

The Board of Liberty Township Trustees met in a Regular Session at the township administration office on Monday, June 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance, Mr. Arnie Clebone, Mr. Devon Stanley, and Mr. Gregory Cizmar presiding.

Law Director Cherry Poteet swore in Police Officer Lee Padula, Police Officer Landon Price, & Police Officer Anthony Baglama. Congratulations to all!

Fiscal Officer Matthew Connelly was absent but submitted a written financial report.

Reports:

Liberty Township Administrator Martha Weirick announced Music in Churchill Park this Thursday, June 11th at 7:00 p.m. Also, the administration is launching a media campaign to invite local residents aged 60 and older to enroll in the Liberty Township Senior Watch Program.

Chief Doug Theobald acknowledged the department's high run volume – noting the crews have been incredibly busy. He stated that the Department really appreciates the extra manpower the Trustees granted. We are now rendering more mutual aid rather than receiving aid, he added. June is officially "grant season." He said they are working closely with an experienced grant writer to secure a two-hundred-and-seventy-thousand-dollar FEMA grant for new Airpacks. He explained that application goes through a peer-review panel before final selection, mentioning the grant writer had been a panelist on the peer review and knows what the grant application requires. Chief Theobald said he also applied for a thirteen thousand dollars grant from Norfolk Southern and a two thousand grant from OTARMA. The Chief expects to cut operational costs because two of our own firefighters just earned their State Instructor Certifications, meaning we can now run our in-house training instead of paying outside contractors. When they aren't out on calls, the firefighters continue to train by keeping our skills sharp, including but not limited to the recent ladder and hose drills over at the North Side Parking Garage.

Chief Ray Buhala presented his report and opened the floor for questions. He reviewed recent department statistics, noting 1,290 calls for service, 49 arrests, and 13,608 miles logged by officers. Chief Buhala noted that the full report is available on the township website. Ray expressed gratitude to Law Director Cherry Poteet for assistance in securing a grant that covers 100% of the cost for a new "live scan" fingerprinting device. This equipment satisfies a local judge's mandate to fingerprint all detainees and will eliminate the need to transport them to Trumbull County. Additionally, the Chief informed the Board that he applied for a state-administered Federal JAG grant to fund department personnel, equipment, and supplies. Trustee Stanley commended Chief Buhala on an outstanding job as a representative for the majority of Police Departments throughout Trumbull County as their spokesperson regarding Trumbull County's 911 billing. At Trustee Stanley's request, Chief Buhala provided an overview of the billing issue and the subsequent meeting. The Chief explained that while serving as interim Chief, he noticed his department was being billed for medical calls they do not respond or handle. Furthermore, the Liberty Fire Department was receiving bills for the exact same calls. When multiple attempts to resolve the matter with the Trumbull County 911 Director failed, and conversations revealed that other local communities were also being double-billed, the county's Police and Fire Chiefs jointly requested a meeting with the Trumbull County Commissioners and the 911 Director to address the systemic issue. The matter has yet to be resolved with further meetings planned.

Road Superintendent Wayne Hickman opened his report by apologizing for his absence last two meetings due to personal matters. He highlighted that multiple infrastructure projects are currently underway across the township. The Center Park Project is nearing completion, with crews wrapping up final punch-list items after waiting for wet ground conditions to improve. The Belmont Sidewalk project is temporarily paused while the township coordinates with AT&T to resolve an issue with a large utility vault. Furthermore, the scope of work at the corner of Belmont Avenue and State Route 304 was modified; amended engineering designs have been submitted to the State, with approval expected shortly. The Geauga Trumbull Go Green Grant picnic table and benches are now placed in Churchill Park ready for Music in the Park attendees to enjoy, he noted. He mentioned Belmont Park Cemetery vegetation growth has been a challenge, but they are working to rectify the matter. The road crew is working on drainage, grass cutting, pothole repairs and street sweeping.

Zoning Inspector Ms. Melissa Ritchie provided her report to the Board. She highlighted nine permits issued and multiple violation letters sent. Ms. Ritchie mentioned she was happy to report she could assist a couple who were cited for high weeds. Furthermore, she was able to resolve the matter by putting the couple in touch with a landscaper who is willing to assist them.

