



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

**REGULAR TRUSTEES MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES**  
**OCTOBER 23, 2023 (POSTPONED)**

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

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Wayne Township Trustees

BILL JONES  
ED TRUSTER  
TIM TAYLOR

Fiscal Officer/ ZONING

LAURA DALEY

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the pledge of allegiance to our flag.

ROLL CALL

PRESENTATIONS

1. Dan Deters- Energy Alliance - Community Aggregate Q &A  
Mr. Deters quickly reviewed that this aggregate issue would be on the November ballot for Wayne Township's residents to vote on. He asked if there were any questions regarding the aggregate. Some questions were asked regarding opting out, where the savings were, how long of a contract would the Township be in and how often the contract is negotiated.

AUDIENCE OF PUBLIC

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- September 18th, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
- September 26th, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes
- October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve all of the above listed minutes was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Ed Truster. Roll call was taken; 3 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent.

REPORTS

- Fiscal Officer
- Fire - Trustee Bill Jones wanted to clarify that at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting he and Tim had made a recommendation to Chief Hoit that Captain Daniel Hoit be demoted from his officer position, he stated that it was brought to his attention that it came off that the Trustees were demoting him, when in fact the SOG's state that any discipline within the dept is done by the Chief. He apologized that it came off



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

as him disciplining the Captain and stated that it was just a recommendation and up to the chief to decide what to do with the recommendation.

- Road – Tolbert road paving resolution for the County is due next month but he is trying to gather information as the quote had increased dramatically from last year to this year. He will gather more information before the resolution is presented at the November meeting.
- Zoning  
All reports are attached.

**UNFINISHED BUISNESS**

1. None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO PURCHASE THE ESO FIRE REPORTING SOFTWARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4025.00.

A motion to approve the purchase was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Bill Jones. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 abstain.

2. A MOTION TO APPROVE ANDREW SCHAFFER TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ROSTER AS AN FIREFIGHTER PENDING HIS BACKGROUND CHECK, DRIVING ABSTRACT, PHYSICAL, AND DRUG SCREENING.

A motion to approve the purchase was made by Trustee Tim Trustee, followed by a second by Trustee Bill Jones. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 abstain.

3. A MOTION TO APPROVE A PAY INCREASE FOR MAINTENANCE EMPLOYEE CHRIS AMBURGEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3.00 PER HOUR, BRINGING HIM TO \$22.50 AN HOUR RETROACTIVE TO OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2023. THIS WAGE IS BASED ON EMPLOYEE DECLINING INSURANCE BENEFITS AND HIS 6 MONTH EVALUATION INCREASE.

A motion to approve was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Ed Truster. Roll call was taken; 3 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent.

4. A MOTION TO APPROVE THE FIRE CHIEF OR FISCAL OFFICER TO PURCHASE A USED FULL SIZE UTILTY TRUCK IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$30,000.00) PLUS THE COST EQUIP WITH LIGHTS SIRENS, RADIO AND DECALS FROM ROSE AUTOMOTIVE TO SERVE AS A UTILITY VEHICLE FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND FOR THE FIRE CHIEF OR FISCAL OFFICER TO SIGN ANY NECCESARY OR RELATED DOCUMENTS THERETO AND TO CREATE A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THIS AMOUNT FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

A motion to approve the purchase was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Bill Jones. Roll call was taken; 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent, 1 abstain.



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

LEGISLATION

1. RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR.

A motion to accept the amounts and rates and certifying them to the County auditor was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Ed Trustee. Roll call was taken; 3 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent.

AUDIENCE OF PUBLIC

Kathy McIntosh – 3623 Mill Road – asked why the recycling bins were removed from Wayne Township? She stated that Madison still has them and they don't seem to have any issues with theirs. Road superintendent Austin Young stated that for years they were abused, we tried to place signs, cameras, even to the point of trying to prosecute the individuals that we had caught to no prevail. The amount of time that the road crew spent cleaning the area became a nuisance and waste of tax payors dollars.

She went onto state that she served at a Fire Dept. as a Firefighter/Paramedic for 40 years and realizes our department is going through some strife. She wanted to offer her assistance as far as meeting with the Chief and help to kind of audit the department to see that we are in compliance with standard operating procedures.

