

## Hamilton Township Trustee Meeting

December 6, 2023

Trustee Board Chairman, Mark Sousa, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Rozzi, Mr. Cordrey and Mr. Sousa were present.

Roll call as follows:

Mark Sousa	Yes
Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes

The *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited by all.

A motion was made by Mr. Sousa, with a second by Mr. Rozzi, to approve the clerk's journal, and accept the tapes as the Official Meeting Minutes of the November 15, 2023, Trustee Meeting.

Roll call as follows:

Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Mark Sousa	Yes
Joe Rozzi	Yes

A motion was made by Mr. Sousa, with a second by Mr. Rozzi, to approve the bills as presented before the Board.

Roll call as follows:

Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Mark Sousa	Yes

### **Guest Speaker** Goodhue Consulting Company regarding Mounts Park Stream Restoration Project

Paul Goodhue approached the board to provide updates on the Mounts Park Stream Restoration Project and getting the board's opinion on potential phases and funding opportunities for the project. Mr. Goodhue has history with the Township as early as 2010 with numerous minor projects, as well as the initial Mounts Park Project in 2017 when working for LJB.

In 2019 Mr. Goodhue started the Goodhue Consulting Company and helps with the owner's interest in infrastructure using four stages of process. The four stages consist of identifying the project, solving, funding, and building/implementing. This specific project is still in the identifying role. Mr. Goodhue continues with his presentation recognizing the steps that need to

be taken to accomplish the project and identifying what his company has solutions for. The following are:

What Do We Need to Accomplish:

- Analyze the existing stream beds that are eroding and interfering with the existing landfill.
- Propose a solution to cap the landfill.

What Has Been Accomplished:

- Received Army Corps 404 Permit in 2022 for potential solution.
- Received Ohio EPA 401 Permit in 2022 for potential solution.

How Do We Move Forward:

- In discussing the project with Township staff and the Warren County Engineer's Office; there are more considerations than simply capping the landfill.
- The best way to address the solution is to find the best engineering firm or team to look at all the considerations together.

Request for Qualifications:

- RFQ was issued on November 29 to more than 75 people representing various consulting firms that do work in Southwest Ohio.
- Responses to the RFQ are due on December 22.
- 5 Firms have already indicated interest and have requested supporting information.

Mr. Goodhue suggested to the board to submit a grant application for funding. Slide 8 of his presentation defines the project and funding timeline if the board does in fact pursue the grant with the projected completion date of October 31, 2026, at the earliest. The first step is to identify who the problems fall on, Warren County or Hamilton Township. The county's analysis will determine those problems with the hope that the county will start putting together funds to cover some cost, becoming a capital improvement plan.

Mr. Sousa: Is the funding a shared grant?

Mr. Goodhue: There are typically two options, either a 50/50 split or an 80/20 split. The more money that is stacked on the front end the likelihood you will get an offer faster.

Mr. Sousa: If there is an issue with storm water on the county road, should we be looking at the County for funding?

Mr. Goodhue: I think the county will be a part of the project all the way through. They will be reviewing the drawings and reports as they go and a partner to the project.

### **Briefing-** IWORQ Software Efficiency

Jeff Wright: Wants to bring attention to the public and board of a new software program the Zoning department will be implementing in 2024. Currently zoning applications are on a paper-system and not web-based. Mr. Wright recognizes Cathy Walton, Zoning and Planning Director, for identifying a weakness we have and brought forth a solution after fully vetting other software providers. IWORQ is a web-based system that will improve our customer service by improving the process in which residents and businesses will submit zoning applications, site plans, and variance requests. Users will have direct access to the status of their application. Warren County Building Department uses the same software, making the application process and communication seamless with the Township. All documents are electronic for easy access if requested.

Mr. Sousa: To confirm, this new software is within the budget as discussed.

Mr. Wright: Correct, the program is within the current blanket certificate and if we commit in December. The vendor will cut in half the one-time initial migration expense from \$8,000 to \$4,000. This is within the range of what has been budgeted for this year's improvements.

Mr. Rozzi: I think this will be great to streamline one aspect of zoning.

Mr. Sousa: Surprising the process was as antiquity as it was. He is glad that Ms. Walton brought forth the problem, being proactive and getting it solved.

Mr. Cordry: Wants to thank Cathy and the staff. He thinks the residents will appreciate it come next spring when submitting pool applications.

Mr. Sousa: I think people would be surprised to hear how many applications Ms. Walton reviews each year, approaching five hundred to one thousand?

Ms. Walton: If you average the last five years, there are about five hundred permits submitted each year. We have many sign companies and developers that work out of town, they will be happy with the changeover and accessibility.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Sousa opened the floor to public comments at 6:33 pm.

Mitchell Fisher- Introduced himself as the Mayor Elect for the Village for Morrow. He attended the meeting tonight to let the township know that he is always available for questions, comments, and open to ideas the board may have. Mr. Fisher believes in open communication with local governments, working together for the benefit of the residents.

The Board of Trustees congratulated Mr. Fisher, stating they will reach out to him after the beginning of the year.

Marvin Stokes- Mr. Stokes provided the Trustees and Police Chief Hughes with a letter of recent verbal encounters that he allegedly had with a neighbor. He stated that himself as well as his wife have been victims of this verbal abuse for a decade. He is requesting the Police Department to

make public records available for more visibility and hopes he receives help from the police and/or board to end the harassment.

Mr. Sousa closed the floor to public comments at 6:36 pm.

### **New Business**

- Resolution No. 2023-1206A – Resolution Approving the 2024 Budget for Hamilton Township

Jeff Wright: Acknowledges the work of the Fiscal Office and leadership team compiling the 2024 budget to present to the board tonight.

Proposing that the General Funds total increase expenditures is .5% greater in 2024 than in 2023. Hamilton Township continues to have a low debt ratio, one larger debt being the administration building which will be paid off by 2027.

Public Works anticipates staying on track to repave seven miles of Township streets, including curb and gutter replacement, projecting to staying on track with the 14-15 yr. repaving schedule for the entire Township. Additionally, budgeting for replacement of the Public Works Department building, encumbering \$300,000 from the Road and Bridge Fund to rehouse the Public Works Department from Testerman Park. A new campus would allow adequate parking and storage for vehicles and equipment, as well as space for growing staff. The building that is currently used by Public Works could then be used as a possible community center in the future.

The prediction for carryovers in the safety service funds continues to get smaller every year. Since the last Police and Fire levy was passed several years ago, there will be a continuation every year to work with the fiscal office and board recognizing the carryovers are dwindling until revisiting another levy request in 2028.

Unique large improvements in the 2024 Budget we have a \$1.1 million dollars in ARPA Funding highlighting the Mounts Park Stream Restoration Project as a necessity. Second, we recently worked with our Law Director, Ben Yoder and Huntington Bank, Port Authority on a bond issuance of \$1.9 Million of bond funds that Kroger purchased that will be spent next year on infrastructure such as underground utilities, new roadways and extension of public roads that will give the opportunity for additional commercial development.

Proposed Budget for Carryover Funds:

- General Fund: -\$464,656

The General Fund is programmed to have a deficit spending \$464,656 at the end of 2024. The Township will collect a little more than 2.4 million. The capital expenses proposed total just under 250,000 that would be 100% replacement if existing administration and police building and replacement of the AC units. The Parks general fund money would be spent on baseball field improvements, light repairs, and investment in parking. Some of the capital funds proposed from the police fund right now is to cover half of the roof repairs. Mr. Wright suggests to the board to

have a conversation regarding amending the proposed budget to meet the goal line of the 2028 safety service funds.

Mr. Cordrey: Stated that he is comfortable with the roof replacement be paid with just the General Funds to help the Police Fund.

Mr. Sousa: Agrees with paying with the General Fund, the building is really for the public.