New Business:

Motion to approve the minutes of the Thursday, May 21, 2026 Regular meeting and the Special Zoning Hearing on May 26, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Stanley. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

Motion to approve warrant/eft expenditures for the month of May 2026 in the amount of \$1,018,371.65 warrants #27658 through #27712 inclusive.

Motion: Mr. Clebone. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Clebone, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Motion carried.

Motion to approve the Purchase Order Listing and any Then and Now Certificates for the month of May 2026.

Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Stanley.

Roll Call: Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

26-96 Motion to hire Landon Price as a Full Time Probationary Patrol Officer per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the OPBA and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees at a rate of \$26.44 per hour effective June 8, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Clebone. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Clebone, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Motion carried.

26-97 Motion to hire Anthony Baglama as a Full Time Probationary Patrol Officer per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the OPBA and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees at a rate of \$26.44 per hour effective June 8, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Stanley. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

26-98 Motion to execute the agreement between RT Vernal Paving & Excavating, Inc., apparent low bidder, and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees for the 2026 County Road Improvement Project for \$553,618.00.

Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Clebone.

Roll Call: Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Motion carried.

26-99 Motion to adopt a Resolution of Necessity for a Renewal Fire EMS Levy (Renewal Levy 2.0 Mills)

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY TO LEVY A RENEWAL TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL LIMITATION FOR FIRE AND EMS PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the amount of taxes which may be raised within the ten-mill limitation will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount for the necessary requirements for Liberty Township Trumbull County, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, an existing 2.0 mill levy for Fire and EMS purposes was first levied in 2007 and expires in 2026 and it is necessary to renew the existing levy in order to have sufficient funds for the Township Fire and EMS services; and

WHEREAS, a Resolution declaring the necessity of levying a tax outside the ten-mill limitation must be passed and certified to the County Auditor.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, that it is necessary to levy a Renewal tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation for the benefit of Liberty Township for Fire and EMS purposes. As provided in R.C. 5705.03(B)(1) the Board states as follows:

(a) The proposed rate of the tax shall be 2.0 mills for each one dollar of taxable value.

(b) The purpose of the tax shall be:

For providing and maintaining fire apparatus, appliances, buildings, or sites therefore, or sources of water supply and materials therefore, or the establishment and maintenance of lines of fire alarm telegraph, or the payment of permanent, part-time, or volunteer firefighters personnel or firefighting companies to operate the same, including the payment firefighter employer's contribution required under section 742.34 of the Revised Code, or to purchase ambulance equipment, or to provide ambulance, paramedic, or other emergency medical services operated by a fire department or firefighting company;

(c) The tax is a Renewal levy.

(d) The sections of the Revised Code authorizing submission of the question of the tax are: R.C. §505.37, R.C. §5705.03; R.C. §5705.19(J) and R.C. §5705.191.

(e) The tax is for a five year period of time.

- (f) The tax is to be levied upon the entire territory of Liberty Township.
- (g) The date of the election at which the question of the tax shall appear on the ballot is November 3, 2026.
- (h) The ballot measure shall be submitted to the entire territory of Liberty Township.
- (i) The tax year in which the tax will first be levied is 2027 and the calendar year in which the tax will first be collected is 2028.
- (j) Liberty Township is wholly located in Trumbull County, Ohio.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fiscal Officer shall certify a copy of this Resolution to the County Auditor with the request that said County Auditor certify to this Board of Trustees the information required pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §5705.03(B)(2).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon receipt of the certification from the County Auditor and adoption of a Resolution to Proceed by the Board of Trustees that said tax levy be submitted under the authority of Ohio Revised Code §505.37, §5705.03, §5705.19(J) and §5705.191 to the electors of the entire territory of said Liberty Township, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §5705.25, in the General election to be held on November 3, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Stanley. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

26-100 Motion to adopt a Resolution of Necessity for a Renewal Police EMS Levy (Renewal Levy 2.0 Mills)

