Resolution Authorizing the Township Administrator to Enter into an Agreement with JK Meurer in the amount of \$93,130.00 to Repair and Repave the Parking Lot at Symmes Park. Ms. Leis seconded the motion. Discussion continued.

Ms. Leis asked if we are paving the entire lot. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes. Ms. Leis asked if this was in the budget. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bryant made a motion at 7:48 p.m. to adjourn into executive session per ORC Section 121.22(G)(1) to consider the compensation and employment of public employee or official. Mr. Beck seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn from executive session and return to the regular meeting at 8:25 p.m. Ms. Leis seconded the motion .

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Approved:

Kenneth N. Bryant, President

Jodie L. Leis, Vice-President

Philip J. Beck, Trustee