

Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees Minutes

February 26, 2024

The Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees met on Monday, February 26, 2024 to transact business. Mr. Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Bari Henning, Guy Bainum, and Gary Jordan answered the roll call. Also present were Fiscal Officer, Doug Lefferson, Maintenance Supervisor/Zoning Administrator Brian Tatman, Emergency Services Chief Jason McCarthy, Deputy Jacob Martin, Jim Weaver, Charlie Maklem, Dylan Arnett, Jody Wilson, John Wilson, and Ed Boll.

Mr. Henning motioned to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2024 meeting. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas.

Mr. Lefferson presented a financial report, including a comprehensive account of expenditures and receipts, and an appropriation status report indicating year-to-date expenditures by account, and the Trustees accepted it.

Mr. Bainum motioned to pay the attached bills. Mr. Henning second. All yeas.

Deputy Jacob Martin of the Clermont County Sheriff's Office reported on activity in the Township. He indicated he was filling in for Corporal Glancy who was on assignment. There were seventeen reports taken in January 2024 with no adult arrests and one juvenile arrest. Deputy Martin provided the following information in regard to crime trends in the Township: no overdoses were reported and no drug arrests occurred during the month of January, there was a decrease in calls in January related to weather which is typical for this time of year across the county, and no burglaries or breaking and enterings were reported. Deputy Martin provided a year in review for 2023. In 2023 there were 447 reports taken with 47 arrests, and there were 12 OVI's. Mr. Jordan thanked Deputy Martin for his report and service.

Jody Wilson asked about zoning on small solar farms. She indicated she was a resident of the Village of Williamsburg. Mr. Jordan stated that Zoning Administrator Brian Tatman and the Zoning Commission were working on updating the Township rules in this regard. Ms. Wilson said she had not seen anything in the minutes since August of 2023 and asked if it had been worked on since then. Mr. Tatman indicated that yes it had been worked on since then. Ms. Wilson said that people were concerned about solar farms. Mr. Jordan stated that we currently have only a small part of the Township being planned for a solar farm as part of a bigger project primarily in Jackson Township. Mr. Jordan said the Trustees want to keep solar farms off of Route 32 due to better tax base opportunities. He informed the group that Mr. Speeg, Jackson Township Trustee, and our liaison to the Ohio Power Siting Board in regard to the Clear Mountain solar project will be attending the next regularly scheduled Township meeting.

Mr. Maklem stated he was present to formerly represent the Williamsburg Local School District regarding a renewal levy on the ballot March 19th. He indicated the 5.35 mill renewal levy provides the district the same tax dollars as they receive today and if passed it will remain the same tax dollars tomorrow and going forward. This renewal levy is for general operating expenses such as salaries and utilities. Mr. Maklem indicated that funding for this levy has nothing to do with building a new elementary school. The new elementary school will be built with funds from the State of Ohio and South Afton Industrial Park. He shared that this levy has been renewed two other times. Mr. Henning asked if this was a five-year levy. Mr. Maklem said it was.

Zoning Report

Mr. Tatman presented a report. One zoning certificate for a carport had been issued since the last report. A new address was issued on Concord Henning's Mill Road. Mr. Tatman said he spoke with a builder about an addition to a home at 4276 S.R. 276 and will be meeting him next week. Mr. Tatman indicated he notified Cloudpermit that we approved the website. They are starting to build things on their end. Mr. Tatman stated he would keep everyone in the loop. Mr. Bainum said we should include information about Cloudpermit in the newsletter. Mr. Tatman requested a new computer for the Zoning Office, stating the old one will be moved to the conference room at the Township Hall. He provided quotes obtained through the Township's service provider LK Tech. Mr. Bainum motioned to approve the purchase of a new computer, monitor, and Microsoft Office, for the Zoning office at a cost of approximately \$1,500. Mr. Jordan second. All yeas.

Cemetery and Maintenance Report

Mr. Tatman provided a report. He gave an update on the new maintenance building. The rough in plumbing inspection was on Friday, February 23rd. The contractor will be pouring concrete on Tuesday, February 27th. Everything looks great. Next week garage doors will be in and the oil interceptor. The maintenance team has started installing the water line for the new building. It should be done this week. Roads were salted on February 16th when it snowed a couple of inches at night. Approximately 6 tons of salt were used. Mr. Tatman indicated they would order salt over the next couple of weeks. Mr. Tatman said they were getting a new set of tracks for the mini-excavator. He indicated the cost was around \$2,500 and they were replacing the original ones from 2012 with 1,000 hours. The Trustees agreed with this routine maintenance expenditure. Mr. Tatman stated they were going to be out working on ditches this week and next depending on weather. Junk Days are set for June 6th and 7th from 8 am to 8 pm, and June 8th from 8 am to 4 pm. Mr. Bainum thanked Mr. Tatman for covering two sections of road for Jackson Township during the recent snow event. Mr. Tatman said we had a brief issue with the website, but he contacted our vendor and all was functional at this point.

