

Liberty Township, Licking County, Ohio

Regular Trustee Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Opening

- Bill Bogantz called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. He stated that the meeting is being recorded and will be a public record. Bill led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Melodie Bogantz took the roll call with the following answering present: Bill Bogantz, Doug Strait, and Ed Wasem.
- The minutes from February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting were available for inspection.
- **Doug Strait made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 12, 2024 meeting. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**

Resident/Public Input

- Joel Dysart of 7364 Northridge Road, gave some feedback on the township wide workshop and survey. He also mentioned the Harlem Township and City of Westerville merger that will be before the voters there. He also inquired about a permit/build near him that is "too close to" the property line. Woody will look into it.
- Greg Behnke of 7021 Nichols Lane, asked about water and sewer. Bill Bogantz said that he will speak to it later in the meeting.
- Kristy Hawthorne, from Licking County Soil & Water Conservation District, described a flood study that will be started in early April for Raccoon Creek Watershed. She also reminded everyone that with construction over 1 acre needs to go through the technical review committee. Bill Bogantz asked Kristy Hawthorne about cleaning up debris field on Raccoon Creek. They will work together to see what can be done to remedy the problem.

Zoning

- Woody presented the monthly zoning report for February
 - 2024-CUP-001 Gary Hamilton \$800.00
6252 Johnstown-Utica Rd.
Storage Units
 - AG Exemption James L. & Beverly E. Smith \$0.00
7813 Windy Hollow Rd.
 - 2024-Violation-001 James Houck
3634 Spotsman Club Rd. \$0.00
Junk Yard Violation
 - 2024-P-002 Tyler McNutt \$447.00
8507 Harmony Church Rd.
Accessory Building
 - 2024-LS -001 Antonio & Shelly Kelly \$300.00
7958 Sadie Thomas Rd.

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- lot split
- Refund of \$100 for lot split -\$100.00
overcharged
- Update on Zoning Issues: Woody stated that the next step for the violation is to have the County Persecutor send violation letters. Woody also informed the trustees about a possible upcoming PUD, and a possible conditional use permit. The current status of the Laurie Thompson violation is she is waiting for the construction to start.
- Melodie presented information showing that 7230 and 7323 Johnstown-Utica Road were rezoned from AG to GB in 2012 but were never updated on the Township's Zoning Map. Melodie presented an updated map.
- **Bill Bogantz made a motion to approve the zoning map updates for 7230 and 7323 Johnstown Utica Road from AG to GB. Doug Strait seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**

Old Business

- **Four Corners:** Bill Bogantz described that this is the area at 310 and 37 where 4 townships come together.
 - Bill address that issue as to whether Liberty Township is part of District 9, the area which was given by the Licking County Commissioners to Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District in October 2023. Liberty Township is not mentioned in the document. Exhibit B to the agreements is a map which does show a corner of Liberty Township being given to Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District. Liberty Township's stand is that we are NOT part of the area given to Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District.
 - Bill presented 2 letters he had prepared with the help of our legal counsel:
 - The first letter states that our assumption is that Liberty Township is not part of District 9 and was NOT given to the Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District. Therefore, it asks them to make this correction to their map.
 - The second letter states that Liberty Township is not part of District 9 that was given to Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District AND asks that the Licking County Commissioners not to assign us to ANY Water & Sewer District. Liberty Township wants to be in control of that decision.
 - Bill stated that he prefers the second opinion letter and asked for a motion to approve and send the second letter with some minor tweaks, not content, to adjust things like who the letter is addressed to.
 - Bill Bogantz answered a question about us forming our own Water & Sewer District. Bill learned in the past month that even if we form our own district, it does not give us exclusionary rights for water & sewer. Someone could still annex and push for their own water & sewer district. So, Bill feels that that option doesn't really help us.

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- Woody stated that he heard that Liberty Township was part of District 9. Bill said that the Ohio EPA said that Liberty Township is not.
- Bill Bogantz asked for a motion to approve sending Version 2 of the letter to the Licking County Commissioners, Prosecutor's Office, Southwest Licking Water & Sewer District, Ohio EPA, and MORPC.
- **Doug Strait made a motion to send version 2 of the letter stating Liberty Township's Position on Sewer District 9 and Ohio EPA and give board chairperson authority to add correspondence as needed along with input from legal counsel and share final version with trustees. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**
- **Package Plants:** Bill Bogantz addressed the EPA proposal for approval of package plants that lowers water quality standards for output of the sewage package plants since Licking County "isn't developing fast enough" according to the Governor's Office.
 - Kristy Hawthorn addressed it saying that the County Commissioners are opposing it, so is the Health Department. Soil and Water's board meets tomorrow; they are opposing it. This has been pushed so building contractors will have a place to stay because of the "housing crisis" in the county. At this point the EPA is trying to figure out how to remove and dispose of this application since only negative feedback has been received. Additionally, Kristy stated that these package plants are only an option where there is a service district provider assigned.
 - **Doug Strait made a motion for the trustees to send the proposed letter to the Ohio EPA opposing Permit Proposal OHI000001. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**
- **Miles Estate Update:** Bill stated that the jury hearing was last week for the sale of four acres to Licking Rural Electric via eminent domain. The jury found in favor of the Miles trust proposing an award for the trust of \$415,851.00 but it could be more to cover legal fees (\$494,817.75). The township's fees are not being reimbursed. There are still two or three open cases by Johnstown and Johnstown Parks and Recs against the estate and Liberty Township.
- **Rental (7111 Northridge Road):** Doug stated that he had to fix the hot water heater and that the septic tank needs to be pumped soon.
- **New Administration Building Update** – Doug stated that the concrete floor should go in Friday, next is the siding and windows. Doug said that the plans show an outlet in the middle of the floor. The trustees agreed to not have the floor outlet.
- **Roads**
 - **2024 Roadwork** – Ed stated that Jeff has talked to Smalls. Smalls will come out the end of March or early April to give us a cost estimate for the proposed 2024 roadwork. Melodie stated that she would like that information by the April meeting so we can sign the request for assistance from the County Engineer's office at the next meeting, which is the next step of the process.

