



The Board of Trustees of Bath Township met on Thursday, **December 5, 2023**, in the Township Boardroom, 2880 Ada Road, Lima, Ohio.

Members Present: Brad Baxter
Mike Meeks
Micah Hollinger

Chairman Brad Baxter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The minutes of the regular meeting of November 30, 2023, were approved as presented. Motion by Mr. Meeks, seconded by Mr. Hollinger and passed by a roll call vote.

FISCAL OFFICER'S BUSINESS

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-1: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby approves the proposal and contract with Medical Mutual, as the provider for healthcare/medical insurance and appoints Grady Enterprises as the Agent of Record for 2024.

Discussion: Mr. Baxter explained this is standard practice to review the healthcare plan on a yearly basis. This year the Township is realizing a savings of 18% to go with the a renewal option through Medical Mutual. Motion made by Mr. Baxter, seconded by Mr. Hollinger, and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-2: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby authorizes the Fiscal Officer to accept a check in the amount of \$1,103.04 from the Bath Twp. Fire Dept. Foundation Inc., to cover the basic cable television service portion of the fire department's Spectrum bill (\$91.92/month) for a period of twelve (12) months.

Discussion: Mr. Baxter explained that Foundations can pay for monthly expenses in situations like this. Motion made by Mr. Baxter, seconded by Mr. Hollinger, and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-3: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby authorizes the Fiscal Officer to set up a Hi-Fi Savings Account for public funds customers with First National Bank of Pandora, at an interest rate of 5.59 % (rate fluctuates) to be set up as a sweep account for the main operating checking account, and to maintain a minimum balance of \$10,000.00 in the main operating checking account at all times.

Discussion: Mr. Baxter explained this is not something out of the ordinary for public entities to do. Motion made by Mr. Baxter, seconded by Mr. Hollinger, and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-4: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby approves retaining the firm of Brosius, Johnson, & Griggs LLC of Dublin, Ohio for 2024.

Discussion: Mr. Baxter explained this is follow up from the last meeting to continue to use this firm for any zoning or economic development related questions or work in 2024. Motion made by Mr. Baxter, seconded by Mr. Hollinger, and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-5: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby approves a RESOLUTION DETERMINING TO PROCEED WITH THE SUBMISSION TO THE ELECTORS OF BATH TOWNSHIP THE QUESTION OF AN ADDITIONAL TAX LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL LIMITATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING TOWNSHIP ROADS, PURSUANT TO SECTION 5705.19(G) OF THE REVISED CODE. Mr. Baxter discussed how the resolution of need was passed at the last meeting, and since then he has had some reconsiderations. Mr. Baxter believes now that it might be more difficult to get a larger tax increase passed at one time between two levies, and the Fire Department is in position of greater need while the Road Department has a carryover available. The Road Department Fund is still in need, but for March 2024 election purposes, the Fire levy should be considered first to put the Township's best effort forth. Mr. Meeks stated he believed the request for funds for the Road Department should continue as Mr. Baxter had several good points addressed at the last meeting on why it was necessary to begin with. Mr. Hollinger agreed that good arguments were made at the last meeting, and the voters should be presented with the information and have the ability to make the decision. Motion made by Mr. Meeks, seconded by Mr. Hollinger, and passed by majority rule vote (Mr. Baxter voted no, Mr. Hollinger voted yes, and Mr. Meeks voted yes).

RESOLUTION 12-5-23-6: The Board of Trustees of Bath Township, Allen County, Ohio hereby approves the RESOLUTION DETERMINING TO PROCEED WITH THE SUBMISSION TO THE ELECTORS OF BATH TOWNSHIP THE QUESTION OF AN ADDITIONAL TAX LEVY IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL LIMITATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, PURSUANT TO SECTION 5705.19(I) OF THE REVISED CODE. Discussion: Mr. Baxter explained that several discussions have already taken place about the Fire Department and the need for an additional levy to pass. Prior conversation has discussed deep cuts to services that are necessary to keep the Fire Department operational. Nothing has changed on the need. Motion made by Mr. Baxter seconded by Mr. Hollinger and passed by unanimous roll call vote.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The fiscal officer reported as of December 2, 2023, the checking account balance First National Bank \$2,369,875.85; Star Ohio balance \$106,033.90 for a total amount of all funds at \$2,475,909.75.

