

PERKINS TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

REGULAR SESSION

June 8, 2021

The Perkins Township Trustees met Tuesday, June 8, 2021, in the Township Services Facility located at 2610 Columbus Avenue. Trustees present were Timothy Coleman, Jeffrey Ferrell, and James Lang. Chairman Coleman opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance at 8:00 a.m.

AGENDA

Mr. Coleman moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. All were in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution 2021-106

Authorize Application under the Congressionally Directed Spending Program

Mr. Coleman moved to authorize the submission of an application under the Congressionally Directed Spending program, and acceptance if awarded. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. Mr. Boyle advised that the Township was recently made aware of this program by Sen. Brown's staff. The request is under the FEMA Emergency Operations Center Grant program seeking a grant of \$600,00 for engineering, etc. costs related to a fire station. The deadline for submission is tomorrow. The total estimate is \$800,000 and the Township's match is \$200,000. Roll call: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye; Mr. Coleman, aye. Resolution adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department: Chief Donald advised that Officers Collins, Jarrett, and Rospert are due to receive step raises per the FOP contract as Class A Officers. Chief noted that Evidence Officer Don Kreidler has been with the Department for a year and asked the Board to approve a raise.

Resolution 2021-107

Approve Raise for Evidence Officer Donald Kreidler

Mr. Ferrell moved to approve a raise to Evidence Officer Donald Kreidler of \$0.50 per hour, effective June 19, 2021. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion. The Trustees said he was doing a good job for the Department. Roll call: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye; Mr. Coleman, aye. Resolution adopted.

Chief indicated that the Department handled a fatal traffic accident last night on Milan Rd. Office Kisner investigated it.

Mr. Ferrell commented on the recent actions of Officer Lanyi.

Fire Department: Chief Murphy noted that part-time Firefighter Avery Cruz has submitted his letter of resignation as he accepted a full-time firefighter position with the City of Lorain.

Resolution 2021-108

Accept Resignation of Part-Time Firefighter Avrey Cruz

Mr. Ferrell moved to accept the resignation of part-time firefighter Avrey Cruz, effective June 16, 2021. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion. Roll call: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye; Mr. Coleman, aye. Resolution adopted.

Chief advised that the Fire Department provided coverage at the Monster Truck event at the Fairgrounds last weekend and thanks the crew for being there despite the short notice.

Community Development Department: Director Byington provided a written report.

Public Works Department: Director Link provided a written report.

Administrator: Administrator Boyle also provided a written report. Mr. Coleman inquired about the status of the Maui Sands issue. Mr. Boyle advised that Code Officer

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McClain has met on-site with the owners' representative related to securing the property, etc. He also noted that the frontage of the property has been listed for sale with Hoty Real Estate, and that a meeting is being arranged in the next few weeks with the owner to discuss plans for this property.

Notices/ Correspondence

- The next regular meeting is on June 22nd at 8:00 a.m.
- Liquor License Transfers
C1, C2, D6 permits Nova8516 to CAPL dba Hy-Miler 2204, 5511 Milan Rd
C1, C2 permits Nova8516 to CAPL Retail dba Hy-Miler 2205, 7001 Milan Rd
C1, C2 permits Nova8516 to CAPL Retail LLC dba Hy-Miler 2220, 310 W Perkins
No hearing was requested.

Fiscal Officer Comments

- Payments for the period May 26 – June 8 total \$105,186.88 including payments to: Adaptive Engineering Group for SRTS Invoices 1-9; Brickler & Eckler for TAN notes documentation; Skyline Tower for painting of the cell phone tower; Universal K-9 for training of Sport and new handler; Pelz Lettering for baseball shirts.

Public Forum – None

Trustees Discussion

The Trustees then discussed levy issues for the November ballot.

Mr. Coleman indicated that information had been received from County Auditor Rick Jeffrey concerning anticipated levy collection amounts for the Police and Fire Departments. Mr. Coleman asked whether that information had been reviewed by the Departments, and whether the estimated amounts would be sufficient.

Chief Murphy noted that he is of the opinion that the additional 2.75 mill amount is better for the Fire Department in the long-term. He has prepared a 10-year projection without any expenses related to new apparatus or a station. That levy amount should hopefully last 10 years. A future vehicle like an engine or equipment will need to be acquired through lease/purchase as funding would not be there. A squad could possibly be covered.

Chief Donald said that he has reviewed the estimates and concurs with Chief Murphy that the additional 2.75 mill levy is preferable. He would be able to sustain operations with that amount based on the assumption that the current levy is renewed at 5 years. The last renewal of the current levy has not been enough to fund the operation and the General Fund has helped fund the Department for several years.

