

The Board of Liberty Township Trustees met in Regular Session at the township administration office on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance, Mr. Arnie Clebone, Mr. Devon Stanley, and Mr. Gregory Cizmar presiding.

Fiscal Officer Matthew Connelly presented his report. Mr. Connelly reviewed the Cash Summary Report with the Board. Matthew balanced through March and is currently working on the April bank statement. Mr. Connelly mentioned we have fraud protection on our bank accounts; however, he reviews the funds twice a day to verify there is no suspicious activity. He affirmed we have received the 1st half taxes from the County and reviewed the budget year to date figures. We are three eighths through the year, compared to last year's figures he stated, we are under spending and revenue is up. In addition to the Walmart Grant, COPS Grant, BWC Grant, and other miscellaneous grants awarded the Fire, Police and Administration, we were awarded the \$450,000 ARPA Grant from the Trumbull County Commissioners. Matthew wanted to thank Fire Admin. Asst. Michelle Rusu, the Fire Chief Doug Theobald, Fiscal Officer's Asst. Teena Wylie, and Administrator Martha Weirick for their help in completing the required Centers From Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collections Survey saving the township \$35,000.00, had an outside company completed the survey. Mr. Connelly reached out to Vienna and Champion Townships to offer his help during their challenging time. Matt explained how the township is involved when a fire destroys a home in our township. He receives an insurance check to hold until the damaged structure is either removed or made safe and inspected by the Fire Department. Once the property is secure, we can release the funds.

Reports:

Administrator Mrs. Martha Weirick discussed the dates and acts for this year's Music in Churchill Park concerts. She thanked the County Commissioners for awarding the \$450,000.00 ARPA check to renovate Center Park, as well as all those who contributed to the grant application (including the Board of Trustees, & Road Superintendent Wayne Hickman). Martha notified the Board she is in the process of requesting Statements of Qualifications from various engineering firms for the upcoming Center Park Project.

Fire Chief Doug Theobald discussed the FEMA Grant as well as the other grants they applied for this past year. He has high confidence in receiving the regional joint grant for Air Packs. The trailer awarded to the Eagle Joint Fire District, City of Girard, and us will soon be lettered. Currently, they are instructing the trainers and soon we can bring the trailer to local departments, events and schools. In July and August, the State Fire Marshall will provide their burn trailer for additional training. Training at the Air Base was recently finished. Chief Theobald reviewed the runs from last month and year to date. Trustee Cizmar asked if all equipment is in working order now, however, the Chief said the Sutphen is not back yet.

Police Chief Toby Meloro presented his report. Chief Meloro informed the Board, he met with the Chief Security Officer at the Jewish Community Center. The Center will give us access to their grant writer. With their help we could pursue the Burns Grant - which would bring in \$30,00.00 - and assist us with pursuing a \$200,000 COPS Grant.

Road Superintendent Mr. Wayne Hickman said we are in construction season. RT Vernal started paving today. Hazelwood drainage is nearly complete but needs a bit more time due to Take 5 Oil Change building upgrades. Once that project is complete, we can pave the road. The Fire Departments parking lot paving upgrade is moving forward with the cement slabs poured. The Townsend project (from Blount to Logan Way) is also moving forward since the decision was made to take the alternate engineering which keeps everything in the right-of-way. Hopefully, he said, it will be bid out in July. The crews are continuing to street sweep, cut grass, repair catch basins and other road department jobs.

Zoning and Code Enforcement Director Mr. Jim Rodway was absent but gave his report last week to the Board to review.

New Business:

Motion to approve the minutes of the Friday, May 3, 2024 Regular meeting.

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

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

Motion to approve warrant/eft expenditures for the month of April 2024 in the amount of \$623,488.52 warrants #26058 through #26130 inclusive.

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

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

Motion to approve the Purchase Order Listing and any Then and Now Certificates for the month of April 2024.

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

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

24-43 Motion to increase appropriations in the 1000-910-910-0221 Transfer Out Court Fine by \$11,300.00.

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

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

Comment by Fiscal Officer Matthew Connelly: The old court fines were deposited directly into the Police Department. It was only recently that I found out they must first be put in the general fund and transferred out into the police fund.