<u>ARP FUNDS:</u>	
The ARP Funding Balances are as follows:	
Total Funds Received (2021)	\$496,457.46
Total Funds Received (2022)	\$497,135.04
Total Funds Disbursed:	\$558,032.29
Total Available/Remaining Balance	\$435,560.21

BILLS FOR PAYMENT

Breakdown of bills for approval:

Payroll Total:	\$28,896.89
Expenditures/Bills	\$97,866.00
Total	\$126,762.89

Mr. Baxter moved, and Mr. Hollinger seconded the motion to pay the December 5, 2023, bills in the amount of \$126,762.89. Motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Reports Emailed to Trustees: Payment Listing 12/2/23, Fund Status 12/2/23, Revenue Status 12/2/23. Mr. Baxter, Mr. Hollinger, and Mr. Meeks confirmed they received these reports.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

The November 2023 bank account reconciliation was completed.

Fiscal Officer Josh Luke requested a motion from the Trustees to be able to process a third payroll in December to assist with wrapping up the year end in a timely manner. Historically the third payroll has always happened at the end of December. Mr. Luke also requested all departments to have any invoices and purchases completed so they could be processed and approved at the 12/19/23 Trustees meeting. Township Secretary Tammy Jay asked for clarification if the departments should have all items in by Thursday, December 14th for processing. Mr. Luke stated this was correct. Mr. Baxter made a motion for the December 19th meeting to be the year end meeting and authorized completing December payroll early, as well as any other necessary purchases to be made early in December to assist with year-end. Mr. Meeks seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote.

CORRESPONDENCE

Received a letter from the Allen County Auditor's Office verifying that the recent street light fund supplemental appropriations passed through resolution 11-7-23-1 have been verified and do not exceed the last amended official estimate of resources for the 2023 fiscal year.

Received a letter from the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services in regard to a change in Ohio law. The change affects the number of determination notices that we receive after individuals we formally employed apply for unemployment benefits. The Township will receive notices when applicable and should appeal if we disagree with them.

Received a letter from AEP for confirmation that we have chosen to switch to Dynegy as the new generation supplier. This is in regard to the previous decision made by Allen County. The switch becomes effective with the December 18, 2023 meter reading date.

TRUSTEES BUSINESS

Mr. Baxter continued the discussion from the last meeting regarding how to assist with funding the Fire Department and best ways to provide financial support for the Fire Fund. Advances from the General Fund to be paid back once the Fire Department receives their first half tax revenue appears to be the only option. The Fire Fund has roughly \$76,000 left to cover through the end of December. Mr. Baxter did mention how Chief Joe Kitchen brought it his attention on the possibility of a Tax Anticipation Note if the renewal levy passes, and under this note, up to 50% of the projected revenue can be received and then paid back. This is generally under a very low interest rate (possibly 0%) and a very low fee structure. Mr. Baxter mentioned this could be an option to look at. Mr. Hollinger thinks that we should not consider a loan of this nature that has a cost to it, when we can just use money from the general fund. Mr. Baxter mentioned providing additional information on this option. Mr. Hollinger also recommended using some of the ARP funds to cover the Fire Department. Mr. Baxter clarified all of these funds need to be appropriated by the end of 2024. Mr. Hollinger reinforced using a portion of that money now.

Mr. Baxter brought up discussion on how the Fire Department should be operating. Should it be operating one a one call at a time basis with 2 Full-Time available per shift, or should there be considerations to stop EMS services, and first responder services could be provided while another municipality or private company could transport to the hospital? Chief Joe Kitchen spoke on 2 full-time firefighters at a time and how that operates. Mr. Hollinger thinks it's not a good idea to eliminate EMS revenue options by stopping EMS services. Mr. Meeks agreed. General consensus amongst the Trustees was to operate on the calls the Fire Department receives, one at a time, doing what they can.

Additional cuts were discussed. Mr. Baxter mentioned proposals from Chief Kitchen that have already went into effect, with more to come. Chief Kitchen clarified that there has already been a 70% cut in part-time employee hours, with further cuts planned for January, February, and no part-time hours scheduled by March 2024. There are currently only 6 part-time employees with the Fire Department.

Mr. Baxter requested an executive session to "To consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotions, demotion, or compensation of a public official."

Mr. Meeks had conversation with Union Chapel church on the upcoming ODOT roundabout project. Consideration for new drive access off of Mirror Lake. The entrance from Thayer Rd. to the parking lot will be closed.

Mr. Hollinger had no additional discussion items at this time.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Road Superintendent Gary Jay mentioned the plow trucks are ready, and small projects are currently being completed.

Fire Department - Chief Kitchen stated there were 1,497 year to date calls for service, and provided the following statement:

The following is a statement from Bath Township Fire Department Chief Joseph Kitchen:

"I remain saddened and disappointed in reference to the failure of the Bath Township Fire Levy on November 7th. However, I am encouraged by the number of voters who did support this ballot initiative. I am thankful that Bath residents will have another opportunity to take a second look at this critical funding request and I feel hopeful that it will pass on March 19th.