Mr. Coleman noted that he agreed that an additional 2.75 mills for each Department is necessary. He then asked about departmental staffing needs. Chief Murphy explained why he recommends that there be eight full-time firefighters per shift. They have operated with eight firefighters per shift for the last ten years or so. Part-time firefighters are increasingly difficult to find, and it is hard to fill all positions especially with the 120-hour limit per month on part-time firefighters. The Department has had about fourteen part-time firefighters in the recent past, but he noted that two of our part-time firefighters have been hired full-time by the City of Tiffin Fire Department and one by Bath Twp. Fire Department. He anticipates that they can continue relying on some part-time firefighters for a few years but there is a real lack of available part-time candidates. The proposed levy would allow for more staff. Mr. Coleman noted that he agreed with Chief Murphy's analysis of his staffing situation. Mr. Ferrell noted that part-time firefighters can still be used even with eight full-time firefighters per shift. Chief agreed that this would be the case. Mr. Ferrell noted that personnel costs are the greatest expense in the budget. He agreed that major vehicle/ equipment acquisitions will need to be by lease-purchase like the recent SCBAs and turn-out gear updates for the Department. There really is not

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anywhere in the budget where you can find significant savings. Chief noted that with one station, operations would be more efficient with eight full-time firefighters, and he could better run three squads which they often need to do now and would still have two personnel available for fire/rescue responses when all squads are out. The number of calls for service is only increasing over time and is not going to decrease in the future. Mr. Lang mentioned that three additional full-time firefighters would be needed to do this. Chief stated that was correct and that would provide even better service to the public. Chief stated that it is difficult to get overtime coverage now. Mr. Ferrell agreed that it is hard to rely on overtime to fill positions. Mr. Ferrell indicated that the Township has tried to control costs by not hiring full-time firefighters in the past and due to budget concerns. The same situation applies to the Police Department.

Chief Donald indicated that the Police Department is down from 24 officers to 21 at this time. Like the Fire Department, the call volume continues to increase. The Department prided itself in being pro-active in its community policing, but due to the call volume it cannot do that kind of policing the way that they want. Our safety services are not growing and have a difficult time just retaining staff. This is compounded by violent crime in a nearby community that spills over into ours. The Department has seized more guns than usual this year. Given staffing levels, Chief advised that he has had to order officers in to work due to the need to maintain bare minimum staffing. Ordering officers to work overtime is difficult on everyone as they need time off too. Chief further noted that he would prefer to see at least five officers per shift. The Department could use an additional detective, an additional command level assistant to the Chief, and an extra patrol sergeant. Ideally, the Department should have between 24 and 25 officers.

Mr. Ferrell noted that the Township needs to look to the future and how it provides safety services.

Mr. Coleman inquired as to the number of full-time officers in the Police Department. Chief Donald advised that there are 21 including himself. The Department also has two part-time officers. Given the call volume and nature of what is going on in the community, there is a need for at least three additional full-time officers, and possibly a fourth. Chief noted that the current budget provides for 22 full-time officers, and it is difficult to fill positions. He is aware of two full-time officers probably leaving this summer, one retiring and one being hired by the City of Lorain Police Department.

Mr. Coleman noted that both Fire and Police Department staff require specific training to be hired, and ongoing training. As a result, the number of possible hires is somewhat limited in our area. Mr. Ferrell also advised that the FOP contract was changed to enable "lateral" transfers to get officers hired. But we are competing with lots of departments to hire staff. Mr. Boyle mentioned that obtaining State certifications for safety service positions is not cheap. He further advised that Chief Donald has reported that the City of Sandusky is paying a portion of Police Academy training to try to increase its numbers. Those officers would need to commit to staying with the Department for a specified period of time. Chief Murphy mentioned that we have done this with paramedic training. Mr. Coleman agreed that it seems to be what we need to do to incentivize people to apply with the Township.

Mr. Ferrell observed that the first Police and Fire levies were passed several years ago. Since those levies provided operating funding for those departments, the Township has been able to undertake many community improvement projects as General Fund resources were freed-up. The Township has actively sought grants for many projects including road, and park improvements, etc. We have started to re-invest in some of our neighborhoods and more needs to be done. It must be remembered that the General Fund has the least revenue stream of all Township funding sources. Staff has really been able to accomplish a lot with the resources that we have. We know that the cemetery needs to be expanded sooner rather than later as we are running out of space. The General Fund cannot continue to fund the Police Department or assist with some of the Fire

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Department's equipment needs. Without additional levy funding, the Township will not be able to fund projects or provide services that benefits our community.

Mr. Ferrell noted that he has wrestled with the whole levy issue, and what increase seems justified. Should it be an additional 2.5 mills or 2.75 mills? The 2.75 mills levy provide about an additional \$100,000 or so over the 2.5 mills to each Department per year. Over 5 years, that is close to the cost of a new fire engine. Chief Murphy mentioned that the City of Sandusky is looking at a replacement engine that costs in the range of about \$650,000. Mr. Ferrell indicated that additional levy money could certainly help with the expenses related to new equipment.

Mr. Coleman asked about the riot gear that the Police Department had considered purchasing in 2020. Chief Donald advised that based on efforts to reduce spending in 2020, that equipment was not purchased. Mr. Boyle mentioned that there were other equipment purchases delayed in 2020 based on our concerns related to revenue unknowns but that does not mean that this equipment is not needed.

Mr. Ferrell indicated that if the Board decides to place levies for both the Police and Fire Departments on the ballot at the same time, perhaps some consideration should be given to asking for an additional 2.5 mills. If they are on the ballot at different times, perhaps 2.75 mills each.

