

The Board of Liberty Township Trustees met in Regular Session on Friday, September 29, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. with the following members in attendance, Mr. Gregory Cizmar, Mr. Arnold Clebone and Mr. Devon Stanley, presiding.

Motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Regular meeting.

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

Trustee Clebone requested to include the below as part of today's minutes:

The many recent improvements within Liberty Township include: Paving 34 miles, which is over half of the roads the Township is responsible for; major improvements to Churchill Park, including restoration of the creek, shelters, pavilion and restrooms; equipment and vehicle replacement for the police, fire and road departments; restoration of the town hall, including a new roof, flooring, HVAC, painting, and landscaping; and increasing the police force from a low of 14 to a current force of 21 officers.

All the above required dollars contributed by residents through taxes and supplemented with grants, zero percent interest loans, fees, and fines. However, to maintain and improve our township we need to preserve and grow our taxable base. Blighted properties detract from the appearance of our township and discourage newcomers considering Liberty as the location for their future home or business and dissuades current residents from investing in maintenance, improvements, and new construction. This creates a downward spiral in which the burden of maintaining roads and buildings, compensating police and fire personnel and purchasing equipment then falls on a smaller tax base and declining population.

To address this problem, I am requesting that the Liberty Board of Trustees increase the staffing level of the zoning office from one to two persons and enact a revised Maintenance Resolution to replace the International Maintenance Code (IMC) that was adopted in 2008. Over half the content of the IMC includes provisions that the Township cannot enforce, e.g., items inside a structure that a township has no authority to enforce. Also, it lacks provisions contained in other township resolutions that need to be considered for inclusion in the Liberty Maintenance Resolution.

I am proposing that maintenance provisions adopted by surrounding communities be reviewed and be considered in whole or part for adoption by Liberty. For example, the resolution enacted in Weathersfield, which is detailed and comprehensive and addresses specific issues that a township can enforce.

[065907bfc3c4/downloads/weathersfield%20zoning%20regs%20REV%2020220510.pdf?ver=1694634182590](https://www.townshipofliberty.com/065907bfc3c4/downloads/weathersfield%20zoning%20regs%20REV%2020220510.pdf?ver=1694634182590).

See four-page Addendum on file in the Township office with further details and provisions contained in other township resolutions that address maintenance concerns in Liberty.

23-123 Motion to amend 23-116 (Motion to accept the resignation of full time Firefighter John Corman effective September 10, 2023) to part-time status. Firefighter Corman requested to remain as a part time employee.

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

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

23-124 Motion to accept the resignation of part time firefighter paramedic Joe Buday effective 9/15/23.

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

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

23-125 No objection to the liquor permit for Jay Astha LLC, DBA Hampton Inn Youngstown North, by Hilton, 4400 Belmont Ave, Liberty Township, Ohio 44505.

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

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

23-126 No objection to the liquor permit for EGG Entertainment and Real Estate Group LLC, 2748 Belmont Ave., Liberty Township, Youngstown, Oh 44505.

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

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

23-127 Motion to accept the resignation of Firefighter Ralph McMahan effective September 29, 2023. In addition, to approve the Settlement Agreement and Release of Claims between Ralph McMahan and the Liberty Township Board of Trustees. Ralph was injured on duty on November 2, 2021 and now seeks to voluntarily leave employment. See addendum file for full details.

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

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

23-128 Motion to hire Matthew Gordon, Canfield, Ohio as a Fulltime Firefighter/Paramedic per the terms of the agreement between the IAFF and Board of Trustees of Liberty Township at a rate of \$23.00 per hour, pending a positive outcome of a physical, drug test, and background check. Firefighter Gordon has more than 20 years of experience as a firefighter/paramedic. The first day worked is his hire date.

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

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

23-129 Motion to hire John Rongyos, Tallmadge, Ohio as a Fulltime Firefighter/Paramedic per the terms of the agreement between the IAFF and Board of Trustees of Liberty Township at a rate of \$18.00 per hour, pending a positive outcome of a physical, drug test, and background check. Hire date is 9/28/23.

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

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

23-130 Motion to approve a letter of support for Build a Better Belmont to be sent to United States Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development.

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

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

23-131 Motion to accept the Workforce Relief Grant for the Fire Department.

