

The Board of Liberty Township Trustees met in Regular Session at the township administration office on Monday, May 11, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. with the following members in attendance, Mr. Devon Stanley, Mr. Arnie Clebone and Mr. Gregory Cizmar presiding.

Fiscal Officer Matthew Connelly was absent but supplied the financial report.

Reports:

Administrator Martha Weirick thanked Trustee Greg Cizmar, Mrs. Trish Cizmar, Trustee Devon Stanley, Geauga Trumbull Solid Waste, Chief Ray Buhala, the Liberty Police Department, Giant Eagle Belmont, Republic Services, Officer Keith Gunther from Girard Municipal Court, and resident Kim Quinlan donating their time or supplies towards the annual litter clean up event held April 25th. Administrative Assistant Maureen Schrecongost and I have been working on the annual Trumbull County Senior Watch Grant application due at the end of the month. Anyone 60 years or older who may be interested in joining our program should contact Police Administrative Assistant Marcy Haney or Fire Administrative Assistant Michelle Rusu for more information. Music in Churchill Park is fast approaching. Our first concert is June 11th at 7:00 p.m.

Fire Department Chief Doug Theobald said they are on par for the year with 1300 runs so far. Chief Theobald wanted to extend his thanks to all the departments who helped with a multi-plex structure fire on Middle Road. The fire was completely involved and it took hundreds of feet of hose to get to a working hydrant, along with multiple tankers to get it under control. Much thanks to our Police who offered traffic control and the Road Department crew who were able to return the muddy hoses to the fire station. He is evaluating this year's applications for the Belmont Pine Scholarships. He along with the Police Chief will recommend two deserving candidates. He mentioned more training at the Air Base. He reported the letters to all health care facilities who use fire personnel for lift assists have been sent out. Adding "all but one facility has acknowledged receiving the letters." The Chief said the Youngstown Fire Department law department is preparing a mutual aid agreement between the township and YFD. Mutual aid will be for fires and disasters only, no EMT services will be included in the agreement. He will provide the proposed Agreement to our law director Cherry Poteet when he receives it. He was notified that the FEMA Grant's are re-opening and recommends higher a grant writer as it is a very competitive grant.

Police Department Chief Ray Buhala presented a copy of his report, and noted that the officers responded to 1351 calls in April. The full report is on the township website. Chief Buhala thanked the residents who supported the recent Police levy. He said, "it was a big ask, and we did not take it lightly." He said the promise made about increased staffing if the levy passed is being kept, as evidenced by the officer being hired this evening. He said he looks forward to regaining full staffing.

Road Superintendent Mr. Wayne Hickman was absent.

Zoning Inspector Ms. Melissa Ritchie presented her report. Ms. Ritchie noted over 30 violation letters had been mailed out this month with most violators already making the necessary improvements to their properties. The reports will not be on the website to protect the privacy of those which contain sensitive personal information, but if anyone has questions about a particular property they can call her. Melissa mentioned successfully working towards a solution with a homeowner who wished to have a shipping container removed from the property, but did not have the funds. She was able to connect her with a company who wanted to work with the homeowner.

New Business:

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2026 Regular meeting and the April 29, 2026 Special Zoning Hearing.

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 April 2026 in the amount of \$578,020.23 warrants #27524 through #27657 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 2026.

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

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

26-83 Motion to pass the following Temporary Moratorium:

A Resolution Declaring a Temporary Moratorium on the Acceptance, Processing, and Approval of Applications related to Motor Vehicle and Vehicle-related uses, including Used Motor Vehicle Sales, motor vehicle service or repair facilities, motor vehicle service stations, salvage yards, junk yards, scrap yards, and tire storage or disposal facilities within Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio.

WHEREAS, the Liberty Township Board of Township Trustees (“Board”) is authorized under R.C. §519.02 et seq. to regulate the location, size, and use of buildings and land for trade, industry, residence, and other purposes in order to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; and

WHEREAS, the Township has heretofore duly adopted a zoning resolution (hereinafter the “Zoning Resolution”) governing the use, development, and subdivision of land within the unincorporated areas of the Township, pursuant to the authority granted under ORC §§ 519.01 through 519.25; and

WHEREAS, the Township has experienced increasing complaints and expressions of concern from Township residents regarding the proliferation and potential expansion of certain automotive and vehicle-related uses within the unincorporated areas of the Township and inquiries and development pressure relating to such uses; and