In the meantime, I pledge to continue to work hard to provide emergency services to our Bath Township friends and neighbors even as it becomes more difficult. I appreciate the hard work and dedication of the men and women of our organization and I will do everything I can to support them and keep them safe from harm."

Joseph L. Kitchen, Bath Twp. Fire Chief

Zoning Inspector/Fire Inspector Ken Meyer reviewed his zoning report with the Trustees.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

There were (23) twenty three from the public in attendance.

Liz Ebbing, 1382 Fetter Rd – What’s the status of a replacement sign for out in front of the Township building? Mr. Baxter answered that it is currently in the works.

Becky Dunahay, 504 Alton Ave – Concerns continue with the neighbor’s property at 502 Alton Ave. She is very appreciative of Joe and Ken’s support and help. She also recently attended the Allen County Board of Health’s meeting. She has new photo evidence of broken doors and windows that are not sealed. Recently they experiences a nuisance at 1:00 AM over the weekend from possible squatters at the property. She has information on Ohio Revised Code 505.86 that permits the Board of Trustees to work with the Fire Chief to remove a property, and is again asking for the Township’s help for a solution. She also expressed her willingness to do her part to help support the Fire Department. Mr. Baxter stated the history is there with this issue, and the Trustees will pursue information. Mr. Meeks stated he would discuss ORC 505.86 with Kayla at the Prosecutor’s Office.

Tony Kroeger, 3803 Stewart Rd – He is a former full-time firefighter with the Township. The Fire Department needs the 3 full-time firefighters on shift. He asked why cuts weren’t previously in place to curb spending years ago instead of dealing with it all at once now so full-time firefighters were protected? Mr. Baxter answered that in his time as Trustee, he’s obtained a much better handle on financial situations within the township over the last year. Previous expectations were to have more time to consider things like additional levies but the reality of the situation was much more urgent than previously expected. A lot of factors have contributed to the financial situation such as rising costs and expenses. Mr. Kroeger asked why cuts weren’t at least implemented earlier in the year then? Mr. Baxter answered conversations on the Fire Department and options have been taking place since at least April 2023 and the effort has been in place to come up with solutions. Mr. Kroeger’s last comment was for the Township to not cut EMS.

Clarence Roller, 3920 E. Bluelick Rd – 2 people per shift at the Fire Department is not acceptable. HE doesn’t care where or how the Trustees come up with the money but demanded action now. The ARP funds are sitting there, use that money for the Fire Department.

Roy Hollenbacher, 150 St. Andrews Blvd. – Roy represents the Union, and asked about any considerations being made to fund a campaign for the Fire Department additional tax levy? Mr. Hollenbacher discussed the previous donations that were made and efforts put in place by multiple funds and parties to do all of the signage, graphics, mailer, and advertising. Mr. Hollenbacher urged consideration for what can be done to assist the efforts. Mr. Hollenbacher is also not in favor of tax abatements for large companies. Efforts should be made by the Trustees to connect with local business leadership to make sure they are understanding of the situation the Fire Department is in, and to see what assistance they are willing to provide.

Crystal Plumpe, 3535 N. Cool Rd. – Reiterated Mr. Hollenbacher’s point that many different donations paid for all previous campaigning materials. Large efforts were made by the Fire Department personnel to get the word out.

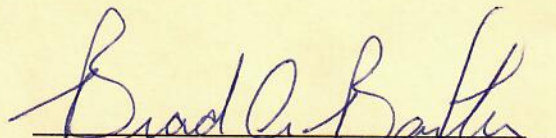
Brandon Webb, 3232 Cynthia Drive – Thanks the Board for pursuing the Road Department levy early before major issues arise.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bath Township will be held **December 19, 2023, @ 7:00 p.m.** in the Township Boardroom


Mr. Baxter moved, and Mr. Hollinger seconded the motion to recess the regular meeting at 8:56 p.m. and go into executive session at 9:15 p.m. It was determined to end the executive session at 9:22 p.m.

Upon returning to the regular meeting Mr. Baxter made a motion and Mr. Meeks seconded the motion to accept a savings on a new dental plan with Delta Dental, no cost increases for the vision plan, and new life insurance options that present a savings and new features. A resolution will be on the agenda for the next regular meeting. Motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote. No further action was taken in the regular session.

Being of no further business, Mr. Baxter moved, and Mr. Meeks seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m. Motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.



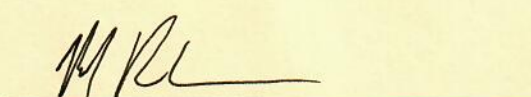
Brad Baxter, Chairman



Josh Luke, Fiscal Officer



Mike Meeks, Vice Chairman



Micah Hollinger, Trustee