

The Champion Township Board of Trustees met in Regular Meeting on January 16, 2024, at 6:30p.m. at the Champion High School Community room for the purpose of conducting the business of the township. Fiscal Officer Hatt called the meeting to order with a full board present at 6:30pm due to an error in publication of the time by the Tribune Chronicle.

Fiscal Officer Hatt read a statement about reminding everyone not to interrupt the meeting after the pledge of allegiance.

The Fiscal Officer called for nominations for Chairman. Trustee Emerine nominated Trustee Fee. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Fiscal Officer called for nominations for Vice Chairman. Trustee Fee nominated Trustee Emerine. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

Chairman Fee made an announcement that due to the recent scrutiny of the meetings, the Board would be handling the meetings more like the County does, with the Fiscal Officer reading the motions and asking for roll call votes, etc. Please bear with the Board as everyone adjusts to this new format.

G2023-1 Sunshine Law Motion (see attached) Trustee Emerine made the motion, Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2023-2 Trustee Emerine made the GovDeals motion (see attached). Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Park Initiative Committee read a statement about not putting the levy on the ballot due to lack of support by the Board and have converted their PAC status to 501©3 status.

Trustee Emerine made a motion to appoint the Township Records Commission for 2024, comprised of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Fiscal Officer, and the Trumbull County Auditor. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-3 Trustee Emerine made a motion to enact Robert Ruies of Order moving forward to establish a baseline on how to properly conduct meetings. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-5 Trustee Emerine made a motion to authorize two trustees and fiscal officer to sign minutes going forward upon approval motion made by the board. Fee seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-6 Trustee Emerine made a motion to authorize the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to sign any and all contract documents as required for any motions passed by the Board. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

R2024-7 Trustee Emerine made a motion to accept the 2023 Annual ODOT Mileage Certification of 41.385 miles, showing no adjustments for the year. The trustees must sign the certification and return it to the Trumbull County Engineer for concurrence and submission to ODOT. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-8 Trustee Emerine made a motion to reappoint Township Legal Counsel, Letson & Swader Co., LPA at \$150.00 per hour on an as needed basis for employment and intergovernmental legal matters. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-9 Trustee Emerine made a motion to reappoint Township Legal Counsel, Cherry Poteet, at a rate of \$150.00 per hour. Attorney Poteet will be the preferred legal counsel for any matters for which the Trumbull County Prosecutor, our statutory legal counsel, is not able to take on the cases, outside of employment and intergovernmental legal matters. Reminder to department heads and Zoning Chairmen: Two trustees must sign an "authorization to utilize legal counsel" form in order to obtain legal services. This form ensures that Legal Counsel understands that Counsel is authorized to perform

work for the Township and that the trustees will not see "surprises" on legal counsel billings, sometimes months after the service was rendered. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-10 Trustee Emerine made a motion to reappoint Township Legal Counsel, Mark Finamore, at a rate of \$100.00 per hour, to complete cases already started and referred to his office. Atty Finamore has expressed quite a bit of difficulty in taking on additional cases so his services will be approved to finish out previously pending legal matters. Fee seconded. **Templeton did not believe that this was what Attorney Finamore meant when he said he was not taking anymore cases. Templeton believed we should continue to send work his way. Templeton stated that there is no one better at Zoning than Finamore. Trustee Emerine stated that he needs legal opinions ASAP, not four- eight months from when he asks a question. Emerine stated he cannot continue to send things Mark's way under the current conditions. If Mark's situation changes, he may be willing to send work that way. Fee stated he concurred with Trustee Emerine and that should Marks situation change, this allowed the township to utilize him. Emerine yes, Fee yes, Templeton NO.**

G2024-11 Trustee Templeton made a motion to approve annual membership in the Ohio DAS cooperative purchasing program for 2024. Emerine seconded. **Fiscal Officer Hatt noted that this is now free.** Passed unanimously.

G2024-12 Trustee Emerine made a motion to approve membership in the Ohio Township and Trumbull County Associations, and approve attendance of the annual State Association Conferences, County meetings and payment of expenses at these events for Trustees and Fiscal Officer and any department heads or zoning board members who wish to be associate members. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-13 Trustee Templeton made a motion to establish 2024 mileage reimbursement rate for approved travel expenses of Township Officials and employees at the current 2024 IRS mileage rate for all out of township travel in personal vehicles, as allowed by the O.R.C. Every effort should be made to take a township vehicle when available. Emerine seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-14 Trustee Emerine made a motion to rehire all part time employees at same rates of pay as last year, includes fire department reserves, zoning inspector and part time police officers. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-15 Trustee Emerine made a motion to rehire all full-time non-bargaining employees at the same rates of pay as last year. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

F2024-16 Trustee Emerine made a motion to appoint Thomas Dempsey and Jason Gray to the Volunteer Firefighters Dependency Board. Templeton seconded. **Trustee Emerine asked Chief Dempsey if Jason Gray was currently on the VFDF, to which he answered affirmative.** Passed unanimously.