Trustee Bill Jones stated that he reached out to the State Fire Marshall's office to do something similar, but they stated that is not a service they offered. She then stated she set up a private email that resident's or employees of the fire dept. could use to share or summarize their complaints and or issues, and she would be the one to access this and it would not be directly related to the Township. The trustees stated that if she met with the Chief and he wished for her assistance that would be fine about would be left up to the Chief.

AUDIENCE OF TRUSTEES

Trustee Bill Jones stated that he would like to comment on a public statement made by Jason Knollman at our previous Trustees meeting. He stated that the statement was made in detail and he would like to respond to at least a couple of the statement made for now. Trustee Jones Comments regarding the statement is as follows;

Jason Knollman, a resident of Wayne Twp, A member of the Wayne Twp Fire Department and is a full time employee of the Liberty Twp Butler County Ohio fire department. As you can see by this statement alone, Mr. Knollman surely sounds quite qualified to have knowledge is the operations of a fire department.

A few weeks ago, Mr. Knollman stood up in a Wayne Twp public/recorded meeting making accusations about the Wayne Twp Fire department and EMS. We, as trustees, were not afforded a list of the things Mr. Knollman claims are wrong with the department so we could not respond at that time to his accusations.

Now that we have had the time to investigate his accusations, we are able to address each one in an open, public meeting.



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

1. Mr. Knollman wrote, “ About a week ago, six members of this organization resigned. As I understand it, there has been no attempt to contact them or gather an understanding as to why they ultimately resigned. That’s rather concerning.”

As you will see in the coming meetings where this and other accusations are being addressed, Mr. Knollman and the people he represents only give you a small portion on the big picture to exaggerate their desires for discord. All of this was started by Courtney Wells making verbal complaints to me about the Fire Chief, The Fire Assistant Chief, The Fire Captain, and Captain Cindy Phillips of EMS. I asked why these concerns were not being addressed to the Fire Chief and she basically said the Chief won’t listen and does nothing. In essence, I told her to get me all her complaints in writing and the proof she has as to her accusations. I advised them that these complaints would be given to the Fire Chief for review.

Once reviewed by the fire chief, he addressed these complaints and made written complaints about the 4 people who were making complaints against him and Wayne Twp. The chief’s written complaints were then given to the complaining fire members through Courtney Wells. In the chief’s comments were recommendations to the trustees to dismiss Courtney Wells, Dominic Bruno, Chris Wells, and Aaron Foley.

We discussed this matter with the Butler County Prosecutor’s and with the Fire chief’s recommendation of termination, we need to have a Twp citizen review all complaints to determine what complaints were valid. This job was turned over to our former Board of Zoning Appeals Chair Carlene Yeager.

Carlene reviewed the complaints and only found the complaints about the fire chief and Captain Hoit not keeping proper records were valid and something needed to be done. Also in this report, Ms. Yeager recommended termination as did the fire chief. This report was provided to all parties and made a public record. Also, Carlene Yeager suggested that Chief Hoit and Courtney Wells meet one last time to see if they can work out a solution to this entire deal. The meeting was set up, Chief Hoit agreed to meet but Courtney Wells refused to meet. I believe it was the day after this refusal to meet, the resignations came in.

We as a township wanted to see if there was any way to solve these problems between the complaining parties but the disgruntled, through Courtney Wells, refused and then resigned. To

me, this shows exactly what they were trying to do instead of their claim to help and better the fire service for our residents. They felt they lost and quit. But they were not done yet, now this group of disgruntled are posting false and inflammatory messages on social media.



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

To answer your concerning questions why we did not ask them about their resignations, I don't think it takes much to understand why these people immediately resigned believing they were going to be terminated. To protect themselves with other departments and their current or future employment in the business, they all resigned from Wayne Township instead of having a termination on their records.

2. In your written statement you said, "48 people had made the decision to no longer volunteer their time to this department in just a few short years."

As before, you failed to give all the information and made statements as to why they quit. I can understand why names would not be used but we, as a township, are going further to give out information about these accusations. It does not matter what position or job they did while at Wayne Twp, it matters as to why they left. In your written statement, you said, "almost everyone said the same thing....". This was about why they left.