Mr. Rozzi: How will that affect the Police's budget with getting closer to the 2028 goal?

Mr. Wright: Yes, that is a good margin to assist with that. It is an \$80,000 dollar decrease to the Police fund's budget if paid instead 100% from General Fund.

- Motor Vehicle Tax: \$3,700

Capital improvement to replace siding on the main garage that houses dump trucks and rolling stock.

- Gasoline Tax: \$19,980

Capital improvement to replace existing furniture in the Public Works building.

- Road & Bridge Fund: -\$298,948

Proposed expense of \$1.65 million for replacement of the existing mini backhoe that is used for our cemeteries and road network. Also, the money would pay to replace a 3-4 Yard Dump Truck that will be outfitted for snow removal making it usable year-round.

Mr. Cordrey: This is where we propose the \$300,000 to jumpstart the replacement building, essentially breaking even?

Mr. Wright: That is correct. There is so much remaining in the fund, it is safe to take that \$300,000.

Mr. Sousa: Historically, that has been the fund that we have performed the best to budget.

- Cemetery: -\$20,000
- Police District Fund: -\$725,761

Capital improvement will be office renovations to accommodate two new investigators.

Mr. Wright: This number will improve with the \$80,000 transfer that was discussed earlier coming from General Funds.

- Drug Law Enforcement: -\$10,000
- Permissive Motor Vehicle License Tax: \$24,900

Capital item for replacement concrete mixer for road repairs.

- Law Enforcement Trust: \$0

- American Rescue Plan Act Fund: \$0
- Fire and EMS Special Levy Fund: -\$420, 493

Capital improvements are a water line extension for the training tower, rescue rope, computers for vehicles, and a tanker truck (contingent with a grant).

Mr. Cordrey: Are we splitting the cost with Deerfield for the water line?

Chief Jewett: Deerfield will contribute a portion totaling 35% to the water line. Hamilton Township Fire uses the waterline more than Deerfield.

Mr. Sousa: Can this waterline be used for the community garden?

Nicole Early: This line will help with a stationary water access point to the community garden.

- EMS Billing Fund: -\$154,200

Anticipate an increase in revenue with a ECW Grant of \$45,000 and a FEMA Training Grant of \$20,000 to pay for paramedic training.

- Lighting District: \$0
- Road Levy 2018: \$0

Three Funds within the budget that can anticipate improvement with higher revenues are Police Detail of \$15,000, Impound Lot of \$225,000, and Fines of \$48,000.

Mr. Sousa: With property tax increasing each year and being conservative with spending, recommends adjusting the budget more accurately instead of the 97% that is reported.

Mr. Rozzi and Mr. Cordrey want to continue with the 97% reporting instead of the 100% to continue to have a financial cushion.

A Special Meeting was set for December 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. to approve a transfer of funds from General Funds to the Police and Fire/EMS funds and to approve the 2024 Budget.

-Resolution 2023-1206B – Increase of Appropriations in the Police District

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve Resolution 23-1206B.

Roll call as follows:	Darryl Cordrey	Yes
	Mark Sousa	Yes
	Joe Rozzi	Yes

-Resolution 2023-1206C – Increase Salaries in the Fire Department

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve Resolution 23-1206C.

Roll call as follows:	Mark Sousa	Yes
	Joe Rozzi	Yes
	Darryl Cordrey	Yes

-Resolution No. 2023-1206D – Resolution Approving a Natural Gas Agreement with Direct Energy

Mr. Wright: Our Independent Energy consultant, Mr. Burns, went out to market with three different suppliers placing bids. With inflation we anticipated the price rise from the current natural gas aggregation cost we currently have. The current agreement with IGS Energy will expire March 1, 2024, with a rate of \$3.48/Mcf. Our consultant recommended agreeing to Direct Energy as our next natural gas supplier based on their bid at (today's rate) of \$5.377 Mcf for a two-year agreement.

Mr. Sousa: Remind the residents that this is an opt-out program, otherwise they will be automatically enrolled in the aggregate plan. Residents also have the option to shop around and choose their own natural gas and electric provider.