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY TO LEVY A RENEWAL TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL LIMITATION FOR POLICE AND EMS PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the amount of taxes which may be raised within the ten-mill limitation will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount for the necessary requirements for Liberty Township Trumbull County, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, an existing 2.0 mill levy for Police and EMS purposes which was first levied in 1992 and expires in 2026 and it is necessary to renew the existing levy in order to have sufficient funds for the Township Police and EMS services; and

WHEREAS, a Resolution declaring the necessity of levying a tax outside the ten-mill limitation must be passed and certified to the County Auditor.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, that it is necessary to levy a Renewal tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation for the benefit of Liberty Township for Police and EMS purposes. As provided in R.C. 5705.03(B)(1) the Board states as follows:

(a) The proposed rate of the tax shall be 2.0 mills for each one dollar of taxable value.

(b) The purpose of the tax shall be:

For providing and maintaining motor vehicles, communications, other equipment, buildings, and sites for such buildings used directly in the operation of a police department, for the payment of salaries of permanent police personnel, including the payment of the policemen employer's contributions required under section 145.48 or 742.33 of the Revised Code, for the payment of the costs incurred by townships as a result of contracts made with other political subdivisions in order to obtain police protection, or for the provision of ambulance or emergency medical services operated by a police department, or for the payment of other related costs;

(c) The tax is a Renewal levy.

(d) The sections of the Revised Code authorizing submission of the question of the tax are: R.C. §505.50, R.C. §5705.03; R.C. §5705.19(J) and R.C. §5705.191.

(e) The tax is for a five year period of time.

(f) The tax is to be levied upon the entire territory of Liberty Township.

(g) The date of the election at which the question of the tax shall appear on the ballot is November 3, 2026.

(h) The ballot measure shall be submitted to the entire territory of Liberty Township.

(i) The tax year in which the tax will first be levied is 2027 and the calendar year in which the tax will first be collected is 2028.

(j) Liberty Township is wholly located in Trumbull County, Ohio.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fiscal Officer shall certify a copy of this Resolution to the County Auditor with the request that said County Auditor certify to this Board of Trustees the information required pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §5705.03(B)(2).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon receipt of the certification from the County Auditor and adoption of a Resolution to Proceed by the Board of Trustees that said tax levy be submitted under the authority of Ohio Revised Code §505.50, §5705.03, §5705.19(J) and §5705.191 to the electors of the entire territory of said Liberty Township, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §5705.25, in the General

election to be held on November 3, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Clebone. Second: Mr. Stanley.

Roll Call: Mr. Clebone, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Motion carried.

26-101 Motion to adopt a Resolution of Necessity for a Renewal Fire EMS Levy (Renewal Levy 1.0 Mills)

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE NECESSITY TO LEVY A RENEWAL TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL LIMITATION FOR FIRE AND EMS PURPOSES

WHEREAS, the amount of taxes which may be raised within the ten-mill limitation will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount for the necessary requirements for Liberty Township Trumbull County, Ohio; and

WHEREAS, an existing 1.0 mill levy for Fire and EMS purposes was first levied in 1992 and expires in 2026 and it is necessary to renew the existing levy in order to have sufficient funds for the Township Fire and EMS services; and

WHEREAS, a Resolution declaring the necessity of levying a tax outside the ten-mill limitation must be passed and certified to the County Auditor.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, that it is necessary to levy a Renewal tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation for the benefit of Liberty Township for Fire and EMS purposes. As provided in R.C. 5705.03(B)(1) the Board states as follows:

(a) The proposed rate of the tax shall be 1.0 mills for each one dollar of taxable value.

(b) The purpose of the tax shall be:

For providing and maintaining fire apparatus, appliances, buildings or sites therefore, or sources of water supply and materials therefore, or the establishment or maintenance of lines of fire alarm telegraph, or the payment of permanent, part-time or volunteer firefighting personnel or firefighting companies to operate the same, including the payment of fire fighter employer's contributions required under §742.34 of the Ohio Revised Code or to purchase ambulance equipment, or to provide ambulance, paramedic or other emergency medical services operated by a fire department or firefighting company;

(c) The tax is a Renewal levy.

