

Montville Township Trustees
March 12, 2024 – Regular Trustees Meeting

Present:

Trustee Jeff Brandon, Chairman
Trustee Sally Albrecht
Trustee Allen Biehl
Fiscal Officer Mary Pawlowski
Police Chief Matt Neil
Planning & Zoning Dir. Paul Jeffers
Service Director Chris Kosman

Also Present:

Resident William Hanigan
Resident Lisa Morrison

At 7:00 p.m. Trustee Brandon opened the regular meeting of the Montville Township Trustees. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Police Chief Matt Neil offered a prayer. Trustee Brandon welcomed residents and stated that the meeting is being recorded for transcription purposes only.

GUEST RECOGNITION

Resident Bill Hanigan asked about K-9 units and their training. How does it hinder the police's ability to search vehicles and differentiating between legal and illegal drugs?

Chief Neil responded that, in the last six years, none of the K-9 dogs in Medina County are trained to find marijuana. Years ago, in anticipation of marijuana being legalized, there is no dog in Medina County that is on the road right now that has been trained to find it.

Mr. Hanigan asked about a current tax issue in Medina City Schools where homeowners and many elderly people on fixed income having their homes and properties appraised at a higher value. What do we do to help those who are on fixed income in Medina County, and especially in Montville Township? When this splurge of development occurs periling people who have possibly lived in their homes for years and suddenly no longer being able to afford to live there?

Trustee Brandon thought that Mr. Hanigan brought up a good point and said that we are all in this together. If the levy passes, it will affect everyone's property taxes. He did not have statistics with him but he recalled listening to Dr. Quallich and other officials from Medina City Schools when the levy was being discussed about a month ago. He learned that student population is down by approximately 500 right now. Enrollment had been approximately 7,500 kids for Medina City Schools and it is currently down to about 7,000. Trustee Brandon said that Medina is redistricting and two elementary buildings are being closed. He understands that they are asking for the levy due to increased costs, not necessarily due to enrollment.

Real estate wise, Trustee Brandon is seeing that some developments that are going in may be targeted to empty nesters, retired and those wanting low maintenance housing. They are not all geared towards young families bringing children into the school district. Also, Trustee Brandon said that Montville

Township does not have many buildable lots remaining.

Fiscal Officer Pawlowski thought that there is a lot more to this issue than property value. Residents need to consider talking with the school board, looking at the carry over and what our teachers' contracts look like compared with the other schools within our county, and the reasoning behind costly redistricting busing.

Trustee Biehl said that he understood that our state legislature was going to investigate how counties appraise housing in the state and especially in the Columbus market where it is very difficult to purchase a starter home because the market in Central Ohio is out of control. They are looking at how counties do their appraisal values for homes.

Mr. Hanigan's third comment was that the Board of Elections is finally seeing an increase in voters this election.

Resident Lisa Morrison said that the process of trying to get a task force together started at the beginning of February. Now, they are submitting dates for hopefully meeting in April.

Trustee Biehl said that it appears that Medina County Engineer Andy Conrad would like to create this transportation task force with the City of Medina and the four townships. There is also an issue that is specific to Montville regarding parks and some property. Trustee Biehl asked if Andy is setting up two separate meetings or will it all be rolled into one meeting.

Trustee Albrecht said her understanding was that the county parks and Nate Epink would like to purchase Kelby Crum's parcel, donate some land to Mrs. Morrison for her project. Mrs. Morrison said that they are purchasing their portion.

Mrs. Morrison said that her sense is that Andy wants to give Nate Epink a platform to discuss the issues and to present an alternative idea.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Albrecht made a motion approving the minutes for the February 27th special and regular Trustees meetings. Trustee Biehl seconded the motion. The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

UTILITIES: Trustee Albrecht said that our gas and electric is handled by Medina County aggregate. She reported that residents in Medina County received notice from Constellation, our Medina County natural gas aggregation program. Inquiring residents may do nothing or they may opt out. The fixed rate is determined by the market and is at .526 CCF from April 24 – June 25.

ZONING: Planning & Zoning Director Jeffers said that tonight is the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan. Trustee Brandon opened the public meeting and requested Planning & Zoning Inspector Jeffers to provide a brief overview.

