

Madison Township Board Meeting Minutes

7047 E. Landersville Rd. Camby IN 46113

April 10, 2024

7:00 pm

Advisory Board Meeting

Call to Order-

The meeting was called to order by Nelson Hoggatt at 7:02 pm.

Roll call-

Present- Matthew Pranger, Nelson Hoggatt, Tina Turner, Chad Coulter, ~~Jeremy Moynahan~~, Larry Ellis

Absent- Chairman Ronnie McClure

Pledge of Allegiance-

Recited by the board and audience.

Prayer/Moment of Silence-

Observed by board and audience.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes-

February 27, 2024 Meeting-

Motion-

Motion to accept by Nelson Hoggatt, seconded by Matthew Pranger.

Motion passed 2-0.

March 7, 2024 Meeting-

Motion-

Motion to accept by Nelson Hoggatt, seconded by Matthew Pranger.

Motion passed 2-0.

New Business-

Resolution 2024-06, Salary Full-time Fire Chief-

Discussion-

Matthew Pranger initiated the discussion by referencing the February board meeting, during which it was determined that a part-time Deputy Chief focusing on operations aligned best with the fire department's needs. He argued that the current necessity for a full-time Fire Chief position had not been established. He also expressed concerns about potential conflicts of interest, noting that Interim Chief Chad Coulter, who was previously a full-time paramedic and Fire Inspector, could potentially benefit from station closures and subsequent renovations or rebuilds. Pranger pointed out the rapid promotion of Coulter from Deputy Chief to Fire Chief, which he believed created a perception issue. He questioned why the need for both a full-time Fire Chief and a full-time Deputy Chief had not been presented in the previous month.

Nelson Hoggatt agreed, emphasizing the importance of having comprehensive information to make informed decisions. He expressed frustration that the resolution was provided only two days prior, leaving insufficient time for proper research. Trustee Ellis responded that he did not anticipate the issue being contentious. Nelson Hoggatt pressed for more timely information, highlighting the need for board members to receive resolution details well in advance. Trustee Ellis concurred and requested that board members reciprocate by providing their resolutions ahead of time. Nelson agreed with the suggestion of a 10-day rule for submitting resolutions and noted that he had only recently seen Pranger's resolution, which left him unprepared. Matthew Pranger questioned if there had been adequate time to consider the current resolution. Nelson Hoggatt acknowledged that he had enough time to see the potential benefits of a full-time Chief but recognized Pranger had not had the same opportunity to observe this role in action.

Nelson moved to accept Resolution 2024-06, emphasizing the benefits of having a full-time Chief and a part-time Deputy Chief.

Further Clarifications-

Nelson clarified that Trustee Ellis had committed to making the Deputy Chief position part-time while transitioning the Chief role to full-time.

Matthew Pranger inquired if a new resolution was necessary to revert the Deputy Chief role back to part-time. Trustee Ellis explained that it was within the trustee's prerogative to adjust roles without requiring a new resolution, although Nelson believed that formalizing the change through a resolution was necessary.

Matthew proposed tabling the resolution until the next meeting, requesting additional data to support the change and ensuring a resolution to adjust the Deputy Chief role.

Consultations-

Nelson asked Trustee Ellis about the implications of tabling the resolution, to which Ellis expressed no objection.

Nelson also sought Interim Chief Chad Coulter's perspective on whether this would undermine his authority. Coulter assured that it would not affect his salary or operational capacity.

Clerk Turner confirmed that the budget already accounted for separate line items for the Chief, Deputy Chief, and Assistant Chief. Coulter's salary, currently under the Deputy Chief line item, would remain unaffected if the resolution was not passed.

Conclusion-

Nelson suggested revisiting the previous resolution that established the Deputy Chief position as full-time.

Trustee Ellis reiterated that the decision ultimately lay with the board, and Matthew Pranger stressed the need for transparent communication and sufficient data to make well-informed decisions.

Motion-

Nelson's motion to accept Resolution 2024-06 did not receive a second, resulting in the resolution dying.

Resolution 2024-07, Salary Full-time Paramedics-

Discussion-

Nelson Hoggatt introduced Resolution 2024-07, highlighting a discrepancy in the number of full-time paramedic positions specified within the budget compared to the actual requirement.

Trustee Larry Ellis clarified that while the initial setup accounted for six positions, the text of the resolution specified only three full-time paramedic firefighters.

Clerk Turner explained the budgeting process, indicating that although the budget allowed for six positions, the department had never exceeded three full-time paramedic positions.

Further discussions on competitiveness and budget planning took place, with some tensions between board members and Trustee Ellis

Trustee Larry Ellis leaves the meeting.

In Trustee Ellis's absence, Interim Chief Coulter provided contextual information regarding staffing levels and salary comparisons with neighboring areas, enriching the understanding of the resolution's implications.

Motion-

Matthew Pranger moved to accept Resolution 2024-07, seconded by Nelson Hoggatt. Motion passed 2-0.

Trustee Larry Ellis returns to the meeting.

Trustee Larry Ellis returned to the meeting, resuming his participation in the discussion and decision-making process.

Resolution 2024-08, Advisory Board Legal Representation

Discussion-

This item was added to the agenda by the Advisory Board Chairman but was not reflected in the publicly provided agenda, leading to procedural concerns.

There was a debate over the legality and necessity of separate legal representation for the board.

