

# ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

## Union Township Trustee Advisory Board

### Meeting Minutes

**Meeting Date:** July 13, 2023 – 6:30 PM, Trustee's Office

**Members Present:** Kelly Carrico, Trisha Carrico, Mike Wozney, Ryan Schafer

**Public Present:** Approximately 30 members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by Trisha Carrico, Advisory Board President. Ryan made motion to approve the minutes from July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and Mike seconded. All in favor.

#### Other Business:

Union North Ambulance Service (UNAS) President John Lampkins presented the Mid-Year financial information for the ambulance service. As the end of last month, Union Township had 118 calls, that was between Union Township and the Town of Lakeville; 137 for North Twp, 2 mutual aide call and we (UNAS) turned down 8 calls - 4 for no EMT, 3 for no EMT or driver and 1 the 2<sup>nd</sup> call was no crew. Ryan asked about getting more staffing, John stated that was his goal. He explained most of the calls turned down are nights and weekends, nights are paid at volunteer rate. There is a board meeting coming up and they will be discussing better pay to attract more people. They are also having trouble during the day and he hopes this will help across the board. Ryan stated the township is going through a budget process and wanted to know if it would help if the Union Twp increase funds for the ambulance service so they can cover these calls. John said any increase will go right on the table, there is a North Twp meeting on Monday to increase their funding by \$5,000 and all of that will go to increase what we pay. Ryan stated that would be \$10,000 for the two townships, which is not enough. Kelly asked about North Twp wanting to go into a territory and one of the board members has reached out and said they would like to acquire the ambulance service. She wanted to know where that would leave us stand. John stated he was not fully aware that was their intention but there was a public meeting and one of the board members wanted more public input. He doesn't want to see anything change in how they cover both townships. Ryan asked if he could put together some numbers of what it would take to get the pay to be comparable to others so we don't lose anyone and get a decent pay for nights and weekends and we can bring that into our budget as our half in a sense it would force North Township to match it. John stated they have budgeted \$102,000 for them total for next year. Kelly said she took into account that they are housed in our station and that is an incentive. She stated that is approximately \$12,000 by housing and providing utilities, when you take that in, we are sitting very comfortably at \$110,000 even though you only get \$60,000. John will get figures to Ryan next week.

Kelly has had community members concerned that a fire truck is not showing up at every emergency, rightfully so. The chief has said there have been 2 calls that called for Rescue 51, the firemen showed up and jumped in the ambulance. When they are jumping in an ambulance, how do I explain to our community that we are open for service, that we have firefighters, but my firefighters jumped in the ambulance? John said they have the same thing in Lapaz. There are times we get a fire call, but we don't have an ambulance call. I hope if there is a fire call, they go as a firefighter and we can also, if there is any question on scene, and I haven't heard of that, but I'll reiterate that if a question is raised we might

be separate entities but we are all one big group and we are here to provide the care that's needed at the time it's needed. It's everybody helping everybody.

John asked if there was an update on the contract. Kelly stated the township attorney is looking at it and there may be questions that we need to sit down and talk about.

Kelly asked to be kept up to date on the fire territory discussions. John said he would know more after August 1<sup>st</sup>.

The following is a summary of funds held by UNAS

CD	\$11216.57
CD(equipment)	\$10117.50
Checking	\$185353.01
Scholarship	\$4240.31
Total	\$217927.39

New Business:

Kelly provided 6-month financials earlier

Discussed a new applicant that was approved by Chief Reeves. He does have all the qualifications/certs that he needs. Trisha made a motion to take a vote, Mike declined it, Ryan seconded, Trisha abstained.

Kelly gave new employee handbooks that Chief Reeves provided that need to be looked over by the board for corrections and then we will adopted them at a later meeting.

Old business:

The Harrison St house will be coming down next week, there only doing demolition at this point. Not going any further with paving.

Just starting work on 2024 budget. Budget hearing scheduled for August 10<sup>th</sup> and budget approval for September 14<sup>th</sup>.

Public Comment:

Pam Urbanski, lives on Kenelworth Road - question for John. She hears the ambulance service answer as Lapaz EMS, feels that's an issue because she pays tax money and it should be Lakeville / Lapaz. John will bring that up. Pam also states that she hears Robin on calls 24/7, how can a board let her do that. John states that they ask her not to. Robin works Mon-Fri, every Sunday and Monday night, like she has for 30 years. Then she will pick up a Saturday or Sunday days, depending on what she has going on, she takes the other weekends off. She also has 4 weeks of vacation a year that she uses very frequently

Public Question: James .... Osborne Road - what do we do with past fireman that were on the dept that didn't make your grade and they are not on now, they are more than physically fit and trained. Are we talking about reinstating them? Trisha stated it has been discussed. Kelly said it had been decided to wait 6 months to reconsider. They would need to reapply with the Chief



Mary Laplace - Lakeville - how many active firemen do we have right now that have full certification? Kelly stated that there are 14 total on our roster. Ryan stated that is about what we had a year ago at this time. The 14 does include our Chief

Public Comment: Brad Sherman - Union Township-you said firemen would rather run under Inc instead of Union Twp, did they tell you that? Trisha asked Brad about backdoor meetings at his house, Brad stated they were not backdoor, they were meetings. Kelly said it's been stated by a board member sitting here who resigned his position from the township but as soon as they get their Inc back in status, he will come back on as a fireman. Again, this should never have been a debate, what I want to make very clear, we have a group of men that will not take responsibility for their actions and that they simply could have fixed their issue and we would have still paid them the same amount of money, they would have still had their same chief, assistant chief and officers. They were given that option on March 27<sup>th</sup>, they refused that option. That's why I'm saying that because this gentleman over here wouldn't even turn in an application, ( Indicating Brad Sherman) he was an officer and wouldn't even turn in an application into us till after we had a meeting in June. And then he is upset because he didn't get accepted back on to the dept for whatever purpose the township board decided

Brad stated that is false, an application was turned in and approved by the Fire Territory Board

Kelly - on June 6th you turned your application in, which was beyond the hiring...