Mr. Jeffers said that sometimes our residents may confuse the zoning code with the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning code is the more active and more used item that steers how zoning takes place on a day-to-day basis. The Comprehensive plan is more of a long-term blueprint that is a guide to follow for making zoning changes or other things that take place within the township long term.

Mr. Jeffers said that, on March 1st, Trustee Biehl, Service Director Kosman, Jeremy Sinko from the Sanitary Engineer's office, and Mr. Jeffers met with some of the land owners along the west side of Wooster Pike regarding sewer line extensions. The residents needed to know where the sewers can come from and the cost to bring it in and whether there are restrictions to where their properties are located. Mr. Sinko presented all the different options with the pros and cons of each, including a possible extension from Cobblestone under the road to the site which was probably the least expensive option. The most feasible option servicing wise would be straight through the Crum property. Mr. Jeffers thought that it was a very good meeting because the residents needed to hear the information directly from Mr. Sinko.

Mr. Jeffers continued with the public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan for the Trustees approval and a Resolution to move forward for having it adopted as the 2024 Plan. Mr. Jeffers would hope to review the Comprehensive Plan again in ten years rather than five years because the township's growth has slowed from 2007 and 2013.

Trustee Brandon asked for any questions or comments from the public regarding the Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Morrison asked whether the overlay would be influenced by what they want to build on the east side of Route 3. Mr. Jeffers responded that our overlay is being influenced by what is currently surrounding the property and what the City of Medina and Montville Township have discussed for that property.

Mrs. Morrison said that, suppose that they were able to acquire the property. It sounded like their plan for their residential community would happen before the overlay for the west side of Route 3. Mr. Jeffers said that it could. Mrs. Morrison asked whether they would need to wait until the overlay is completed before they will know if they can do what they want to do.

Mr. Jeffers replied that is not 100% correct. A portion of the property was taken out of the JEDD when it was changed to residential; however, the City of Medina was not notified. Medina could decide to put it all back into the JEDD and we would have to change it all back to commercial. We are trying to work with the city to be able to keep these landowners having some residential and some commercial on their property.

Trustee Brandon asked the Board for any questions or comments regarding the zoning text amendments. Trustee Biehl asked that, none of the comments

that were heard resulted in any need to change anything; it was more of an educational thing. Mr. Jeffers responded that they did some updating of the verbiage, making sure everything was consistent grammatically such as what names State Routes were called. Also, the numbers were updated on the charts.

There were no further questions or comments. Trustee Brandon closed the public hearing.

Trustee Albrecht moved Resolution 031224.01 adopting the 2024 update to the Montville Township, Medina County, Ohio, Comprehensive Plan as presented and recommended by the Montville Township Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and record said document with the Medina County Recorder as the official 2024 update of the Montville Township Comprehensive Plan, County of Medina, State of Ohio. Trustee Biehl seconded the Resolution. The Resolution was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

In his zoning report, Mr. Jeffers said that the overlay discussion is moving forward. They are at a point where they had to create terminology for this project because it is not typical terminology with anything else we do in the township. The Zoning Commission review has been pushed back to an April meeting.

Tomorrow evening, Mr. Jeffers said that the Zoning Commission will be looking at another text revision regarding additions to principal structures.

Mr. Jeffers noted that he taught a class at Medina High School earlier today. The class is doing a project with students are given different zoning models such as single family with 50 acres where they try and put together how to make it work in a township or other setting. Mr. Jeffers was able to discuss how zoning works, what makes good or bad zoning, issues to consider avoiding such as heavy traffic.

POLICE: Chief Matt Neil said that a resident observed that the weather siren at Cobblestone was not working. Mr. Kosman and his crew then activated the siren manually from the control box on the pole and it seemed to work. Chief Neil said that his report from Saturday indicated that it worked on that day. Chief Neil had Dispatch do a test and found that it is working. He does not know whether there was a glitch on the day the resident reported it, but Chief Neil will keep an eye on the siren.

Chief Neil is on the committee of four people to make recommendations for the Emergency Management Executive Board to select the EMA Director for the county. The committee has narrowed it down to two candidates and they will be making a recommendation to the Board in the next week.