What are the names of these 44 people so we can confer or deny your accusations. You are the one saying this, and we have no proof.

The Twp was concerned with this accusation, and we have a very long and detailed response.

a. To come up with the somewhat same number of people that you claim left in "a few shorts years", our investigation came up with 48 people who left the department and we had to go back to the 2014-year roster, 9 YEARS AGO. I do not consider 9 years a few short years, again an exaggeration on your part again to try to obtain discord.

b. Our records show:

7 moved out of the area.

3 were hired pending certification and they failed to gain their certifications.

4 had changes in their family circumstances.

1. Friends with people who left.

7 were terminated for multiple reasons including but not limited to insubordination, failure to comply with mandatory training, threats of violence toward other members, violence against another member, showing up to call with no medical leave clearance.

14 had full-time job commitments and had a lack of time to devote to the department.



**WAYNE TOWNSHIP**  
**BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

2 medical concerns.

1 reported burnout

7 recent resignations

2 reported had issues with other departments where one member had a dispute with a deputy and the fire chief and walked off a scene and the other had issues from other employment.

At least, without giving names, we did our homework and reported to the best of our ability why people left. Through Courtney Wells reporting to me directly about a certain person who left "because of Cindy Phillips", I called and spoke with this individual myself. The reason this person left is because he/she could not afford to advance to paramedic

because of the cost. This person got out of nursing and the fire service all together and perused employment in the private sector.

c. To address another area of concern concerning turnover, this is not only a problem for Wayne Twp but also for Butler County, Ohio, and the entire country.

1. Of those who do and can participate in the fire/Ems fields, there is a monetary war going on between neighboring departments for pay. All departments need people and feel if they pay more, they will attract people no matter where they come from. Smaller departments have a huge problem trying to fight this monetary battle with other departments with larger budgets.

2. Young people coming into the field have a hard time getting a full-time job. They apply to a host of small-time departments, get on for the experience and then leave when they are offered a full-time well-paying job in larger departments elsewhere. This is not only a problem with smaller departments but with larger departments as well.

In a report released by the U.S about fire departments, the following information was shared:

1. NFPA reports in 2020, there was a 6% nationwide decrease in volunteer fire fighters from 2019.
2. 82% of the 24, 452 fire departments in the US are all or mostly volunteer.
3. 37% of these fire departments provide no medical services.
4. 46% of those who do provide medical services provide basic life support services.
5. 17 % provided Advanced Life Support.



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## **BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO**

To me, these numbers bring home the truth about Wayne Twp. We are struggling just like everyone else. It is amazing to me that a very small rural department like Wayne Twp can serve as an Advanced Life Support provider at all. I can tell you this, with what we have, the residents are lucky to have these dedicated people. These are the ones who sacrifice themselves and their families to serve our citizens. It appears that others, who are disgruntled and quit when they are losing, resign and complain instead of staying around, working out any problems that may exist to better the department for the future. To me, that shows where their intentions are and have been all along. He stated that there were many more comments that he will address but does not want to take up more time so they will be addressed at future meetings.

Trustee Tim Taylor stated how disappointed he was that this issue has come to the surface as it has, he is disappointed in those Fire members that have tried to instill fear in our resident's as the resident's have never been in any danger. The Fire Department is doing a fine job of getting to calls and some of our members are exhausting themselves to pick up the slack that this disruption has caused, but still calls are being covered and the residents are safe. He reiterated how upsetting it is that a group of our members would want to try to spread false accusations and try to instill fear when it is not warranted. He expressed that we are a rural volunteer department and cannot be compared to, nor held to the same standards as some of the full-time department's elsewhere that these individual's work for.

Trustee Edward Truster stated that he is not going to comment further on the department as he has served for many years as the Fire Chief, but wants to reassure our resident's that the department's number one priority is the safety of our resident's and that will never change.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

### NEXT MEETING

- November 20th, 2023 at 7pm Regular Meeting. This meeting is during the week of Thanksgiving.

### ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Tim Taylor, followed by a second by Trustee Ed Truster. Roll call was taken; 3 ayes, 0 nays, 0 absent. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm.