

## CLAY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING

January 29, 2026

The Special meeting of the Clay Township Trustees was called to order by Chairman, Angela Howell at 5:33 pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said and a moment of silence was observed for our active military, veterans, and first responders.

Fiscal Officer Vanessa Furrey absent. Angela Howell called the roll.

Roll: Angela Howell – Present          Dale Winner – Present          Mark Haworth – Present

### Public Comment

Duane Heuker asked for the fire department issues to be a priority, adding he has collected more signatures for the support to the opposition of the township split.

### No Unfinished Business

### New Business:

Angela Howell presented the discussion to review The Village of Phillipsburg and Verona's Fire and EMS Department operations and budgets. Angela stated that Fire Chief Aldrich, Chief Rayburg, and Chief Fletcher were present at the last meeting to advise the Board of the status of their overall fire department's operations. Primarily, Chief Aldrich with The Village of Phillipsburg's Fire and EMS Department described their difficulties with sustainable funding to continue to operate long term per their contract with the township and to remain compliant with their rules and regulations, voicing a need for help.

Mark Haworth stated that he had conversations with all chiefs and The Village of Phillipsburg's Fire and EMS Department is close to having to close. Mark stated there is a need for funding and spoke of the possibility of a levy to ensure the village's fire department stays in working order. Mark introduced Phillipsburg's Chief Pat Aldrich to make the presentation.

Chief Aldrich discussed stats and levy issues and spoke in detail about the revenue of the current Fire and Emergency Medical Services Levy. Chief Aldrich stated that the fire levy funding has not been able to keep up with the changing times and rising costs since the early 2000's. The average shift costs have risen above the levy amounts and the current funding is not sustainable to ensure the department has adequate equipment and the ability to pay quality employees. Chief Aldrich expressed the great need for Phillipsburg to be able to operate fully and to the industry standard level, but without additional funding this will not be possible. The fire department is solely funded by the levy money from the township contract \$247,000 annually and its EMS billing \$55,000, which is not guaranteed funds. A 2.5 mil levy was discussed to help the department continue to operate with appropriate staffing levels and to be at the industry level standards with equipment.

Chief Fletcher provided feedback on EMS response billing and how that affects all three departments.

The Village of Phillipsburg's Mayor Josh Simpson provided feedback regarding the funding and how the Village has been helping through their general fund, but this is not a long term option and he believes additional funding is needed to ensure the department's survival.

Chief Rayburg provided feedback on the status of The Village Of Verona's Fire Department. He indicates that his department has been operating on the bare minimum and cutting for a long time to get by, but they have no more to cut and need more funding for staffing / operations and new equipment.

The Chief's provided the Board with feedback and education on the process of purchasing fire trucks and ambulances and the costs involved. Most of the time used equipment is what is looked for because of how expensive and how long you have to wait for a new engine.

Mark Haworth thanked the Chief's for their feedback. Mark asked Mayor Josh Simpson how long the department would be able to get by. Josh replied that they are making things work, but for long term goals additional funding is needed as this way is not sustainable. They are looking at all avenues to continue to support the department, but the primary issue is making sure they have the recurring money to pay payroll and keep the department staffed.

Chief Aldrich explained the timing of this request and believes if a levy is put on the ballot it needs to be for May 2026, not to wait until November. Dale Winner agreed with Chief Aldrich and stated the timing is tight, but that it could be done. Dale has questions about the millage and Angela Howell asked Chief Aldrich to explain the choice of 2.5 mil. Chief Aldrich presented the reasoning behind the amount chosen. The 2.5 mil levy is a reasonable request to meet the needs of the fire departments, this would cost residents about \$87 annually per \$100,000.

Angela Howell asked the Chief's if they would be looking at wanting to re-negotiated the contracts after this, the answer was no, all believe the percentages per contract based on call for service is adequate.