Chief Neil requested, and **Trustee Biehl made a motion applying for the annual OTRMA \$1,000 Law Enforcement grant to pay a portion of the cost of Sergeant Gaede's Gracie training. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion.** In discussion, Chief Neil said at we have \$1,000 that we can apply for Police and \$1,000 for Fire. Sergeant Gaede's training is \$1,500 but the maximum for the grant is \$1,000. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.**

Chief Neil requested, and **Trustee Biehl made a motion paying expenses for Officer Percy to attend Lock Picking and Specialized Entry Techniques training on May 23 and 24, 2024, in Streetsboro. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion.** In discussion, Chief Neil said this a two-day class for a cost of \$650. Officer Percy was scheduled to attend this class in 2020 and it was cancelled due to COVID. They are finally bringing it back to Ohio. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.**

Officer Kawalek introduced K9 Tino, who is a two-year-old German Shepard born in Slovakia, where he received most of his training. He received his specialty training here in the United States. Tino has multiple disciplines including tracking and he can differentiate the odor between disturbed and undisturbed ground. Tino is trained in narcotics detection. He is not trained on marijuana and does not alert to it.

Chief Neil said that K9 training has evolved over the last two decades. People no longer know when a dog is inside a K9 police car because they do not bark when someone is near the car. Also, they used to scratch and claw at a vehicle when they alerted for narcotics; they now sit down and square up to the vehicle.

Tino is trained in building and area searches. He begins with visually searching and then will use his ears and smells to find a person.

Officer Kawalek continues Tino's training every day at least 16 hours per month, and usually more, to stay up to date. Coming to work for Tino is the most fun that he has ever had. He is not a family dog and is completely indifferent to other dogs that he encounters.

The bullet-proof vest Tino is wearing was donated by a resident through the Brady Foundation which was started by a teenager in Strongsville whose goal is to provide every working dog in America with a lightweight ballistic vest.

Officer Kawalek explained some of the safety measures that we now have in the K9 car and that he carries to ensure Tino's safety.

Chief Neil discussed that every single Montville police car is equipped with tactical shields due to grant money. We paid around \$600 at the time we purchased them, and the pricing has since tripled.

LST/FIRE: Trustee Brandon had no updates for LST.

Trustee Brandon reviewed the City of Medina's 2023 annual fire report which was received recently. Chief Neil said that he has a PDF copy of the fire report if anyone was interested in reviewing it.

Chief Neil reminded everyone that the intersection at River Styx and E. Smith Road will be closed during the last week of the month. As Medina observes Spring Break for the schools, ODOT and the County felt that would be the best time to work on that intersection.

ROADS: Service Director Kosman requested, and **Trustee Biehl made a motion purchasing fertilizer and weed controllers from Slicker Farms for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Biehl made a motion purchasing mulch from Smith Brothers for an amount not to exceed \$10,000. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. In discussion, Mr. Kosman asked the Trustees whether they would like to stay with black mulch. Trustee Albrecht said that it was a bit more expensive but it looks very nice. Trustee Biehl thought it would not look good if we start to mix and match, and he agreed to stay with black as well. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Biehl made a motion entering into an agreement with Sweet Water Pond Services for the 2024 season for an amount not to exceed \$2,200. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. In discussion, Mr. Kosman said that the gentleman from the company we used last year for our two ponds (one is at the Service building and one is at White Tail) has retired and closed his business. Sweet Water Pond Services is a new contractor for us. The Service Department had maintained the ponds in the past but Mr. Kosman has found that the contractors are more pro-active in their maintenance and do a better job. Trustee Biehl asked whether Sweet Water Pond Services was a local company. Mr. Kosman replied that they are on Marks Road just south of Fenn Road. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Albrecht said that she noticed the flower beds at Badger were cleaned out. Mr. Kosman said that they are a little behind but are on schedule.

In his roads report, Mr. Kosman said that the Normandy Park project will be going out for bid in the upcoming weeks and our regular road projects will go out for bid after that, which the county helps with. The Normandy Park project has the OPWC funding. Mr. Kosman said that we also have a couple of things that we have done on Ridgewood. A resident emailed us regarding the berming. They have a daughter that got caught by the lack of berm on the edge of the road and pulled into the ditch. We put some delineators on the northeast side of Ridgewood near Windfall to try and keep our berm back. When the weather stabilizes and the soil stabilizes, Mr. Kosman said that we will have to go in and move the ditch back because it is too close to the road.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING: Mr. Kosman asked the Trustees for guidance regarding replacing the gray block in front of the entrance. He thought of putting one pole in the center between the two pillars, which will protect the front door. He found various options but is finding it difficult to aesthetically tie in to the building.