24-44 Motion to enter into an agreement with Groover Roofing and Siding for \$16,800 to remove the existing roof and furnish all materials and labor from Park Department Building (attached to the maintenance garage) and to install new heavy gauge seamless spouting and downspouts for \$3,580.00.

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

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

24-45 Motion to pass the following resolution for grass abatements:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees hereby determines that the owner's maintenance of vegetation, garbage, refuse and other debris upon the following properties constitutes a nuisance:

Address:	Parcel No.:
1127 Churchill Hubbard	12-763755

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that notice of this Board's intent to provide for the abatement, control, or removal of said vegetation, garbage, refuse or other debris constituting said nuisance be given to all owners of the land and holders of liens of record upon said land in accordance with Section 505.87 (B) O.R.C.; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon proper notice, and failure of the property owner to abate said nuisance within seven days, the Board of Trustees provide for the abatement, control, or removal of said vegetation, garbage, refuse or other debris constituting said nuisance in accordance with Section 505.87 (B) O.R.C.

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

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

NOTE: After discussion with a concerned neighbor at the end of the meeting, the Board amended the above resolution to include 281 Potters Circle. SEE resolution 24-50 below.

24-46 Motion to hire Alec Coman as a probationary full time Firefighter/EMT pending positive background check per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the IAFF and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees. The first day worked is his hire date.

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

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

24-47 Motion to hire Bryan Harris as a probationary full time Firefighter/EMT pending positive background check per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the IAFF and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees. The 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.

24-48 Motion to hire Erik Lyszaz as a probationary full time Firefighter/EMT pending positive background check per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the IAFF and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees. 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.

24-49 Motion to hire Dylan Campbell as a probationary full time Firefighter/EMT pending positive background check per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the IAFF and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees. The 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.

24-50 Motion to amend resolution 24-45 to include 281 Potters Circle Parcel #12-764789.

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

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

A resident asked about a letter that was to be sent to the Zoning Commission some time last year, seeking recommendations to the current codes. The Trustees were not in agreement on how to proceed with those updates. Trustee Clebone feels it's not just maintenance issues but other zoning matters that are vital. Trustee Cizmar maintains he is concerned that certain provisions within the Boardman's Maintenance codes (which was suggested to emulate) on how one person's opinion of what is considered unsightly may differ from another's opinion. Trustee Clebone also mentioned, again, we should hire a 2nd person to work in Zoning. However, a citizen spoke who questioned why we would hire a 2nd person at this time? He said, "until you get things updated, you don't need a second person." On another matter, a resident had an issue with the vacant home near him on Potters Circle and needed some help determining who now owns the property. He reported it was sold to a mortgage company, who then sold it to another, but that person has yet to take ownership. In the meantime, the property is not being maintained. Trustee Stanley said he would get the grass cut and look further into the matter.

Trustee Arnie Clebone discussed the Build a Better Belmont joint venture with the City of Youngstown. He invited anyone who would like to ride a bike next Sunday for the Bike Belmont Avenue, beginning and ending at the B & O Station. He expects around 100 people to attend.

Trustee Greg Cizmar thanked all those who helped with the litter clean up. He mentioned Republic Services for the extra dumpsters, Giant Eagle on Belmont provided the snacks, Geauga Trumbull provided the supplies needed, the Girard Probation Department for the extra manpower and the Park Department kids who gathered all the bags collected. He reported we had another successful auction selling 11 cars and a road department tractor.

Trustee Devon Stanley thanked Trustee Cizmar and Trustee Clebone who, along with the IAFF, successfully negotiated an amicable memorandum of understanding and congratulated the new hires in the Fire Department who will supplement the staff at both stations.

24-51 Motion to begin the zoning public hearing for the property located at 2018 Pleasant Valley, Niles, Ohio 44445. Motion: Mr. Cizmar. Second: Mr. Stanley.

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

This is a Public Hearing held pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 505.86 at the request of the property owner, Angelo Silvestri, who is challenging a demolition order issued for the property located at 2018 Pleasant Valley, Niles Ohio 44446, Permanent Parcel No. 12-665750 (the "Property") in Liberty Township.