WHEREAS, such automotive and vehicle-related uses, including, without limitation, used car lots, automobile repair facilities, gasoline stations, salvage yards, junk yards, scrap yards, and tire storage or disposal facilities (“Covered Uses”), have the potential to generate significant adverse impacts, including but not limited to environmental contamination of soil and water resources, groundwater pollution, the creation of unsightly and blighted conditions, excessive noise, increased traffic congestion, diminished property values in surrounding areas, and public safety hazards arising from the storage and handling of hazardous materials, waste tires, and derelict vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that it is necessary and prudent to temporarily pause the issuance of new zoning approvals for such uses in order to preserve the status quo and allow the Township adequate time to conduct a comprehensive study and review of the existing Zoning Resolution to determine whether its current provisions adequately regulate the siting, operation, and potential expansion of these Covered Uses and to consider whether amendments to the Zoning Resolution are necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of Township residents; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Attorney General, in Opinion No. 2003-024, has recognized that a board of township trustees is authorized under ORC § 519.02 to impose a temporary moratorium on certain land uses as a reasonable exercise of the Township’s zoning power, provided that such moratorium bears a substantial relation to the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare, and provided that such moratorium is limited in duration and scope; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court, in *Tahoe-Sierra Preservation Council, Inc. v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency*, 535 U.S. 302 (2002), has held that temporary moratoria on development, imposed while a governing body studies and formulates a plan for regulation, do not per se constitute a taking of property requiring just compensation under the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds and determines that a temporary moratorium of six (6) months’ duration on the establishment, construction, or expansion of the Covered Uses described herein is a reasonable, necessary, and lawful exercise of the Township’s zoning authority to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the residents and property owners of the Township;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Township Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, that:

Section 1. Moratorium Imposed.

A temporary moratorium is hereby imposed prohibiting the Township Zoning Inspector, Board of Zoning Appeals, and any other Township official or body from accepting, processing, or approving any application, zoning certificate, conditional use permit, variance, site plan, or other request that would authorize the establishment, expansion, or construction of any Covered Use, including:

- Used motor vehicle sales

- Motor vehicle storage lots;
- Motor vehicle repair or service facilities;
- Motor Vehicle Service Stations or fuel-dispensing facilities;
- Salvage yards
- Junk yards
- Scrap yards or scrap-processing facilities
- Tire storage, tire recycling, or tire disposal facilities

Section 2. Duration.

This moratorium shall remain in effect for six (6) months from the effective date of this Resolution, unless earlier terminated or extended by further action of the Board.

Section 3. Purpose.

The purpose of this moratorium is to preserve the status quo and allow the Township Zoning Commission and the Board of Trustees sufficient time to review, study, and potentially amend the Township Zoning Resolution regulating Covered Uses, including but not limited to location, design standards, buffering, traffic considerations, environmental impacts, and permitting requirements. This moratorium is intended to prevent the approval of new applications for Covered Uses during the study period, so that any such approvals do not render potential zoning amendments ineffective or undermine the integrity of the comprehensive planning process.

Section 4. Exemptions and Vested Rights.

The moratorium imposed by this Resolution shall not apply to any Covered Use that was lawfully established and in active operation as of the effective date of this Resolution, provided that such use is not Expanded beyond its existing footprint, capacity, and scope of operations as of said date. Such existing uses may continue to operate in the same manner and to the same extent as they were operating immediately prior to the effective date, subject to all other applicable provisions of the Zoning Resolution and applicable law. This moratorium shall not apply to any Covered Use for which a complete zoning application has been submitted and accepted by the Township prior to the effective date of this Resolution, or to any use that has obtained all necessary zoning approvals and has undertaken substantial construction or expenditures in reliance on such approvals.

Section 5. Study and Review.

During the Moratorium Period, the Township, in consultation with the Township Zoning Commission established pursuant to ORC § 519.04 and any planning consultants, legal counsel, or other professionals retained by the Township, shall undertake a comprehensive study and review of the Township's Zoning Resolution as it pertains to the regulation, siting, permitting, and operational standards applicable to the Covered Uses.

Scope of Study. The study authorized by this Section may include, without limitation:

- (a) Review and analysis of the current Zoning Resolution provisions applicable to Covered Uses, including permitted use and conditional use locations, conditional use standards, and district regulations;
- (b) Assessment of the environmental, aesthetic, economic, and public safety impacts of Covered Uses upon neighboring properties and the Township at large;
- (c) Evaluation of best practices, model regulations, and zoning standards adopted by other Ohio townships, municipalities, and counties for the regulation of Covered Uses;
- (d) Whether environmental impact assessments, traffic studies, groundwater protection analyses should be required for any Covered Uses;
- (e) Public hearings, community workshops, and stakeholder engagement sessions to solicit input from Township residents, business owners, and other interested parties; and
- (f) Any other investigation, analysis, or study the Board or the Township Zoning Commission deems relevant and appropriate.

Zoning Commission Recommendations. Upon completion of its review, the Township Zoning Commission shall prepare and submit to the Board written recommendations regarding any proposed

amendments to the Zoning Resolution, in accordance with the procedures set forth in ORC §519.12. Such recommendations shall address, at a minimum, proposed changes to use classifications, district regulations, conditional use standards, development standards, screening and buffering requirements, and operational performance standards applicable to Covered Uses.

Progress Reports. The Township Zoning Inspector shall provide the Board with periodic progress reports on the status of the study, at intervals of not less than once every sixty (60) days during the Moratorium Period.

Section 6. Severability.

