

Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees Minutes

March 11, 2024

The Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees met on Monday, March 11, 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, Joe Speeg, Jim Weaver, Dylan Arnett, and Ed Boll.

Mr. Jordan opened by taking a moment to recognize the passing of Chad Graybill. Mr. Graybill was an asset to the community and one of our team as a member of the Township Zoning Commission. The Township also dealt with Mr. Graybill through the Grant Vocational School. Mr. Jordan asked that we keep his family in our prayers.

Mr. Bainum motioned to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2024 regular meeting. Mr. Henning second. All yeas. Mr. Henning motioned to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 special 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. Jordan motioned to approve the attached bills. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas.

Joe Speeg, Jackson Township Trustee, and our liaison to the Ohio Power Siting Board on the Clear Mountain Energy Center solar farm provided an update on the project. Mr. Speeg indicated that an application for construction and operation of the solar farm has been filed with Ohio Power Siting Board. He provided a copy of Ohio Revised Code Section 4906.10 on the basis for the Power Siting Board to either grant or deny the request in the application. Mr. Speeg also provided a copy of the email notice of the application sent by Clear Mountain Energy Center's attorney. The Siting Board provided a letter of completeness in regard to the application on March 9th indicating it was complete. Mr. Speeg provided a copy of a mailing and solicitation from Pivot Energy looking to lease land (20 acres or more) for solar projects that has been received by local residents. Shifting back to the Clear Mountain project, Mr. Speeg said that the portions of that project in Batavia and Williamsburg Townships were purchased not leased. Mr. Jordan asked if those purchases were pending acceptance of a final permit. Mr. Speeg replied yes. He indicated the project appeared to be projecting to produce 83 to 87% of the 100 megawatts. Mr. Jordan asked if the project needed the land from all three Townships to be viable. Mr. Speeg said possibly unless they have another plan to acquire more land. Mr. Jordan asked about hearing that Batavia Township's portion may be moving out. Mr. Speeg had not been informed of that in his official liaison role. Mr. Speeg discussed the possibility of RUMAs or Road Use Maintenance Agreements to help cover the cost of road damage during construction. Mr. Speeg stated that if the Township wants to intervene in the project we must file a notice of intervention working through the Prosecutors Office. Mr. Speeg indicated there were approximately 193 public letters in support of the project sent to the Power Siting Board and available for review. He said several were from the Milford and Loveland area. Local letters tended to indicate it was best for their family. He believed that part of the lease agreements involves sending a letter to the Ohio Siting Board if you are getting payments. There was some discussion that if the project needed additional land it would be looking northwest to the current location. Mr. Speeg indicated that in some neighboring areas some leaseholders have not received payments in five years. The Ohio Department of Development controls the release of payments. The rule is that payments will not start until the facilities are fully functional. One issue is that there are multiple definitions of "fully functional." Mr. Speeg indicated he was meeting with the Prosecutors Office Thursday. He stated some consultants have advised those receiving revenue to get your money upfront. Mr. Speeg said he would ask prosecutors about the definition of fully functional. He indicated that Jackson Township could not pay for a private attorney to intervene and that Clermont County may not be interested, but he has not asked them directly. Mr. Jordan said the Commissioners were sent letters from the Township expressing opposition to large solar projects. Mr. Speeg said and the Commissioners did act to ban future large projects for those Townships. Mr. Henning stated that the Commissioners do not have a say in the 50 megawatt and below projects. Mr. Speeg said that is correct. He indicated there should be a public hearing on the Clear Mountain project at the Fairgrounds in the next 30 days. He referenced an engineering study that indicated land was better utilized if developed commercially versus being a solar farm. Typically, the solar farms once operational operate with either one person on-site or primarily operated remotely. Mr. Speeg indicated he will also meet with the Williamsburg and CNE School Superintendents. Mr. Jordan asked if Jackson Township's Zoning rules were complete for the 50 megawatt and less solar projects. Mr. Speeg said it was being voted on this Thursday. Mr. Bainum asked if we could review Jackson Townships rules. Mr. Speeg said absolutely. Mr. Jordan asked if we were spending good energy on stopping the current large project or just spinning our wheels. Mr. Speeg referenced some potential issues with site of the Clear Mountain Energy Project including an older report on a potential airport that said the site was not favorable for that due to stirring up surrounding water. He also discussed the potential for a future leak from the old CECOS landfill site nearby and would future contamination risk be blamed on coming from the solar farm. Mr. Jordan said they would have Hannah Lubbers from the Clermont County Office of Environmental Quality at a

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future Trustee Meeting to provide an update on the old landfill. Mr. Bainum said we also have mining in the area with vibrations and explosions and would that disturb the landfill site. Mr. Speeg said the mining operation is headed west away from the landfill expecting a 58-year supply of gravel and you will notice a new vent shaft above ground that will look like a silo. Mr. Henning said the vein that is being mined does not head toward the old landfill. Mr. Boll said that twice a day the underground explosions from the mine shakes his house. Mr. Boll asked in regard to the solar farm meeting with commissioners would the owners of Clear Mountain Energy be there. Mr. Speeg said they would not. Mr. Weaver asked about the difference in 50 megawatt versus 100 megawatt solar projects. Mr. Speeg said above 50 megawatt projects were controlled by the County Commissioners, 50 or less the villages or townships must manage. Mr. Weaver asked if after 20 years as a solar farm was the ground still usable for farming. Mr. Speeg said there was not enough research yet. Mr. Henning asked if there was some farming going on with the solar fields could the land still be classified as agriculture (CAUV for real estate tax purposes). Mr. Speeg said there was no answer for that. Mr. Arnett asked if the rules for a utility size solar farm versus a smaller solar farm were created through the legislature. Mr. Speeg said yes and 50 megawatt and less are all handled at the local level. Mr. Speeg on separate issues asked if the Township was having any issues with storage containers. He indicated 13 smaller boxes had been dropped in Jackson Township in a relatively short period of time. The Trustees were not aware of any issues in Williamsburg Township. Mr. Speeg also indicated they were working on drug issues at their park. The Trustees thanked Mr. Speeg for the information.

