

MANTUA TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES MEETING

Regular Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2026

John Festa called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll Call: John Festa, Matthew Benner, Graham Harmon; Trustees, Michelle Stebbins, Fiscal Officer. If you need copies of the minutes or other records, please contact the Fiscal Officer, Michelle Stebbins. Others present. The pledge led by Graham Harmon.

The meeting on May 7 covered several key points. The fiscal officer reported signing checks \$1,500 for the Easter egg hunt catering. A resolution was needed for new bonds and salt for next year. The township received a \$229,600 OPWC grant for road improvements and is preparing bids for Chip and Seal projects on Vaughan and Wayne Roads. The trustees discussed the need for a new salt shed and the installation of veterans' plaques. Public comments included concerns about culvert maintenance and the need for new codes for building alarms. The meeting discussed the status of the township building under legal review, awaiting Portage County's reply. The building remains closed until occupancy permits are secured. The town hall doors' swing direction was debated, with historical references and life safety codes considered. Accusations of backdoor dealings on social media were addressed, emphasizing the need for factual communication. Zoning fees were proposed to be simplified to a single rate for new construction. The township's water bill decreased. The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn.

Meeting Commencement and Pledge

John Festa initiates the meeting, noting the date as May 7 and the agenda focused on township business.

Graham Harmon leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

John Festa mentions the meeting is being recorded and will be available online later in the month.

Matthew Benner requests a moment of silence in honor of Susan Lilly, whose husband passed away unexpectedly.

Fiscal Officer Report

Michelle Stebbins discusses a deed for Alan and Joanne Buck Moore and the need for new bonds for trustees, custodian, zoning, and road supervisor.

Michelle Stebbins mentions Mike Zemeznick's work on Wi-Fi for all buildings, resulting in cost savings and the cancellation of some services.

Michelle Stebbins proposes canceling the cemetery PO box and moving it to the regular township PO box to save money.

Michelle Stebbins has the resolution for salt for the 2026-2027 Season

RES 67-26 John Festa requests a motion to approve the April 2, 2026 meeting's minutes, which is seconded by Graham Harmon. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 68-26 John Festa motioned to sign the new bond paperwork seconded by Matthew Benner. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 69-26 Matthew Benner motioned to accept the Salt Bid with 800 Ton per Brian Taylere, seconded by Graham Harmon. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 70-26 John Festa motioned to accept the Fiscal Officer report, seconded by Matthew Benner- VOTE-All Ayes

Trustee Reports and Cemetery Cleanup

Tim Bennett discusses the cleanup for the cemetery and the possibility of coordinating with the school for help after allowing the 4H to use the annex.

John Festa suggests having the 4H kids help with setting flags at the cemetery, with Tim Bennett agreeing to contact the 4H leader.

Tim Bennett mentions issues with the school fridge freezer, including frost on the ceiling and the need for a new thermostat.

Zoning and Chamber Reports

Carole Pollard provides updates on a job fair, a multi-chamber lunch, and the farmers market.

She also mentions the Restoration Society's fundraising dinners and the charm of small town businesses.

Road Projects and Salt Shed Discussion

Matthew Benner discusses road projects, including the OPWC grant for Mennonite Road and the need for bids for Chip and Seal for Vaughan Road and Wayne Road.

He also provides cost estimates for the road projects, emphasizing that the township does not have to proceed with them.

Graham Harmon suggests a new salt shed to address storage issues and the need for a salt-resistant dome.

Mark Hall questions the need for a new salt shed, given previous improvements and the current state of the shed.

RES 71-26 Matthew Benner motioned to authorizing Portage County Engineers to put out a bid book for Vaughn Road, Wayne Road, Mantua Center and Sheldon, seconded by Graham Harmon VOTE-All Ayes

Pavilion and Utilities Planning

John Festa discusses the need for utilities at the pavilion, including power, water, and seating.

He provides quotes for running electric and water lines, recommending Advanced Industries for the work.

He explains the benefits of having water at the pavilion for cleaning and potential future use.

He mentions the need for a frost-free hydrant and the possibility of running water to a drinking fountain.