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- A resident on Concord road expressed concern about the ice on a hill. He is wondering why it has been an issue this year.
- **Update on new truck:** Doug stated that he has been in communication with Peter Griggs to get a resolution to get bids on a truck.
- **Cemeteries:** Ed said that he looked at charges for surrounding cemeteries and feels our prices are in line with those in the area. Bill Bogantz requested that Ed provide the information for the other trustees to see.
- **Health Insurance for elected officials and full-time employees:** Bill Bogantz stated that we looked at this a couple years ago and the cost was \$111,000 for the 4 elected officials per year. The trustees decided to look into it again this year. Melodie would be covered if approved by trustees before 4/1/2024. Bill Bogantz would not be covered on a family policy and would not vote on the coverage. Bill proposed a meeting on 3/25/24 to discuss further after he gets estimates. Doug will not be available on that date. Doug will let other trustees know if he would be available in March.
- **Comprehensive Plan Update:** Bill stated that there were over 100 people at the community workshop on Feb- 27th. The current survey closes March 15th. The next public engagement is May 1 at Northridge High School.
- **Zoning Fees & Salaries Update:**
 - Woody stated that he forgot to mention something on zoning earlier: There is PEP, Public Entities Pool of Ohio, which is basically insurance for zoning issues. They supply you with legal counsel for an annual fee. At a certain point you can take off your private legal counsel and used PEP.
 - Since we don't have the spreadsheet available today, the trustees will discuss it next month (Bill Bogantz will not be part of the discussion since his wife, Melodie, is compensated with a percentage of the fees).

New Business

- **Package Plants – (covered in Old Business)**
- **OTARMA policy renewal:** Melodie presented the OTARMA insurance policy as provided. The new building should be added when the building is complete. \$9886.00 is the cost of the basic policy for one year.
- **Bill Bogantz made a motion to approve the basic OTARMA insurance policy. Doug Strait seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**
- **Fire Contracts with St Albans & Monroe:** Melodie presented the fire contracts for both St Albans Township and Monroe Township. She stated that we changed the contract to be a 5 year contract instead of a 3 year contract. The Compensation section was also updated to match what really happens. The two payments are NOT equal and they are based on the amount of money received from Licking County and the State of Ohio for the tax levy. The payments are to be made to the supporting townships within 45 days of receiving the total amount.

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- Doug Strait made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-04, Agreement for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Liberty Township Board of Trustees and with St Albans Township Board of Trustees. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.
- Doug Strait made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-05, Agreement for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Liberty Township Board of Trustees and with Monroe Township Board of Trustees. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.
- **Road & Bridge Levy:** Melodie presented the information on the 1.0 mill Road & Bridge levy that the township can put on the November ballot. She stated that a renewal would generate \$81,000 for the township and a replacement would generate \$173,357. The current levy (renewal) costs the owner of a \$100,000 home \$12.31 annually. A 1.0 mill replacement levy would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home \$35 annually. The trustees agreed to pursue a renewal levy. Melodie will get the paperwork started to get the renewal levy on the November ballot.

Correspondence & Financials

- Melodie read the February Credit Card Charges totaling \$942.61
- Melodie read the January and February correspondence.
- Melodie read the past month's payment totaling \$25,765.87
- Melodie read the past month's receipts totaling \$26,929.94
- The meeting was paused to sign Credit Card Summary, Bank Reconciliation, Minutes, Permits, Reports and Warrants.

Closing

- Announcements: Next monthly meeting is April 8, 2024 @ 6:30 pm.
- **Doug Strait made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Bogantz seconded the motion. The motion passed with all YES votes.**
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:12pm.

Approval

Approval of the minutes for meeting on March 11, 2024:

Trustee: William Strait Date: 4/8/2024

Trustee: E. Waseem Date: 4-8-24

Trustee: _____ Date: _____

Fiscal Officer: Melodie Bogantz Date: 4/8/24