Mr. Weaver said in regard to sewer and water at the Township's new maintenance building, because it was a transfer of service from the old building nothing would have to come before Williamsburg Village Council. Mr. Henning thanked Mayor Weaver for the quick follow up.

Zoning Report

Mr. Tatman presented a report. One zoning certificate had been issued since the last report. Mr. Tatman indicated he would be meeting with the new zoning software vendor Cloudpermit on March 28th. He stated we will need another Zoning Commission alternate member due to the passing of Chad Graybill. The Trustees said they were reaching out to a short list of potential candidates.

Cemetery and Maintenance Report

Mr. Tatman provided a report. He gave an update on the new maintenance building. The oil separator is installed. Gutters and downspouts will be installed either this week or the beginning of next week, and garage doors will be next week. Mr. Tatman said that should finish everything up for the core of the building. The contractor wants everything done by the end of this month. Mr. Tatman said the Maintenance team is working on drainage and replacing pipe on the Maintenance building and cemetery grounds, but that will be finished up as a summer project. He indicated they did some ditch work on Ashton Road and Island Trail Drive and will be out again this week doing some more areas. Mr. Tatman informed the Trustees that the blacktopping bid was a little higher than the last estimate, but still under the \$75,000 approval. It was originally estimated at \$71,445 but the actual bid came in at \$74,591.75. He provided the bid form from the County. Mr. Tatman said pipes will be replaced on Hennings Mill Road before it is blacktopped. Mr. Tatman provided pricing from vendors for a new pickup truck. The Trustees said they would review the pricing, specifications, and different options. Mr. Henning asked about pricing for paving in the cemetery, wanting to know if we were separating it by segments so we could look at just the current gravel sections. Mr. Tatman said yes, we were looking at it in pieces. Mr. Lefferson asked if we were obtaining prices on the Emergency Services parking lot as well. Mr. Tatman replied yes. Mr. Jordan asked Mr. Tatman to look at Musgrove Road and Bass Road in regard to drainage or other road issues. Mr. Tatman indicated he would. Mr. Weaver asked about apparent dumping off a portion of Dela Palma Road. Mr. Tatman said a letter from the Zoning Office had been sent.

Emergency Services Report

Chief McCarthy provided a report. There were 44 Fire and 96 EMS calls for the month of February. The Department participated in a Fire Drill and a Tornado Drill at the Williamsburg Elementary School. The 2016 ambulance has an upper oil pan leak, power steering leak, and needed rear brakes. JCM is doing the repairs. The 2019 Horton is still at Maines Collision having the dashboard installed, it will go to Horton after that to finish repairs. Probably still 2.5 to 3 months out before returned. The Chief indicated that Brown County is looking to give away a 17-foot enclosed trailer. If this trailer is usable, he would like to pursue this opportunity to utilize our Gator and other service equipment. Since the last report there have been two preparatory safety visits to the Purina plant. Chief McCarthy participated in an electric vehicle and battery hazards training at Colerain and had shared the materials with Chairman Jordan. Mr. Jordan said he found the documentation interesting. The Chief said at least it gets the Township thinking about new rules that may be needed. Chief McCarthy stated that JJ Heck has submitted his resignation and he recommends we accept it. Mr. Bainum motioned to accept the resignation of JJ Heck. Mr. Henning second. All yeas. The Chief recommended we bring on Ben Watson as a Cadet. Ben lives in the Township and will be pursuing his fire and EMS credentials through Southern Hills in the Fall as a senior. Mr. Bainum

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motioned to add Ben Watson as a Cadet. Mr. Henning second. All yeas. Mr. Lefferson and Chief McCarthy indicated they had received a \$5,000 donation to Emergency Services from Dualite and Chief McCarthy indicated he had sent a thank you letter. The Trustees were grateful for this donation. Mr. Lefferson and Chief McCarthy also indicated they were working together on a possible grant from the State of Ohio for new siding, roof, floors, and parking lot at the Emergency Services Building. More information to be provided later. Mr. Jordan complimented the Chief on run times.

Mr. Bainum indicated that the first subcommittee meeting in regard to the Township brand (logo, signage, etc.) would be held at 9:30 a.m. on March 21st. Mr. Bainum said resident Ruth Lung who has extensive marketing and branding experience has agreed to participate. Committee members include Mr. Bainum, Mr. Lefferson, Chief McCarthy, Supervisor Tatman, and resident Ruth Lung.

There being no further business, Mr. Bainum motioned to adjourn at approximately 8:15 p.m. Mr. Henning second. All yeas.

Fiscal Officer

Chairperson