

# Middleton Township Trustees

*Wednesday, November 3, 2021*

*6:00 p.m.*

Mr. Vetter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was spoken. Trustees Moulton, Cromley and Vetter and Fiscal Officer Limes were in attendance. The sign-in sheet for employees and visitors is attached with the approved minutes.

Noted on the sign in sheet is a statement indicating the meeting may be recorded or streamed live to the internet by a visitor - not at the authority of the township trustees.

## **FISCAL OFFICER REPORT**

- **Mr. Moulton moved, Mr. Cromley seconded a motion to approve the October 20, 2021 meeting minutes as provided with edits noted. Motion approved.**
- **Mr. Cromley moved, Mr. Vetter seconded approval of accounts and payroll as submitted. Motion approved.** A payment register is attached to the approved minutes.
- The Fund Status and Revenue reports were reviewed.
- Mrs. Limes noted there has been no resolution on an investment policy.
- The September and October bank reconciliations were provided for Trustee review.
- **Mr. Moulton moved, Mr. Vetter seconded a motion to move the meeting time of the December 15 meeting to 9:00 am. Motion approved.**

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

- Chief Steve Asmus provided monthly run reports for review.
- The transmission is out on Truck 661. Work is on-going.
- An emergency brake assembly kit has been purchased by Assistant Chief Chuck Steedman for Truck 683. Ford has also shipped one and it is still in transit.
- Chief Asmus reviewed the grant to purchase sirens for the township. He indicated there will be five (5) sirens in the proposal. Mapping and preliminary review of the pre-application has been held.
- A Sutphen representative will be on site to run diagnostics on Truck 662. Training on the truck will be held with all department personnel.
- Fire Fighter Dustin Decker will be attended a 36-hour FF1 class at Vanguard.
- Assistant Chief Brian Kotula confirmed the Amplex internet connection could be disabled at the fire station in Dunbridge/ Station 2. The station will be using a cell phone hot spot for internet service that has been tested for more than two months.
- Pinning of the Brass Ceremony will occur at the December 1 township meeting. Mr. Kotula confirmed two Lieutenants and one captain will be honored that evening.
- Mr. Steedman offered to gather personnel for a Fire/EMS building committee. The Trustees encouraged this once final numbers are in on a new road maintenance building.

## **EMS DEPARTMENT**

- Chief Matt Bechstein provided a run report for review. He was not in attendance.

## **ROAD DEPARTMENT**

- Contractor Zach Sarver provided the Trustees with a 'good faith' payment toward the driveway installation project. Mr. Sarver apologized for the finish on the drive and felt they should reimburse for some of the work. The trustees requested Mrs. Limes to return the check to Mr. Sarver.
- Gerken Paving has completed the subdivision paving project. Blacktop prices were overestimated, which may cover all or a portion of the cost of the additional street added to the project.
- The King Road improvement project is almost complete. The contractor is working with FirstEnergy for installation of the new poles along the road right-of-way.
- Mr. Vetter indicated they are working with Duane Abke at the County Engineers' office for assistance with the drainage issues at Five Point Road and St. Rt. 64 resident yards.
- Mr. Cromley reported on an assessment of drainage at the Holland truck terminal.
- There was brief discussion with regard to the joint venture with the Village of Haskins on King Road. Mr. Vetter is in continuing conversation with Jason Sisco with regard to project scope.
- Washington Township has requested a cost share on clean out of the Liberty Hi ditch to allow for better flow under the road. The Trustees determined they would be willing to share in the cost but did not want to share half the burden.

## **ZONING DEPARTMENT**

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- Mr. Cromley moved, Mr. Moulton seconded a motion to approve Cory Asmus as an alternate on the Board of Zoning Appeals to fill the balance of the term held by Mike Bookenberger. Motion approved.
- Mr. McDowell will be asked to look into building concerns at Devils Hole Road and Mercer Road.
- Mr. Moulton has obtained the Curling Center owner's name and is contacting him with regard to the lighting shrouds in the parking lot.

**VISITOR COMMENTS**

- Four Otsego students were in attendance. Numerous details about township government were shared with the students. The Trustees and Fiscal Officer signed their paperwork and encouraged their participation in another meeting.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT (cont'd)**

Fire Fighter Tom Fowler's suspension was questioned by members of the fire department. Clarification was requested with regard to the time line and why Mr. Fowler was not terminated. Fire Fighter Eric Featzka admitted he did not feel the township 'had the backs' of the fire fighters based on their decision. The Trustees noted they felt it was handled appropriately as written letters of concern were received, the Trustees acted in a timely manner and the incident was reported to the Trustees by the Fire Chief. Township resident Abby Bechstein read a statement with regard to her experience on the department and work environment with Mr. Fowler. She also noted her agreement from mediation with the township does not allow her to return to the department and her experience with a local city fire department has given her vast experience that would be beneficial to the township. Mr. Vetter reviewed the current punishment and shared that our liability insurance company was contacted as well as the township's prosecutor. All groups supported the decision made by the Board. The Board asked for patience while more information was gathered. Fire Fighter Mike Koratnayi shared his wife's recent experience with Mr. Fowler, noting the inappropriateness of his comments to his wife. Lieutenant Jennifer Featzka confirmed she was uncomfortable with the encounter. Both Angel Kotatnayi and Jennifer Featzka have written statements on file with Chief Asmus with regard to the incident with Mr. Fowler. Fire fighter Dave Modul encouraged the board to 'do the right thing' and not bring Mr. Fowler back to active status at the end of his suspension. Others supported Mr. Fowler not returning to active duty. The Trustees continued to reinforce patience and allow them time to speak to legal and insurance representatives.

Jennifer Featzka and Chuck Steedman questioned the third rider program in place with the EMS Department. Mr. Steedman confirmed he did not want to enter into conversation on this topic without Chief Matt Bechstein present to continue discussion.

**Mr. Moulton moved, Mr. Vetter seconded a motion to approve the decision that township Chiefs and/or Department Heads may suspend an employee, with pay, until the next township meeting, with notification to a Trustee upon making that decision. Motion approved.**

**Mr. Cromley moved, Mr. Moulton seconded adjournment of the meeting at 9:15 pm. Motion approved.**

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Fred E. Vetter, Chairman

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Donald E. Cromley, Vice Chairman

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Michael Moulton, Trustee

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Laurie L. Limes, Fiscal Officer