Reminder: any inventory not turned in by tonight's meeting is late under the ORC. Trustees will need to review and accept at the next meeting.

Discussion and possible motion to conduct the first reading of the renewal of levies for placement on the November ballot. The Board tabled this for the February meeting. **They stated that even though these motions would be made in February, they would not be on the March ballot. The Fiscal Officer wanted to walk the incoming Fiscal Officer through the process and the Prosecutor's office would like these levy motions in early as they are short staffed and have a lot of big cases this year.**

Trustee Templeton made a motion to accept the Amended Certificate of Estimated Resources dated January 8, 2024, in the amount of \$6,611,604.99 for fiscal year 2023. Emerine seconded. Passed unanimously.

F2024-17 Trustee Emerine made a motion to make supplemental appropriation and pay a \$35,000 additional principal payment on the Champion Engine 21 debt from the generous donation of the estate of Nicholas and Eleanor Hannison. This will eliminate approximately \$10,750 in interest due on the loan in the next four years. Templeton seconded. **Emerine asked Chief Dempsey what he thought about doing this and Dempsey stated that this was a good move to save the department money since they got this unexpected donation.** Passed unanimously.

Z2024-18 Trustee Emerine made a motion to set a flat rate of \$75 each running half acre special assessment fee to any property declared and mowed by township employees under 505.87. Templeton seconded. **Trustees asked Working Foreman Davis what he thought after Fiscal Officer Hatt explained the administrative allowance as a result of the Prosecutor's opinion and WF Davis agreed.** Passed unanimously.

Reminder: department heads that donations are to be placed on the agenda monthly so that trustees see the resident donations coming in and they are receiving proper mention in the minutes for their generosity.

F2024-19 Trustee Emerine made a motion to accept the Ohio Dept of Commerce 2024 MARCS Grant in the amount of \$21,372 and approve purchase of equipment from Hudson Communications in the amount of \$20,542. The balance will go to MARCS Radio fees. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-20 Trustee Fee made a motion to hire Cherry Poteet to draw up a contract for the grant writer at a rate not to exceed 3.5% for administration fees for grants secured so that it is ready in time to present for discussion when interviews are conducted. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-21 Trustee Fee made a motion to create the contract position of grant writer within the township employment structure. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-22 Trustee Fee made a motion to authorize the advertisement for a grant writer. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

A discussion on the OPBA contract was tabled until executive session.

G2024-23 Trustee Emerine made a motion to establish the department head spending threshold at \$500 per ORC 505.35. Any expenditure above this threshold will need Board approval *prior to* purchase of items. Reminder that all purchases need to be following the township procurement policy and the Federal guidelines under 2 CFR 200, as recently amended as well as state procurement guidelines. Fee seconded. Passed unanimously. * Typographical error, ORC should have been 507.11.

Trustee Templeton tabled until February a motion to establish a policy that amends the IRC section 125 Cafeteria Plan for the township to allow for ORC 505.603 allowing reimbursements for premiums up to 25% of the cost of the township policy premiums.

Reminder: Benefits Administrator needs to get the Cafeteria Plan 125 Forms signed off by all employees as soon as possible. These are required for their Audit files as the IRS requires this for withdrawal of Premium share. **Trustee Templeton claimed that he was not sure why someone kept telling people he was the Benefits Administrator because he was not, and he was only trying to get a healthcare policy passed back in the Spring and he would appreciate if people stopped spreading that around.** Trustee Emerine asked Fiscal Officer Hatt where this form could be found. She stated

that it could be found on Healthcare.gov and Trustee Emerine requested that the department heads retrieve this form and get it filled out and turned in ASAP.

Discussion and possible motion on paying for a paving project for Durst, Walker and Hummel drives from the Road Improvement Levy fund in the absence of a grant from OPWC. The rest of the county submitted very large projects and Champion is #8 on the unfunded list, with another 7 contingency projects to take up any money. All loan funds have been accounted for at this time also. The Road Improvement Levy fund will bring in about \$250,000 in tax money this year. A carryover balance estimate from 2023 is \$102,662.78. The Engineer's estimate is \$192,343.00 for Durst only. The total project for all three roads is \$282,783. Trustees tabled this until next month.

G2024-24 Trustee Templeton made a motion to appoint Courtney Hatt and Douglas Emerine to the TIRC (Tax Incentive Review Council) for representation of Champion Township at the annual meeting on March 14, 2024, at 10am in the Trumbull County Commissioner's Meeting Room. Fee seconded. Passed unambiguously.