(d) The sections of the Revised Code authorizing submission of the question of the tax are: R.C. §505.37, R.C. §5705.03; R.C. §5705.19(J) and R.C. §5705.191.

(e) The tax is for a five year period of time.

(f) The tax is to be levied upon the entire territory of Liberty Township.

(g) The date of the election at which the question of the tax shall appear on the ballot is November 3, 2026.

(h) The ballot measure shall be submitted to the entire territory of Liberty Township.

(i) The tax year in which the tax will first be levied is 2027 and the calendar year in which the tax will first be collected is 2028.

(j) Liberty Township is wholly located in Trumbull County, Ohio.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fiscal Officer shall certify a copy of this Resolution to the County Auditor with the request that said County Auditor certify to this Board of Trustees the information required pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §5705.03(B)(2).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon receipt of the certification from the County Auditor and adoption of a Resolution to Proceed by the Board of Trustees that said tax levy be submitted under the authority of Ohio Revised Code §505.37, §5705.03, §5705.19(J) and §5705.191 to the electors of the entire territory of said Liberty Township, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code §5705.25, in the General election to be held on November 3, 2026.

Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Clebone.

Roll Call: Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Motion carried.

26-102 Motion to hire Liam Haas as a part time seasonal maintenance grounds employee for the Belmont Park Cemetery and township grounds at a rate of \$15.00 per hour, no benefits. His first day worked is his hire date.

Motion: Mr. Stanley. Second: Mr. Cizmar.

Roll Call: Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

Public Comment: A local resident returned to follow up on a property matter from a previous meeting. She expressed her gratitude to our police department for their assistance, noting that the disruptive devices she made a complaint about have been removed. The resident requested that the Board of Trustees consider drafting a resolution to ban electronic or ultrasonic pest control devices entirely.

Trustee Clebone asked if she knew of any other communities that had banned these types of devices. Her

response was to say she could not find any type of resolutions in the United States. She highlighted the severe emotional distress and grief the situation had caused her family, stating that her younger children were deeply impacted and her daughter was forced to move out of the home due to distress and remains fearful of returning.

Trustees' remarks.

Trustee Arnie Clebone announced that the Liberty Township Historical Society will host the America 250th Celebration on July 18, 2026, at Churchill Park from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. with a fireworks display at the end of the evening. Commemorating the 250th anniversary of the United States, the event features a local "Heritage Tour" where participants can visit multiple historically significant sites throughout the township. Attendees can pick up a tour pamphlet, collect site verifications, and be entered into a drawing to win a gift card.

Trustee Devon Stanley expressed his appreciation for the successful negotiation and ratification of the Teamsters and Fire Department contracts. He extended his compliments to the Police Department for successfully passing the police levy, noting that it will fund the hiring of additional officers, as seen this evening with the hiring of three additional officers. He added he is proud to be "building a young, vibrant team of Police Officers." Lastly, Trustee Stanley commended Zoning Inspector Melissa Ritchie and Fire Chief Doug Theobald for their efforts, concluding with high praise for all the hard work across all township departments.

Trustee Greg Cizmar commended Liberty Township Police Chief Ray Buhala. Chief Buhala's presentation to the Trumbull County Commissioners and the County 911 Director served as an eye-opener, he said. Greg acknowledged Ray successfully highlighted critical operational "blind spots" and resource challenges that the county commissioners were previously unaware of, advocating on behalf of the county's Police Chiefs. Trustee Cizmar is looking forward to further talks on the matter with the Commissioners. Belmont Park Cemetery is slowly improving. Lastly, Trustee Cizmar attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for Dudes Chicken and highly recommends the food!

Motion to adjourn into executive session at 6:34 p.m. to consider the employment, dismissal, or discipline of a public employee.

Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Stanley.

Roll Call: Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn from executive session at 7:18 p.m. and end the meeting. No decisions were made.

Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Stanley.

Roll Call: Mr. Cizmar, Yes. Mr. Stanley, Yes. Mr. Clebone, Yes. Motion carried.

Next business meeting June 18, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

Music in Churchill Park June 11th 7:00 p.m. Bring your lawn chair!

MATTHEW CONNELLY
FISCAL OFFICER

GREG CIZMAR, CHAIRPERSON