Trustee Ellis and Clerk Turner cited guidance from the Indiana Township Association against the board appointing its own attorney.

Matthew Pranger expressed frustration over unaddressed document requests and communication issues.

Motion-

Nelson Hoggatt moved to table Resolution 2024-08, seconded by Matthew Pranger.

Motion passed 2-0

Unfinished Business-**Station 31 Update-**

Nelson Hoggatt provided a comprehensive update on the status and planned improvements for Station 31. He shared the findings from an engineering company, which highlighted the need for repairs to the concrete pad for the drive and the necessity for adequate drainage around it. Nelson mentioned that he expects to receive the engineer's report on Friday, after which he plans to present it to Mattingly Concrete to obtain an updated estimate. The previous estimate was a little over \$143,000, which the board found satisfactory. Additionally, Nelson intends to seek another quote from a different contractor and expressed a preference for using a contractor within Madison Township if possible.

Trustee Ellis emphasized the importance of obtaining multiple estimates and mentioned that due to the project's cost, the work would need to go out for bid. This process would enable the board to select one based on the bids received.

Nelson also addressed the significant issue of the electrical system throughout the building. He proposed hiring an electrical firm to inspect and address issues such as plugs and code violations. Interim Chief Coulter offered to collaborate with the electricians on this matter. Nelson suggested that by resolving these electrical issues, they could improve the living quarters without needing to expand the building, allowing operations to resume and potentially plan for more extensive projects in the future.

Trustee Ellis presented an alternative, long-term option of adding to the building to enhance the living quarters, expand the day room, and include a computer lab. He pointed out the necessity of installing a firewall between the living station and the bays, as the current doors leading to the bays are not fire-rated. He proposed a comprehensive renovation, including redoing the interior, adding a new facade, and installing a sprinkler system for safety, even though it is not required. Additionally, connecting the station to the sewer system would be more efficient than the current septic system. Trustee Ellis has been working with Sunco to create preliminary drawings for these renovations and outlined a plan to add 30 feet to the building, providing more space for growth and reducing cramped conditions for personnel.

Furthermore, Trustee Ellis shared that they have identified a grant opportunity that could provide up to \$500,000 to assist with these improvements, which would help minimize the need for additional loans. He estimated that constructing a new station could cost between \$4 million and \$5 million, a cost he is reluctant to impose on Madison Township.

Matthew Pranger inquired about the timeline for reopening the station and the main obstacles remaining. Trustee Ellis explained that temporary connections to the septic system and securing electrical connections from REMC are necessary steps. He assured that plans are in place to manage the logistics of parking and engine movement during the construction of the concrete pad.

Nelson reiterated the goal of reopening the building and stressed the importance of having a clear, comprehensive plan for both renovation and potential rebuild options. He requested detailed cost comparisons for a new build and a renovation.

Trustee Ellis confirmed that while it is ultimately the trustee's decision to present options to the board, he currently sees the high cost of a new build as a significant deterrent. He committed to sharing detailed cost estimates with Matthew Pranger. Matthew Pranger also asked about the progress of the firehouse re-inspection. Trustee Ellis explained that the State Fire Marshal had conducted a walkthrough and, as a courtesy, did not file an official report to avoid immediate penalties. He advocated for fixing known issues to reduce the number of violations in a subsequent inspection. Interim Chief Coulter added that any improvements would trigger inspections for building codes and fire safety, and obtaining a certificate of occupancy from the county is essential before moving back in.

The estimated timeline for reopening the firehouse is approximately 3-4 weeks, with efforts focused on addressing electrical and sewer connections to meet operational standards.

Public Comment-

Trudy Ellis- Raised concerns about the accuracy and completeness of the meeting minutes.

Dawn Horock- Asked for clarity on the topics allowed in executive sessions and the procedures for requesting and conducting these sessions.

Gregg Terhune- Clarified guidelines for executive sessions, stating they should be limited to specific topics outlined in state statutes and emphasizing transparency in board proceedings.

Angie Turley- Inquired about grant applications and feasibility studies for rebuilding or remodeling the firehouse.

Amy Russell- Expressed concerns about staffing shortages, emergency response times, and financial management.

John Walker- Sought detailed information on staffing plans for the new ALS engine and logistics during construction.

Eric Brown- Raised questions about staffing levels and ALS certification requirements for fire engines.

Megan Butler- Urged for greater community involvement in decision-making processes.

Andy Endicott- Voiced concerns about the fire station closure, budget allocations, and transparency in the board's decision-making process.

Eric Shields- Called for immediate action to address fire protection needs in the township.

Adjournment-

Motion-

Nelson made a motion to adjourn at 8:28p, 2nd by Matthew.

Motion passed 3-0.

Next Meeting Date-

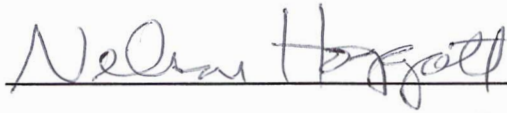
Wednesday June 12, at 7:00 pm.

Minutes prepared by Matthew Pranger, Board Member Secretary

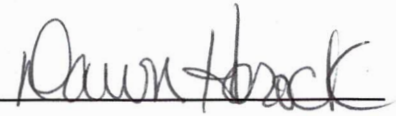
Dated this 6th day of June, 2024.

AYE






NAY



ATTEST



Trustee Ellis, Madison Township Trustee