Dale Winner asked Chief Fletcher how this additional money would benefit their department. Chief Fletcher advised the Board those decisions are on the Council to make, but referenced that it would help reduce the amount of funds needed from the general fund to fund operational costs.

General discussion held regarding the suggested mil amount and the recommended date to add to the ballot. Chief Aldrich stated the benefits of this levy are township wide. Dale Winner commented that this is a team approach and Chief Fletcher agreed. He continued stating that if we had a township fire department we would position 3-4 fire departments around the township, which is the set up the township has now with its three contracts between the city and the two villages. Angela Howell asked Chief Fletcher to speak more to that as she received a question from a resident asking why can't we combine resources and run one department. Chief Fletcher stated that we could do that, but there would be no cost savings to have because they would not be able to eliminate duplication, ie. having three fire chiefs. We would still need the same amount of funding and equipment as we do now with the three departments. He also stated that there is no central location to put the combined fire department and if there were only one department there would be a part of the township that would always be further away and have slower response times. Right now, the setup of having the three departments on the outside corners of the township all moving into the middle is efficient for call response times and cost saving.

General discussion held about how this relates to the NorthWest Initiative's proposed township split. Mark Haworth asked for final comments from all Chief's and Mayor Josh Simpson. Chief Aldrich and Mayor Simpson agree it is the right time and would like the trustees to consider adding a 2.5 mil levy on the May 2026 ballot.

Angela Howell and Dale Winner stated they had no other questions. Mark Haworth stated that he believes the board should leave this up to the residents to decide. Angela Howell voiced her support and thanked the Chiefs for their time and efforts to inform the Board of the issues they face.

Dale Winner states to move forward the Board needs to review Resolution 2026-006 Requesting the Montgomery County Auditor to Certify the Total Current Tax Valuation of Clay Township and the estimated revenue from a proposed Fire and Emergency Medical Services Levy.

Angela Howell read aloud the proposed ballot language: the Board of Trustees proposes that said tax be for fire and emergency medical services, specifically for providing and maintaining fire apparatus, mechanical resuscitators, underwater rescue and recovery equipment, or other fire equipment and appliances, buildings and sites therefor, or sources of water supply and materials therefor; for the establishment and maintenance of lines of fire-alarm communications; for the payment of firefighting companies or permanent, part-time, or volunteer firefighting, emergency medical service, administrative, or communications personnel to operate the same, including the payment of any employer contributions required for such personnel under Sections 145.48 or 742.34 of the Ohio Revised Code; for the purchase of ambulance equipment; for the provision of ambulance, paramedic, or other emergency medical services operated by a fire department or firefighting company; or for the payment of other related costs, all as authorized by Section 5705.19(I) of the Ohio Revised Code.

Final discussion held and with no other questions, Mark Haworth made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-006 Requesting the Montgomery County Auditor to Certify the Total Current Tax Valuation of Clay Township and the estimated revenue from a proposed Fire and Emergency Medical Services Levy, seconded by Dale Winner.

Roll: All yes

Dale Winner stated he will send the signed resolution to the Auditors office to get the certificate and then another resolution will need to be done to finalize the process with the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Citizen Duane Heuker presented pledges & donations from numerous members of Clay Township to the Village of Phillipsburg and Verona's Fire departments. Angela Howell thanked him for his dedicated efforts to helping the township.

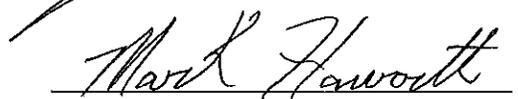
With no further business, Dale Winner made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:15 PM, seconded by Angela Howell.

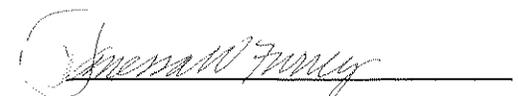
Roll: All Yes

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM

 Angela Howell, Chairman

 Dale Winner, Trustee

 Mark Haworth, Trustee

 Attested, Stacy L. Huelscher, Assistant Fiscal Officer