Emergency Services Report

Chief McCarthy provided a report. He stated the ambulance broke down Saturday night and appeared to have some power steering fluid issues and is also in need of new brakes. It is being looked at today, but will probably need to go to JCM for repairs. The Chief said six mattresses, as previously approved, were ordered at the mattress sale fundraiser for the Williamsburg High School Band/Music Department. Chief McCarthy said the Department participated in a safety visit at the Purina plant. The Chief requested an executive session to discuss discipline involving a member of the department. Mr. Jordan said they would do so later in the meeting.

Jim Weaver, Mayor of Williamsburg, said he was in attendance with the goal to build a better relationship with the Township. He indicated that regarding previous discussions on annexation there must be something more to it. He stated he met with Clermont County Auditor Linda Fraley and that on property taxes the Township gets 29% more than the Village quoting some numbers (Township mills 12.3 versus Village mills 9.55), so the Township should be fine with annexation from the Village. Mr. Weaver said the only reason for annexation is for development and that the Township gained more than if it was vacant land; therefore, it makes sense to partner with the Village. Mr. Jordan agreed the Township would be making

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more dollars than vacant land, but we would generate even more if it was developed without annexation. Mr. Jordan stated he had also recently been to the Auditors Office in an attempt to continue to learn and grow in regard to the tax implications of annexations. Mr. Jordan reiterated we have waited a long time to have growth in the Township, but the 88 counties and 1308 townships in Ohio cannot grow in geographic size like villages can through annexation. He feels pressure on the Township as the Village continues to expand, and from the Villages of Batavia and Mt. Orab. Mr. Jordan also stated he is sensitive to the fact that we had to run an Emergency Services levy. Mr. Jordan said the Township works on plans for development ourselves and that maybe we have a vision as well. He stated we want the Village to do well. Mr. Jordan indicated he had spoken with State Representative Adam Bird and the Ohio Township Association on the topic of annexation as well. Mr. Jordan said he was concerned about the Village of Batavia waiving property tax for a housing development leaving emergency services and others with greater coverage and no revenue. He said the Township had been supportive by partnering with the Village of Williamsburg on the JEDD, but at this point he still agreed to disagree on the topic of annexation. Mayor Weaver said it was unfair to compare them to Batavia. Mr. Henning addressed Mr. Weaver saying he originally threw out a lot of numbers but Mr. Henning's understanding was that in regard to property tax Village versus Township it was important to look at inside millage. He indicated if you live in the Village, you pay 1.1 mills to the Township general fund and 2.3 mills to Village of Williamsburg general fund. Mr. Henning reiterated his position that he was not totally against annexation but it was based on the situation. He indicated that you do not partner on annexation. Mr. Boll asked about the JEDD agreement with the Village. Mr. Henning said they do partner with them on the JEDD but that was a separate topic. Mr. Henning said the Township does share some of the JEDD revenue with the Village contractually, but the Township could have partnered with another village, not that they wanted to. Mr. Weaver said the compensation is for paperwork and processing. Mr. Bainum said he was not against annexation entirely, but that it was in the best interest of the Township to hang on to some land by Purina and the railroad tracks. On a different note, Mayor Weaver indicated the Village's Police Chief was leaving. Mr. Henning offered to sit down with Mr. Weaver outside the meeting to look at numbers that have been discussed. Mr. Henning reiterated to look at millage. Mr. Maklem offered some insight into the discussion indicating he has spent a considerable amount of time studying property tax given his role with the school. He indicated it was important to look at the inside millage (inside millage is enacted by the State and not voted on) of 1.1 for the Township versus 1.8 for the Village. The numbers Mr. Weaver quoted earlier 12.3 and 9.55 were gross total millage and include levies voted on for specific services. The Township does get more in total due to the cost of providing emergency services to the Village and Township.

Mr. Jordan motioned to go into Executive Session pursuant to ORC 121.22 (G)(1) for the purpose of discussing discipline of a public employee at approximately 8:05 p.m. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas. The Trustees came out of Executive Session at approximately 8:21 p.m. having discussed discipline of a public employee with no action taken and no decisions made.

Fiscal Officer Lefferson said he had researched the approximate \$119,000 savings account at Chase Bank and no longer sees a need for this separate account. At this time, he recommends closing the account and transferring the money into our operating account which is tied to a sweep savings account at Peoples Bank. Mr. Henning motioned to authorize Gary Jordan to close the Township savings account with JP Morgan Chase Bank ending in account number 8796, obtaining a check to be delivered to the Fiscal Officer for deposit into the Township checking account with Peoples Bank. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas.

Mr. Wilson discussed some of his research and involvement with solar farms as it pertained to Tate Township. He indicated that the County was getting much more revenue than the Township on solar farms in his area. He also indicated that Tate Township had approved an application fee for solar farms 50 mega watt and below. The Trustees thanked him for the information.

There being no further business, Mr. Bainum motioned to adjourn at approximately 8:30p.m. Mr. Henning second. All yeas.

Fiscal Officer

Chairperson