Brad - my application was already turned in and approved, I'm not going to get into this

Kelly - I'm not going to get into it either. It's again

Brad - you have to get your facts straight

Kelly - You have to get your facts straight too. I'm not going to sit here and argue because it's really sad unfortunately, and I'm not blaming anyone but had you had a trustee sitting in this position looking at 1099's and looking at the legalities, this would have been discovered easily 8 years ago, if not 12 years ago. Because where the downfall of this is, I can only speak to the last 12 years of what happened because these men were getting checks from the township under other trustees. When Bill Stroup came in as trustee, he just gave them a lump sum amount, he gave them a contractual amount of money, well guess what, they never claimed it. They never took those monies and claimed it. They took it to a bank, down to First Source in Lapaz, cashed the check, turned around and paid their men in cash. Now we know you can't do it legally. And then when we on March 27<sup>th</sup> said, guys we can't do this, here's our resolve for you. We will bring you in under us as township employees and you can just continue to operate, there will be no issues. I'm just going to ask, is that something we discussed on March 27<sup>th</sup> because you were there.

Brad Sherman - possibly

Kelly - so we gave that option, here's an application, just for legal purposes, we came out with an application that at the top said Union Lakeville Fire Territory employee. April 12 still did not have those applications and certifications in hand and at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, Ryan, me, some of the territory board members were down there saying we have to have this for legal purposes. We have to prove that we have employees, we have an agreement from them for 1 - insurance purposes and 2 - legal purposes. They refused to do it, so guess what we had to do, we had to shut down the fire dept for the safety of our residents and our tax payers

Public comment - I helped run businesses for over 30 years, when we ran into problems, we tried to work it out

Kelly - We tried to work it out, believe me, we tried to work it out but it's very hard to work when you're offering and offering and literally, if we didn't want to work with them, March 27<sup>th</sup>, we could have just said we are closing the dept now but we didn't. We were like, let's just keep operating, we're giving you options, fill this out, I mean it was not a matter of anyone becoming anyone's boss, it was a matter of just lets just get it done legally and have reduce the liability for our community. And I mean I literally had firemen walking in on April 12<sup>th</sup> when I was just sitting in just a small little office, here's your F\*'in application, you'll never be my f\*'in boss. And I'm like excuse me, I don't want to be your boss, never did want to be your boss, all I want to do at the end of the year is write you a check legally so when the state board of account comes in and audits my books, I am legal, unlike the other trustee who was not. And believe me, we will be having an audit and the state board of accounts will be dealing with his bookkeeping. I'm going forward and I'm doing everything legal under my term. So I can sit there, I have put facebook posts for the community to read my minutes, I have started a website and you know what nobody still understands it because we have people going out in the community only wanting to think what they've been told. And yet I'm in this office, you want to know the truth? I will show you the facts, I'll show you the facts. I have nothing to gain, I had nothing to gain absolutely by shutting that down other than I was protecting you as a tax payer because you know if somebody would have went out on April 12<sup>th</sup> and there was an accident and one of the these men would have gotten killed or somebody else would have gotten injured, we would not have had insurance for them and you know who they would have come after? The township, not the town, the township

Public Comment- I heard too that the original insurer that had it for a number of years, she was willing to insure but she didn't want to get into a confrontation with you, as the board, not just you personally

Kelly - Yeah, we could have went with Marilyn Gundlach. The whole reason we switched insurances is that we were provided a better insurance policy. When we looked at the policy we had, and I'm not knocking Mrs. Gundlach, she was only giving us appraised value for equipment. We only I think \$10,000 written in for life insurance for the fireman where now they have 2 different life insurance policies they can pull from and we were able to get it for less money. So from the business stand point, we had more insurance, we are able to insure our men liability wise in the sake if something happened to them, we are protecting the township, we are protecting everyone as a whole and we are doing it for less money. So yeah, I mean, when I'm talking I'm talking about an insurance company statewide that deals with fire services, I mean that's one of their specialties

Ryan - we do have a website for the township, I just wrote down the website address as it is, [stjosephcountyindiana.godaddysites.com](http://stjosephcountyindiana.godaddysites.com). I'll set this here so you can take a picture or whatever you want to do. We put all the board minutes on, we post them as a draft prior to them being approved.

Trisha - by law we can do that

Ryan - in these times, I feel like that's important. And we got a facebook page but I like the website better because it's easier to navigate. I'm not a big facebook guy.

Kelly - it's new

Ryan - we are working through that, it's something we've never done. I pushed for that because I do think that a lot of the information needs to get out to the people

Public - there's a lot of people in the township who are not aware of what's going on

Ryan - how would you know?

Public Comment - word of mouth



Ryan - and is that ever good? No, not really. I've talked to people, I don't know everybody in the township, I don't think I want to because they would be calling, but I've talked to a lot of people and I've had a lot of people reach out to me and I've tried to explain things to them. I've personally have been a big pusher for this website. It's rough, it could be better but it's a great start.

Public Comment - you have to start somewhere

Ryan - I don't know anything about websites, I've got to be honest, I'm the last guy you want to do that. I think it's a start for us and it's pretty easy to navigate but it could be better.

Trisha asks for any other questions, with further business to discuss. At 7:40 PM a motion to adjourn was made by Trisha Carrico, Second by Mike Wozney. All in favor.

Minutes approved 22 Day of August 2023

 Board Chairman

 Board Member

 Board Secretary

 Trustee