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve Resolution 23-1206D.

Roll call as follows:

	Joe Rozzi	Yes
	Darryl Cordrey	Yes
	Mark Sousa	Yes

-Resolution No. 2023-1206E- Resolution Approving ODNR Aquatic Education Grant Fund

Mr. Wright: This is a \$6,000 grant that is coming from ODNR that Ms. Early will use to improve the township parks.

Ms. Earley: Correct, this grant will be used to stock additional fish at Mounts Park for Fishing with the 5-O, event mailers to residents, educational signage. This is in addition to the annual fish stocking that takes place in April at Mounts Park with the original ODNR agreement.

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve Resolution 23-1206E.

Roll call as follows:	Mark Sousa	Yes
-----------------------	------------	-----

Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes

–Motion- Approve Then and Now Purchase Order for the Police Department

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve the Then and Now Purchase Order for the Police Department for health care.

Roll call as follows:	Darryl Cordrey	Yes
	Mark Sousa	Yes
	Joe Rozzi	Yes

–Motion- Approve Chase bank Site Plan Review

Mr. Yoder opened the Public Hearing for comments and swore all in the audience that would like to come forward who are in-favor or against the project.

Cathy Walton presented a Power Point with Chase Bank’s proposed site plan.

No public comments.

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to approve the Chase Bank Site Plan Review.

Roll call as follows:

Mark Sousa	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Joe Rozzi	Yes

- Motion – Approve Purchase of Cemetery Deeds

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Rozzi to purchase cemetery deeds.

Roll call as follows:

Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Mark Sousa	Yes



## **Public Comments**

Mr. Sousa opened the floor to the second public comments at 7:40 pm.

Mr. Sousa closed the floor to public comments at 7:40 pm.

## **Trustee Comments**

Mr. Rozzi: Reminder of the Tree Lighting at Station 76, with fireworks and a drone show, weather permitting.

Mr. Cordrey: The next Trustee Meeting will be held December 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. At that meeting the Employee Recognition Awards will be presented. Also, thank you to the Village of Marienville for their partnership in the Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Mr. Sousa: Compliments staff, Mr. Wright, and Chief Hughes for getting the budget together to present in tonight's meeting. Also, thank you to Mr. Goodhue and Ms. Earley for the presentation on Mounts Park.

## **Administrator's Report**

Jeff Wright:

- The Fire Department will be conducting interviews for the next coming weeks, for a full-time firefighter, and openings in the officer ranks. Fortunately, we have strong internal candidates that are applying for the positions.
- Ms. Early in Parks confirmed the shelter at Marr Park is completed. Mr. Wright and Mr. Pelfrey had the opportunity to see the shelter and excited for the residents to use it come Spring.
- Public Works has finished some of the road ratings. Mr. Pelfrey is done with the rankings with roads that will be deemed priority and will be discussed with Mr. Wright to then be sent to the Warren County Engineer Office. Lastly, Mr. Pelfrey ordered 400 tons of road salt that will be delivered tomorrow.
- The Police Department is working on an internal process as they have a vacant supervisor position. Also, this morning the department hosted a K-9 Training class with over a dozen agencies attending.
- Mr. Wright and Chief Hughes discussed the new State Issue 2, use of recreational marijuana that passed on the November 2<sup>nd</sup> ballot. With the guidance of Mr. Yoder and the legal team they will bring the issue to the board for ideas.

## **Executive Session**

Mr. Sousa made a motion at 7:45 pm with a second from Mr. Rozzi to enter Executive Session in reference to O.R.C. 121.22 (G)(8) to discuss negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance.

Roll call as follows:

Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Mark Sousa	Yes

Mr. Sousa made a motion with a second from Mr. Cordrey to come out of Executive Session and adjourn at 8:24 pm.

Roll call as follows:

Joe Rozzi	Yes
Darryl Cordrey	Yes
Mark Sousa	Yes