RES-72-26 Matthew Benner motioned to accept Grade Line's bid at \$9,200.00 for electric and water lines to the Pavilion (Advanced Industrial was second at \$28,827.00), seconded by Graham Harmon VOTE- All Ayes

Public Comment and Culvert Concerns

Mark Hamm raises concerns about culverts backing up and the responsibility for their maintenance.

John Festa agrees to have Brian, the superintendent, inspect the culverts and address any issues.

Mark Hamm mentions the presence of large potholes at the back of Remington Point and the need for repairs.

John Festa reassures that the potholes will be addressed and mentions the challenges of hot patching during cold weather.

Historical Society and Building Maintenance

Graham Harmon discusses the historical society's plans for the open doors event, including maps and historical boards.

He expresses concern about the exterior of the town hall building and the need to fix and paint the wood.

He mentions the priority of fixing the water problem before addressing exterior maintenance.

Freedom of Information Act Request

Terry Hronek mentions a Freedom of Information Act request filed eight months ago and the lack of response.

He expresses frustration over the delay and the need for a formal complaint process.

Michelle Stebbins offers to handle the payment for the copies of the documents requested.

Fundraiser Dinner and Mutual Aid

Mark Hall announces the next fundraiser dinner at the annex and mentions the installation of plaques at all four buildings.

He highlights the importance of mutual aid for the fire department and the need to maintain good relations with neighboring departments.

Matthew Benner clarifies the difference between automatic aid and mutual aid, emphasizing the automatic response to structure fires.

Mark Hall mentions a recent fire on their street and the quick response from mutual aid departments.

Legal and Building Review Update

John Festa mentions that the building is under review and legal scrutiny, waiting for Portage County's reply to their attorney.

Matthew Benner expresses reluctance to invest in a building that cannot be occupied, referencing the Portage County Building Department's de-occupancy.

Mark Hall inquires about the town hall doors' swing direction, referencing historical and building codes.

Matthew Benner explains the necessity of adhering to life safety and fire codes, emphasizing that historical significance is secondary.

Discussion on Building Occupancy and Accessibility

John Festa emphasizes the need for handicapped accessibility in public buildings.

Mark Hall asks about a meeting held on April 24th, which Graham Harmon confirms was a gathering at the town hall and a visit to the school and the Township Office's as well as the Town Hall with Braina Taylere.

Addressing Social Media Accusations

Graham Harmon addresses accusations of backdoor dealings on social media, expressing frustration and defending his and the other Trustees integrity.

He also offers to discuss any concerns directly with the accusers and emphasizes the importance of factual information.

Joh Festa supports Graham Harmon's stance, encouraging direct communication if there are issues.

John Festa and Graham Harmon agree on the lack of accountability on social media.

Introduction of New Fiscal Officer

Mark Hall welcomes Michelle as the new school officer, noting her busy schedule and big shoes to fill.

Matthew Benner thanks Michelle for her hard work and dedication.

John Festa concludes public comment and invites the zoning inspector to make a report.

Rich Gano provides a detailed update on various zoning issues, including complaints, permits, and ongoing disputes.

Graham Harmon suggests simplifying zoning fees by having a single fee for new construction, combining commercial and industrial fees.

RES 73-26 Matthew Benner motioned to accept the zoning amendment , seconded by Grahem Harmon. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 74-26 Motion by John Festa to enter an executive session under 121, 22 public meetings exceptions, paragraph 1g, to discuss appointments, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, and compensation. Seconded by Matthew Benner, VOTE-All Ayes makes a motion to go into executive session to discuss employee compensation and promotion.

RES-75-26 Motion by John Festa to return to the regular meeting. Seconded by Matthew Benner, VOTE-All Ayes

RES-76-26 John Festa motions not to replace the Cemetery Sexton for Mantua Township putting the Trustees in charge with the help of the Service Department, Seconded by Matthew Benner. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 77-66 John Festa motions to pay bills, seconded by Matthew Benner. VOTE-All Ayes

RES 78-26 John Festa Motioned to adjourn, seconded by Graham Harmon. VOTE-All Ayes

All formal actions of the Board of Trustees of Mantua Township concerning and relating to the adoption of resolutions and/or motions passed at this meeting were adopted in a meeting open to the public, in compliance with the law, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code

John Festa, Trustee

Graham Harmon, Trustee

Matthew Benner, Trustee

Michelle Stebbins, Interim Fiscal Officer