G2024-25 Trustee Emerine made a motion to approve the McKinsey resolution for adjoining the Opioid Settlement. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously. **Templeton asked if this was similar to the other Opioid Settlements we had adjoining. Fiscal Officer Hatt stated that it was the same resolution just the vendor had changed.**

Announcement: Township Clean Up Day is Saturday, April 20, 2024, from 8am-2pm. Please watch for more announcements and check the website for rules and driving instructions to make this a safe event for everyone. **NO BUSINESSES MAY BRING SCRAP TIRES FOR CLEAN UP DAY. Emerine stated that he expected Working Foreman Davis to have the cameras on the tire pile for after-hours dumping issues that have been encountered in the past.**

Cemetery Sexton Davis requested this item be tabled until he had some time to do some research on this himself. He was concerned about the resident prices. Discussion and possible motion to increase Cemetery rates for full grave purchases to \$600 each; Cremation graves to \$400 each; Full grave openings for nonresidents to \$1,100 each; full grave opening for residents to \$700 each; Cremation openings for nonresidents to \$600 each and Cremation openings for residents to \$400 each; Use of chapel for residents after the first free half hour, \$85; Use of the chapel for nonresidents to \$85 per half hour; Special circumstances after hours/holidays, if granted at the discretion of the Cemetery Sexton, are double the opening and chapel use rates, generally, in line with other Cemeteries in Trumbull County.

Department Head Reports:

Gerry Brown, Zoning Inspector
Shawn Davis, Working Foreman

Larry Skaggs, Chief of Police
Thomas Dempsey, Fire Chief

P2024-26 Trustee Fee made a motion at the request of Police Chief Skaggs to approve a payment of \$5775, to Lexipol for Law Enforcement policy manual and training. Emerine seconded. Passed unanimously.

P2024-27 Trustee Emerine made a motion to repair unit #57 up to \$3,300 per quote from the mechanic. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

The Trustees set the Free Community Garage Sale Weekend for May 22-26. No permit is required.

Fiscal Officer Hatt requested to use the Prosecutor to address Records Retention Schedule Updates and to enter into contract with Trumbull County Records Center and Trumbull County Recorder Todd

Latell for digitizing and microfiche the records. Trustee Emerine stated that there was concern that there was not enough room in the new storage building to house all our records and he would be in Favor of this option. The other two agreed. Fiscal Officer Hatt believed as records custodian she did not need a motion to do this but would double check with the Prosecutor on that as well.

R2024-28 Trustee Fee made a motion to terminate Neff's Landing effective March 31, 2024. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

G2024-29 Trustee Emerine made a motion to terminate Champion Self Storage effective May 31, 2024. Templeton seconded. Passed unanimously.

Trustee Fee gave an update by reading a letter from Ashley Yuhasz regarding the Diversified Property clean up that is being worked on by the Trumbull County Land Bank (Neighborhood Partnership) and the Ohio EPA Grant of nearly \$1 million. They are conducting many legal items behind the scenes and wanted to assure trustees that the project was moving forward. The project is in a thirty-day comment period before they can proceed.

Architect Update was given that the building is planned to be finished, weather permitting, by February 20.

The trustees wanted to remind everyone we are still in need of a Zoning Appeals Board member for a five-year term.

The trustees set a date of the February 20 meeting to review the Personnel Policy with any employee who was interested prior to the Board passing it. Chief Dempsey stated that as long as the policy stated that it is superseded by the Union contracts, he does not see a problem from his members. Trustee Fee stated it has always stated that on page one.

Public Comment

J. Besse, 381 Durst, wants to know the recourse for the denial of the Appalachian Grant.

B. Johnson, 4651 Verona, thank you for hiring a grant writer, question on getting a new revenue stream for the park such as a hall to have folks rent. Seeking Volunteers for the Champion Police Ladies Auxiliary do not have to be a lady. Announcement: Cub Scout pack 4025 is hosting a pancake breakfast on Saturday at the Masonic Lodge on Everett Hull Road. Please attend.

J. Kish, 5110 Sabrina, thanks to Rex and Park Initiative Committee for all their hard work. He concurs not going for a levy is smart idea. Will the loss of this funding move where you see the park going, such as the Central Property? Fee stated that he did not see investing the money in the Central Property. Kish had further comments on the cultural quality of life for Trumbull County residents. He believed the park would help. Emerine stated that he did not see the park moving forward at all.

S. Dozier, 6158 Shafer Rd, questions about new building with water and electricity available. Concerns about the roof with no gutters. WF Davis stated the gutters have been placed.

R. Emrich, 4658 N Park, had comments about the building.

Trustee Templeton made a motion under ORC121.22(G)1,4 to enter executive session.

Trustee Emerine made a motion to exit executive session.

Z2024-30 Trustee Emerine made a motion to increase the pay rate of Gerry Brown, Zoning Inspector to \$17 per hour. Fee seconded. Passed unanimously.

Hearing no further comment, the Chairman requested a vote to adjourn the meeting. Emerine made the motion, Fee seconded. Passed unanimously.

Trustee

Trustee

Fiscal Officer