

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of **Greenfield Township Trustees** *Special Meeting*

May 20, 2024 - Held 6:00 PM

The Greenfield Township Trustees met in special session at the Township Administrative Office. Trustee Searle called the meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Dave Cotner, Lonnie Kosch and Kent Searle were present. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed road levy for Greenfield Township.

Tom Shafer, Road and Cemetery Superintendent, began the meeting by reading briefly from the proposal he had prepared for the Board, with five main items:

“Trustees and Fiscal Officer:

I have been researching the needs of the Road Department, and the justification of a road levy. Here are just a few items to consider why additional money is needed to cover the costs associated with, but not limited to, running a Road Department:

1. Road maintenance: increased housing and population growth in the area has also increased the vehicular traffic. That alone has put a strain on the roads that needs addressed. Chip sealing roads for the last 50+ years has run its course. There’s still a place for it from a surface wearing course perspective, but we are in need of a more permanent, long term solution to get rough, narrow roads leveled up with hot mix bituminous asphalt and make them safer. The current cost to pave one mile of road with bituminous asphalt at an inch and a half deep and 22 feet wide is about \$140,000. That should be a mile. Slower production work like housing subdivisions or short roads with intersections can see prices up to \$150,000 per mile. For example: Plum Road, which is a main township road used by bus drivers and students for Bloom Carroll Schools, is 2.25 miles long. It would cost us approximately \$315,000 to resurface the road with blacktop at today’s current prices. This cost is going to continue to elevate in the future.
2. Several of our trucks and road mowers are at the point where they need to be replaced and one vehicle in particular might be considered unsafe because of the extensive rust and corrosion. I have attached a list of trucks and equipment with the age, respectfully, so you can see at a glance the age of the unit and what it is. Most of the equipment and trucks that we have in the fleet are in decent shape mechanically and appearance-wise; however, given the age of most of the fleet parts availability can and has presented a problem because some of the equipment and components that are used are specialty use, such as valve bodies, electrical solenoids, switches, etc.
3. More manpower is needed on a more permanent basis. While I oversee approximately 37 miles of roads and maintain seven cemeteries, my job as Road and Cemetery Supervisor has given me an increase in clerical duties and paperwork in recent years. A few other things that are increased that are not limited to is phone calls, emails, responding and composing them, walk-ins that are needing basic information on our roads, or having zoning issues, walk-ins that are needing assistance with purchasing a cemetery plot, etc. We currently have two full-time employees and one part-time employee. The part-time employee can only work a maximum of 29 hours per week. In previous years, we never had to adhere to employees working a limited number of hours on a weekly basis. In previous years, there were three full-time employees and three part-time employees. With my job requiring me to be at my desk more often, that only

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leaves one full-time employee to handle road work duties by himself if I'm busy, and that presents a safety issue when an employee is working by himself out along the roadway.

Another topic to talk about and consider is my length of employment at the Township. I have worked here at the Road Department and 15 of those years were under the supervision and direction of Lonnie Kosch. The shortened and condensed version of this comparison is that I was the successor to Lonnie. I had 15 years of training under him to learn and prepare for the role of Road Supervisor. I currently have no successor to replace me or to step down and move on to another chapter in my life. The township residents deserve an employee that has had proper training, has had an opportunity to absorb and learn the role of Road Supervisor and Cemetery Sexton with the same length of time that I learned under. This needs to be a priority for additional discussion in the very near future. We also need to have discussion on increasing wages, and the need to give serious consideration on adding several more people soon.

4. I have every intention to continue to participate in the Ohio Public Works Commission grant opportunity. We can get jobs that have a large dollar amount attached to them funded for a fraction of the cost through OPWC and with the help of the Fairfield County Engineers. The Township's portion that pays 26% of the total project costs additional funding for the Road Department will help offset the cost that can easily reach into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and with increased funding, we can continue to make our roads safer for the residents and the motoring public.
5. The road levy that we currently have in place was voted on in 2001, and elected on in 2002. It currently generates \$125,545. A replacement levy at today's value would generate \$252,669 at 1 mill. I hope I don't even need to explain how much we have seen a tremendous cost increase with everything and all the changes we have seen in the last 23 years, but I will. The road levy we are working off of was voted for and passed two months after the World Trade Centers collapsed; gasoline was \$1.46 per gallon, minimum wage in Ohio was \$4.25 an hour, and the average median income was \$42,350. Today, gas is \$3.66 a gallon, minimum wage in Ohio is \$10.45 and the average medium wage is \$75,580.

Here are a few examples that I and we face daily as we try to provide a continued service to the residents while utilizing a shortfall of funds:

The average to pave one mile of road was about \$27,000 in 2003. Today, it is closer to \$140,000. I had a 135 percent increase, but I was told that it was closer to 520 percent increase and an average of 6.75 annually with the big spike that took place during the COVID years, just like everything else did. We purchased a one-ton truck in 2003 for \$25,000. That same truck that is rusty, and very much needs to be replaced at today's cost is going to be around \$110,000".

Tom explained he went on to compare the Road funds that were available and appropriated from the 2014 budget to the 2024 budget. These numbers were part of the first packet (Fund Status Report Sheets) he had previously provided to the Board. He also pointed out he had updated some of the numbers that were previously provided to the Board. On the 2014 Road, Fire and General funds, he had incorrect numbers for the Fire Department. The former number for 2014 for Fire was \$1,172,100. Their

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number as of today, since the beginning of 2024, is \$2,384,187.43, so that is a 49 percent increase.