Mr. Coleman noted that the County Auditor has indicated that our total valuation has increased since the Police and Fire levies were first approved. That has not, however, translated into additional revenue for the Township but has helped to lower the effective millage that residents are paying on those levies.

Mr. Ferrell added that HB 920 hurts us as no new revenue comes our way. Inflation has eaten away at the funding generated by these levies since they were first passed. The Township must be competitive in wages to recruit and retain personnel in both the Police and Fire Departments. He added the Township has been fortunate that we have significantly reduced our health insurance costs in the past three years, and those savings have helped us financially.

Mr. Ferrell asked Chief Murphy whether he could wait another year to have the additional levy amount for the Fire Department on the ballot. Chief advised that based on his projections, he will not have enough operating funds from the levy in two years. That is unless the Board helps by using General Fund money to cover the Fire Department's anticipated shortfall. Chief further noted that the School District has indicated that it intends to be on the ballot in November 2022. The Township does not want to be in competition for levy funding with the School District. Mr. Coleman suggested that the Township consider placing one of these additional levies on the ballot this November. Mr. Ferrell added that the General Fund cannot keep funding the Police and Fire Departments as there are other pressing community needs for that funding. Mr. Coleman indicated that he thought that the additional levy amount for each Department needed to be 2.75 mills although he could also understand how some might feel that an additional 2.5 mills is perhaps more palatable. Mr. Coleman then asked whether the Township could place a levy issue on the spring ballot? In any event, the Township needs to be able to explain to the public why an additional levy is needed as we cannot continue to use the General Fund the way we have been to help those Departments with their expenses when there are other needs that can only be funded by the General Fund. Mr. Ferrell concurred that there is no really good time to ask for the of approval levy funding. But it should be remembered that any additional levy amount approved on this year's November ballot will not be collected until 2023, and that places both safety Departments in an untenable funding position.

Mr. Lang noted that he totally understands the need for additional levy funding for both Departments and that he agrees with it. However, he questioned whether coming out of a pandemic is the right time to ask for both levies at the same. He added that it did not seem

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to him that the Township should proceed this November with an additional levy funding ballot issue for both Departments. Although the funding is needed, he mentioned that he did not want to see both additional levy requests fail.

Resolution 2021-109

To Proceed with an Additional 2.75 Mill Levy for the Police Department

Mr. Ferrell moved to proceed with an additional 2.75 mill levy for five years for the Police Department on the November 2, 2021 ballot. Mr. Coleman seconded that motion. Under discussion Mr. Ferrell stated that both additional levies are needed for the safety of the whole community. The Trustees have a duty to protect the public by providing safety services that they expect to receive. Mr. Boyle mentioned that the Township has undertaken several community improvement actions that have enhanced the quality of life in the Township such as many park development and improvement projects, recreational programming, road and sidewalk projects, demolition of substandard buildings, etc. While all those efforts are very important, he noted that he is of the opinion that another important element related to quality of life is the availability and quality of public safety services. Mr. Coleman agreed that our primary focus must be on public safety, including the safety of our Police Officers and Fire Fighters by having adequate staffing. This has to be explained to the community that while we have been pro-active on neighborhood improvements, we also do lots of things to make the community safer such as through community policing, school resource officers, fire inspections, CPR training, etc. Roll Call vote: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye, Mr. Coleman, aye. Resolution adopted.

Mr. Ferrell noted that commercial properties in the Township pay a large portion of the property tax collected. The levy issue has to be on the ballot in November for collection in 2023. He further noted that the Fire Department will likely have no carryover by the end of 2023. We understand that the School District will likely be on the November 2022 ballot. As a result, he thought that it would be better to do both levy issues in November of this year. Mr. Coleman agreed that it would be preferable not to be on the ballot at the same time as the School District. There is a need to have additional funding for the Fire Department in the very near future.

Resolution 2021-110

To Proceed with an Additional 2.75 Mill Levy for the Fire Department

Mr. Coleman moved to proceed with an additional 2.75 mill levy for five years for the Fire Department on the November 2, 2021 ballot. Mr. Ferrell seconded that motion. Mr. Lang stated that he still feels that this November might be difficult for residents affected by the pandemic but stated that he does know that the additional funding is needed. He also indicated that the Township needs to start to put funding from the General Fund into an account for the construction of a new fire station as both stations are used well beyond what they were designed for. Mr. Ferrell advised that he definitely agrees with the need to fund the construction of a new station. Roll Call vote: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye, Mr. Coleman, aye. Resolution adopted.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, Mr. Coleman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 am. Mr. Ferrell seconded. Roll call vote: Mr. Lang, aye; Mr. Ferrell, aye, Mr. Coleman, aye. Meeting adjourned.

Timothy Coleman, Chairman

Diane Schaefer, Fiscal Officer
(From notes & digital recording)

NOTE: The Resolutions of Necessity submitted to the Erie County Auditor stipulate that the levies are for the tax duplicate years starting in 2021 with collection (and disbursement) in 2022. The Resolutions to Proceed will contain the same language.