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

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

Discussion: NOPEC Representative Tony Ramos spoke to the Board of Trustees on Gas and Electric rates. Tony indicated NOPECs rates are competitive with other companies. Currently there are roughly 5000 residents enrolled. Since the residents approved NOPEC, we cannot join the County's program. NOPEC offers a Pace Loan Program for commercial property owners and helps finance energy efficiency improvement through loans. For more information call 440-249-7840 or email Tony at aramos@nopec.org.

Fire Chief Doug Theobald reported Station 35 air conditioner keeps losing freon and needs replaced. Also the main room floor at Station 35 needs to be replaced as sections of the tile are completely worn. The Chief is glad to see the two new hires on the agenda but still needs two more full-time paramedics. The volume of calls continues to stretch the crews. Air Packs will need to be replaced soon. He is hoping to collaborate with the City of Youngstown and possible other communities in hopes of better chances to secure an Air Pack Grant. The Thomas and Mercy Health Foundations on securing funding for a new fire truck are still moving forward. Controlled burn training at the Airbase will commence in October and the 2nd week of October is Fire Prevention week. There is a nationwide study regarding EMS crews who encounter hostile situations and considering using a single word or verbal announcement to alert 911 of any hostile situations.

Road Superintendent Wayne Hickman reported 997 tires were collected at this year's Scrap Tire Grant (through Geauga Trumbull Solid Waste). The 2023 Local Paving Program is being designed by the Trumbull County Engineers Office including Station 35's parking lot. Wayne hopes to put it out to bid before December for early spring paving. Wayne thanked Gary Modarelli for addressing the bent trees at Churchill Park. The crew had the drag box out and did some hot mix patching. There were some drainage issues he addressed including removing brush which added to the drainage issues. However, in doing so, the crew unearthed a deep ditch and Wayne has safety concerns that someone may drive into the ditch. Because the area is private property, Trustee Cizmar suggested, with the owner's permission, installing a few posts and guard rail. There is a fallen tree on Will-O-Wood, which is technically on a paper road but the road was never accepted by the township. The Board authorized Wayne to look into having it removed.

Police Chief Toby Meloro congratulated the Police Department Detective Sgt. Michael Shuster and Detective Jeff Palmer for their EXCELLENT INVESTIGATIVE WORK in solving the recent B&ES on Logan, Rt.#304, Tibbetts Wick Rd., Vienna and other surrounding communities. "Excellence is not a skill, it's an attitude! Great job!" The Chief mentioned an A2F liquor permit application, which allows wine to be manufactured on a property. He needs time to research the request and speak to the property owner who applied for the permit. Chief reminded everyone of the October Fest and Craft Show Oct. 21st from noon to 3 p.m. and the open house on October 31st from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Zoning and Code Officer Jim Rodway reported the old gas station property on Belmont Ave. is scheduled to be demolished.

Trustee Greg Cizmar reported we had another successful auction. The two baseball fields received 336 tons of dirt between the two fields. Between the dirt and some drainage matters corrected by the road crew, improvements should be apparent for fall ball tournaments.

Trustee Arnie Clebone mentioned he had a few more vendors interested in coming to the October Festival. The Foundation Group was asking if the funds received will go through the foundation group or through the township. Generally the foundation group manages the funding, but because the Fiscal Officer was not present, he decided to talk to Matt before making any decisions. The Build a Better Belmont clean up along Gypsy Lane last week was a success.

Trustee Clebone spoke of his zoning concerns and discussed his issues with all Board members. Trustee Clebone said the Board of Health somehow lost track of a house on Redfern and another house on Redfern that has gone downhill over the past 10 years. Arnie suggested we review the Weathersfield and Boardman's Property Maintenance Code. Trustee Devon Stanley suggested reviewing Boardman's Property Maintenance Code and asked Jim to print the 5-page document for the Board members. Trustee Clebone offered, people buy homes then can't afford to maintain them. Trustee Cizmar countered, who are we to stop people from buying homes or what circumstances are going on in their lives after purchasing a home.

Motion to adjourn into executive session at 9:59 a.m. to consider the employment of a public employee.

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

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

Motion to end executive session at 10:39 a.m. and end meeting.

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

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

Next meeting Tuesday October 10, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

Liberty Township Fall Festival and Craft Show...Saturday, October 21st from 12 – 3 p.m. Music, food, crafts, children's games, and pumpkins...

Neighborhood Trick or Treat October 31st from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Childrens come dressed in your favorite costume and meet your Police and Fire personnel from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. on October 31st at the Township Police Station before you head out to the Neighborhood Trick or Treat.

MATTHEW CONNELLY FISCAL OFFICER

DEVON STANLEY, CHAIRPERSON