If any section, clause, or provision of this Resolution is found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining portions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 7. Effective Date.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption

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

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

Law Director Cherry Poteet was asked to explain the moratorium. She said this puts a six month pause on development of certain automotive related uses to give the Zoning Commission time to review the current situation and recommend changes to the Zoning Resolution to establish more appropriate locations and limitations on these types of businesses.

26-84 Motion to hire Lee Padula as a probationary full time Police Officer per the terms of the bargaining agreement between the Ohio Patrol Benevolent Association and the Board of Liberty Township Trustees pending pre-employment drug testing and successful background check at a rate of \$28.00 per hour effective 5/11/26.

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

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

26-84 Motion to pass the following resolution:

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A DONATION OF \$2,500 FOR AN AMERICA 250TH CELEBRATION AT THE TOWNSHIP PARK PURSUANT TO R.C. 505.261

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio (“Board”) recognizes the national significance of the upcoming **America 250th** commemoration marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to support a community celebration at the Liberty Township Park to honor this historic milestone and to promote civic pride, community engagement, and public education; and

WHEREAS, R.C. 505.261 authorizes a board of township trustees to expend funds from the township general fund for the public purpose of presenting community events that are open to the public in a township park; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that contributing funds toward the America 250th celebration at the Liberty Township Park constitutes a valid public purpose and will benefit the residents of the township;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of Liberty Township, Trumbull County, Ohio, that:

1. The Board hereby approves a donation in the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) to the Liberty Community and Historical Society, a non-profit organization, in support the America 250th celebration to be held at the Liberty Township Park.
2. The Fiscal Officer is authorized to issue payment in the amount of \$2,500.00 from the township general fund to the Liberty Community and Historical Society for the America 250th celebration to be held at the Liberty Township Park.
3. This Resolution shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption.

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

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

Discussion: Trustee Clebone explained that he abstained from the vote because he serves on the Board of the Liberty Community and Historical Society. The Society is promoting the history of the United states and Liberty Township in multiple ways to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the

Declaration of Independence. He said there will be various historical sites throughout the township where signs will be installed and residents can visit and document their visit and those visiting all the 12 sites would be entered into a drawing. The sites will include Seceders Cemetery on Rt. 304 where Revolutionary War soldiers are buried, Kravitz Deli, & Jimmy's. Marcia Levy, a local historian, will be presenting a slide show about historic Liberty homes. The final day of the celebration ends at Churchill Park on July 18th with a fireworks show. In addition to the \$2,500 donation from the Township, the Historical Society will be providing \$10,000 towards the celebration.

Citizen Remarks: A resident commended the Trustees for the moratorium that was passed this evening. He complimented the Zoning Inspector as well. He asked about the progress regarding the Tibbetts-Wick gas station. Zoning Inspector Melissa Ritchie said the owner is working with a Civil Engineer perhaps to develop or demolish the structure. After some dialog, Ms. Ritchie said, "he has cleaned up everything cited." However she added, "there is little I can do because it is not aesthetically appealing but is structurally sound". She noted other violators, one in particular just behind the gas station on Shannon Road that is in much worse shape that she has cited.

A Timbercrest resident who had a noise complaint registered against him last month regarding pest repellent devices that he subsequently removed after a visit from the Police Chief spoke to the Board. He brought a new device he purchased to demonstrate. The homeowner wants to use the device as a deterrent for feral cats who defecate on his driveway and mulch. He also had a sprinkler device with him asking for authorization to use both devices at night. He was asked to demonstrate the repellent device. Although marketed as inaudible, multiple attendees at the hearing found the high-pitched sound clearly audible and even distressing. The sound seems to be audible to younger people. Chief Buhala said the resident takes the risk of a noise citation if he chooses to use the new device.

Trustee Remarks:

Trustee Devon Stanley commended the departments for working closely together. He congratulated the Police on passing the levy.

Trustee Arnie Clebone also congratulated the Police on the passing the levy. He has been working with the Planning Commission for a possible CDBG grant. Yesterday he went around Fredricks Street talking to residents and business regarding the flooding in the area. While speaking with the residents and business owners, they had only good things to say about our Police and Fire Departments. Trustee Clebone reminded everyone of the Bike Belmont event on May 17th, starting and ending at Wick Park. Riders will travel Belmont Avenue, with stops along the way. The more skilled rider can bike to the Youngstown Airport and enjoy a ride on a runway. They expect around 500 bikers to attend.

Trustee Greg Cizmar was pleased to see the Police Levy had passed. He thanked the Police Department for their help at this year's litter clean up. He acknowledged the Baseball Fields are nearly complete and was happy to see two of the fields being used.

Motion to adjourn into executive session at 6:45 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the fact finders report regarding the firefighters Union contract.

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

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

Motion to adjourn from executive session at 7:14 p.m. and resume regular session.

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

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

26-85 Motion to accept fact finding report.

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

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

Motion to end meeting at 7:16 p.m.

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

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

Next business meeting Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

MATTHEW CONNELLY
FICAL OFFICER

GREG CIZMAR, CHAIRPERSON