



WAYNE TOWNSHIP
BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO

SPECIAL TRUSTEES MEETING
SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

5967 Jacksonburg Road, Trenton, Ohio 45067 Phone 513-217-7317

Wayne Township Trustees

BILL JONES
ED TRUSTER
TIM TAYLOR

Fiscal Officer/ Zoning

LAURA DALEY

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Bill Jones called the special Trustees meeting to order at 7:00pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken; all members of the board were present.

REQUEST FOR RECUSAL

1. A MOTION TO RECUSE TRUSTEE EDWARD TRUSTER FROM THE SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2023 SPECIAL TRUSTEES MEETING.

A motion to recuse Trustee Ed Truster from the September 26th meeting was made by Trustee Bill Jones, followed by a second by Trustee Tim Taylor. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 Recused.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. A REQUEST TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING PERSONNEL MATTERS (ORC 121.22(G)(1)) referring to the appointment, employment, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, license, or regulated individual.

Trustee Bill Jones made a motion to go into executive session for the above stated purpose, followed by a second by Trustee Tim Taylor. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 recused.

The Trustees minus Edward Truster went into executive session at 7:02pm. A motion to come out of executive session was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Bill Jones. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 Recused. The Trustees came out of executive session at 7:25pm.



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AUDIENCE OF PUBLIC

Jason Knollman-spoke for some of the audience in attendance.

NEW BUSINESS

1. A MOTION TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS OF FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL AS FOLLOWS: (written resignations) COURTNEY WELLS, DOMINIC BRUNO, CHRIS LEWIS, CAMERON BARTLETT, AND AARON FOLEY. (Verbal resignation) SARAH BOULEY. (un-confirmed) OWEN STAMPER.

Trustee Bill Jones stated that it was unfortunate that these members decided to resign as an investigation of both sides of complaints had not been complete. After receiving the one side of complaints from officers against our upper officers, the Trustees reached out to our legal advisors within the Butler County Prosecutor's office. The Trustees are required to follow their legal advice, under this advice they were told to ask the accused to verify or rebut what was being accused of them, the Fire Chief was given a short amount of time to file a rebuttal along with any complaints the department may have against those making the accusations. Then the Trustees were to find an unbiased third party that resided in the Township, that could examine the complaint and give their suggestion of disciplinary action that needed to be taken against any of the parties named in said complaints. Unfortunately, before this investigation could be completed multiple members of the department took themselves out of service and turned in their equipment and resignation's. Giving the Trustees the choice to accept or decline the resignations. The Trustees felt as the member's who took themselves out of service were in direct violation of the Fire Department's SOP's, so the Trustees determined to accept the resignations at this time. Before this meeting the investigation report was returned to the Trustees that had been completed by the third party and it was found that most complaints were of a personal nature. There were some concerns that will be addressed later in the meeting.

Trustee Tim Taylor accepted the motion to accept the resignations, followed by a second by Trustee Bill Jones. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 Recused.

2. POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL.

Trustee Bill Jones stated that after receiving the report of the investigation that was partially able to be completed before those members that filed the complaint's resigned, it was found that the Fire Chief would be held to make sure that the Fire reports are to be filed monthly and in a timely manner. This is something that can be delegated to other members in the department but ultimately the Chief would be held responsible to make sure this was done. Next the Trustee's felt that the SOP's should be reviewed again and as they were told that one of the officer's that resigned was in the process of working on them, they would need to be updated within one year. They then stated that after reviewing the report of the investigation, they suggested the demotion of Captain Daniel Hoit as he was responsible for filing the reports and it was found that he had fallen behind on this responsibility several times. The Trustees repeated that most of the complaint's were found to be personal in nature and that the officers had a difference in opinion on how a rural volunteer department should be handled. The complaint's against Asst. Fire Chief Edward Truster, and Captain Cindy Phillips were unfounded.



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Trustee Tim Taylor spoke regarding the actions that were taken in this meeting, stating he understands where some of the complaints were coming from but that we are still a volunteer department. He feels it is very unfortunate that there was this much strife within the department and that it could not be resolved within the department and had to be brought to the Trustees. He explained for being a rural volunteer department, our residents have always supported our Fire Department. We have very nice equipment, and the Trustees are constantly bragging on how great of a job our members do for such little pay. He emphasized the fact that the day of a Volunteer department being successful seems to be behind us and feels that if we could have waited it out a bit longer, things may have turned out differently. He explained he's been a part of either the Fire Department or a member of the Board of Trustees for 40 years now, he sees everyone's views, but is saddened that those that considered each other family allowed this happen.

NEXT MEETING

- October 16th, 2023 at 7pm Regular Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:41pm by Trustee Bill Jones, followed by a second by Tim Taylor. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 recused.