Discussion continued as to whether the original levy should be kept in place, in case the new levy didn't pass. In that way, there would still be a levy in place to generate funds. Lt. Reaves suggested that the former levy should be left in place, and then have the new levy at the appropriate millage to complement the first levy. Trustee Kosch also noted the levy needs to be specific in its language so it can be used for the intended needs of the Department. It was noted that a sample resolution for the road levy had been received from Amy at the Prosecutor's Office. Fiscal Officer Kull confirmed that she had spoken with the Prosecutor's Office to ensure the language could be amended according to what the Board decided on millage and dollar amount. She went on to explain the three-pronged approach of the levy: First prong: 50 percent to be used for road updating and improvements, i.e. paving, etc.; Second prong: additional full-time employee for salary and benefits; remainder: upgrading and replacing equipment. There is a page included in the packet that shows the equipment list with the age of each item.

Discussion continued as to the millage on the levy and the cost. A one mill levy would be \$35 per \$100,000; a two mill would be \$70 per \$100,000; a 1.75 mill would be approximately \$60 per \$100,000. The average cost in the Township would be approximately \$210 per year.

The group also discussed the verbiage needed on the levy, as well as the timeline, and getting the word out to the public by various means. Open meetings for people to ask questions, as well as pamphlets or flyers, and social media sites were noted. In terms of the timeline, Fiscal Officer Kull explained she had a draft resolution from Amy Brown-Thompson at the Prosecutor's Office, and she had been given the okay to amend the resolution per the decisions made at the current meeting for millage. Then, the resolution can be presented at the next Trustee Meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 for approval. At the following Trustee Meeting, another resolution needs to be approved to give Tom Shafer enough time to gather all the documentation that is needed to provide to the Prosecutor's Office and the Auditor's Office so they can finalize the paperwork. Then, they can give the information to the Board of Elections by August 1, 2024. She noted the Auditor's Office will be in the midst of the budget process in July, so the sooner the information can be submitted to them, the better.

Trustee Searle reviewed the proposed levy information as presented: 50 percent for upgrading roads; funds for an additional full-time employee, and the third item should say operating expenses instead of saying Road and Cemetery. Lt. Reaves pointed out that it needs to be an operational levy, so if money is needed from a different line item, it will give more flexibility; money can be moved from one line item to another. This will cover everything across the board.

Jeff Williamsen, 1201 Winding Oak Drive, suggested if the proposed levy was being considered between two and two and a half mills, it should be done at two and a half. Tom Shafer noted the two and half mills would generate \$631,000, which would double his budget. For a \$300,000 property, it would cost \$262 per year. Tom also reported that he had recently gotten a quote from Shelly Company for \$169,000 to put a one inch level coat of hot mix asphalt down on the entire length of Brook Road - 2.26 miles. He stated that the roads in the township are structurally sound; however, there comes a time when they need more attention than they have

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received. It was noted that the roads need to be maintained for safety for the public service and school buses.

Discussion continued to make a decision on the millage to be sought: two or two and a half mills. Various factors were discussed, including the cost of living, income of the residents, the time frame since the last levy, the average cost of houses in the township, etc. A question arose which needs to be clarified by the Prosecutor's Office: Will the levy apply to the incorporated or unincorporated area of the township.

The next steps of the process were outlined as follows: The "Declaration of Necessity" is approved by the Board. Then, it is presented to the Auditor's Office, and they then give the Fiscal Officer a "Certificate of Estimated Tax Revenue". When this is received, then the Prosecutor's Office - Amy Brown-Thompson - is notified, and she will prepare the "Resolution to Proceed" for the Board's consideration. This should be done at the first meeting in June, and then with no other issues or concerns, that gives the remainder of June to get the information gathered and submitted to the Auditor's Office. That gives them enough time to finalize the process on their end so it can go to the Board of Elections in July. Although it is a tight timeline, the work that Tom had done with the Auditor's Office prior to the meeting had gathered most of the information needed. It was also noted that a Special Trustee Meeting can be called, if needed, in order to meet the deadline. Fiscal Officer Kull will follow-up with Amy tomorrow for clarification on the incorporated vs. unincorporated question. Lt. Reaves reiterated that the resolution needs to state that it is an operational levy, and also needs to state everything that is covered under that resolution; the verbiage must be correct.

Trustee Searle raised the issue of cemetery equipment being included in the resolution, but that is something that will need to be clarified with Amy. Tom explained that some of the mowing equipment needs to be used interchangeably due to the needs of the area being maintained. It was also pointed out that the wages for the part-time employee must be paid out of the cemetery funds when he cuts grass in the cemetery. The road funds cannot be used.

Lt. Reaves reiterated that once the resolution is in place, the committee needs to be formed for the levy, and a pamphlet with explanation of the levy needs to be created. He stated both Chief Smith and Cpt. Spires can assist with this process, since they have experience with it. He also suggested making a Facebook page for the Road and Cemetery Department to get the word out. He explained a geofence with specific mileage radius can be attached to the page in order to maintain the area of where the page will reach, i.e. Greenfield Township, and it will be sent out multiple times to target the residents in the township who have a Facebook page. He also suggested the Fire Department can include the information on their page.

It was confirmed that no motion was needed at this time, as the resolution will be ready for a vote at the next Trustee Meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2024.

With no further business to come before the Board, Trustee Cotner made a motion to adjourn; Trustee Kosch seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Searle: Yes Kosch: Yes Cotner: Yes Motion Passed 3-0

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.