Law Director Cherry Lynne Poteet represented the Township. The following documents were presented to the Trustees as Exhibits by attorney Poteet (see addendum file for the copies):

1. A certified copy of Resolution 23-140 adopted by the Liberty Township Trustees at their meeting on October 27, 2023, declaring the structures on the Property to be unsafe and constitute a nuisance and threat to public health and safety and ordering their demolition.
2. A copy of the declaration of the Trumbull County Board of Health, adopted at their regular meeting on November 15, 2023, declaring the structures on the Property to be Unfit for Human Habitation.
3. A copy of the lien report for the Property dated January 17, 2024.
4. A copy of the letter sent by certified mail on April 22, 2024 to the Property owner, Angelo Silvestri, notifying him of the order to demolish the property and right to request a hearing.
5. A copy of the letter from the Property owner received May 3, 2024 requesting a hearing.
6. A Letter to the Property owner dated May 7, 2024 notifying him of the hearing set for May 13, 2024. The date of the hearing was agreed to by the Property owner in a telephone conversation on May 7, 2024.
7. Photographs of the structure taken by Zoning Inspector Jim Rodway.

The Property Owner, Mr. Angelo Silvestri was sworn in and given the opportunity to present his evidence and arguments to support his claim that the structures are not a nuisance and a threat to public health and safety and should not be demolished.

Mr. Silvestri admitted that the buildings on the property have been in bad shape for a long time. There is a hole in the roof of the house, and the roof is caved in on the garage. He would like the opportunity to demolish it himself if it is going to cost him to have the Township demolish the buildings.

Mr. Silvestri requested additional time to make improvements to his property. He stated he spoke with the Health Department several years ago. The biggest issue is the septic system. To upgrade the septic system will cost of approximately \$20,000.00. Mr. Silvestri admitted that in addition to the damaged roof, the structure has no functioning electric, plumbing or HVAC. The Health Department declared the structure unfit for human habitation.

Mr. Silvestri stated that when he bought the property years ago, his goal was to make repairs and move into the house. However, he decided not to make it his own home because he decided he didn't want to live in that neighborhood and there is a nuisance property next door to this property with multiple vehicles parked everywhere. He attended a hearing held at Trumbull County Health Department when they declared the property unfit for human habitation, but he was told there was nothing he could do then and was advised to go home and wait for a letter from the Landbank.

Mr. Silvestri asked if the demolition would cost him. Law Director Cherry Poteet said if the Landbank receives the grant they have applied for, the Landbank could demolish the home at no cost to him. He would still maintain ownership of the property. However, if the Landbank does not obtain the grant, the Trustees could proceed with the demolition order and have the house and garage demolished and the cost of the demolition put on the property as a tax lien. Mr. Silvestri said in that case, he would rather demolish it himself. He was told he could hire someone to demolish the home or do it himself, as long as the person demolishing it obtains a demolition permit from the Trumbull County Building Department and disposes of the material in a legal landfill.

Mr. Silvestri asked the Trustees to give him time to fix the structure and property. He was willing to come up with plans to make the structure livable and demonstrate he has the ability to pay for those improvements. He lives out of town and would be doing much of the work himself, so he would need time to accomplish the renovations.

No other interested parties testified.

The Board of Trustees told Mr. Silvestri that he has two weeks to provide detailed plans to make the necessary repairs, financial proof of the ability to pay for those improvements and provide a reasonable timeline to make the structure livable. The Board agreed to give Mr. Silvestri two weeks from today to present his plans to the Zoning and Code Officer Jim Rodway. The Board will review the proposal and determine whether to enter into an agreement with Mr. Silvestri allowing him to make the proposed improvements on a set timeline or proceed with the demolition.

The hearing concluded and the Trustees agreed not to make a decision yet and wait two weeks to give Mr. Silvestri time to contact the health department and show Mr. Rodway he has a plan and the means to make the necessary repairs, and the ability to pay for those improvements. After two weeks the Board of Trustees will review the proposal and decide how to proceed.

Motion to adjourn the public hearing and the meeting 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Next business meeting Friday, May 24, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

MATTHEW CONNELLY, FISCAL OFFICER

GREG CIZMAR, CHAIRPERSON