Trustee Brandon does not want just a couple of posts and have someone walk into them. We may have to illuminate them in some way. Trustee Biehl thought that they do not have to line up with the lighting and can be placed closer to the door. Trustee Albrecht said that we had talked about two large concrete planters and add seasonal decorations or plants. Mr. Kosman said that we would need to consider dispersing the weight on the concrete. He also said that they cannot remember to water plants.

Fiscal Officer Pawlowski likes the idea of flowers and plants but does not want to add maintenance and more things to purchase. She suggested a tasteful decorative thinner concrete look in front of the pillars with our logo.

The Trustees will consider ideas to discuss next month.

CEMETERY: Trustee Albrecht had no updates to report.

PARKS: Mr. Kosman requested, and **Trustee Biehl made a motion purchasing fence toppers for the baseball fields and pickleball courts from Mid America Sports Advantage for an amount not to exceed \$9,000. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Biehl made a motion hiring Site Technology to resurface the basketball courts at White Tail Park for an amount not to exceed \$25,000. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. In discussion, Mr. Kosman said that this is to repaint and to do some maintenance on the basketball courts. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.**

Mr. Kosman said that, in talking with the City of Medina, we have agreed to not open any courts until the beginning of April. Mr. Kosman spoke with the Parks Director and we are both in agreement. We will open by April 15th at the latest and, if the weather is nice, possibly earlier.

Mr. Kosman said that they have begun the bridge project at Aaron Smith Park. Trustee Albrecht noticed the footers that were put in and asked whether they were building a covered bridge. Mr. Kosman said that the bridges will be the same throughout the park. Trustee Albrecht shared pictures of progress on the nature trail and the bridges and everyone was in agreement on how nice it looked.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Trustee Brandon said that he received a call from Steve Hambley. He sent the ORC regulations to Trustee Brandon and said that the county wants to start a land bank board. Townships that have a population of 10,000 or more will have a seat on this board, which will include Montville and Brunswick Hills. Trustee Brandon said that we will need a representative to appoint to this board, and it does not necessarily have to be an elected official. Discussion ensued.

Trustee Albrecht moved Resolution 031224.02 appointing Trustee Allen Biehl to be the Land Bank Committee representative for Montville Township with Planning & Zoning Director Paul Jeffers as alternate. Trustee Biehl seconded the Resolution. The Resolution was passed, 3 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

Trustee Brandon reported on the solid waste policy committee meeting held on February 29th at the solid waste facility on Lake Road. Trustee Brandon thought it was a good meeting. He said that they have made changes on the campus which is now more user friendly for residential customers. Trustee Brandon said that they had previously charged per bag; it is now a \$6 fee up to 200 pounds. There is a

charge of \$2.50 minimum for any yard waste. Currently, the charge for trash for residential and commercial customers is at \$55 per ton.

Trustee Brandon said that, in 2023, the total waste processed at the Lake Road facility was 153,585 tons. Out of the total waste, they had 23,057 tons of recycling.

Trustee Brandon attended the annual Health District advisory committee meeting held on March 4th, and he had received the Medina County Health Department annual report at the meeting. Trustee Brandon provided some statistics and happenings from the annual report. He said that, fortunately, COVID deaths finally dropped out of the top five causes of death in the county. The number one cause of death in 2023 was heart disease.

COMMUNITY EVENTS: Trustee Albrecht said that Montville Cares is currently working on the annual Easter Egg Hunt which is scheduled for Sunday, March 24th, at 1:00. Signs have been posted for the event, and we have a second sponsor who will be setting up a table that day. Everything is paid for by our sponsors.

Trustee Albrecht said that Spokes Café will be holding an eclipse event during the eclipse on April 8th. They are also planning their Earth Day for Saturday, April 13th, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Trustee Biehl reported that he recently met with ODOT for updates and discussion about issues in our township, mostly relating to the Route 18 project. He said that Mr. Jeffers had advised him about the lines are hanging in such a way that they obstruct the view of the traffic signals. ODOT looked at the intersection and agreed; they will raise the lines up to correct the situation.

As Chief Neil had mentioned, Trustee Biehl said that ODOT will be closing the intersection at E. Smith and River Styx. They will be replacing the temporary turn lane with a permanent turn lane heading north on River Styx and turning onto Smith. As part of the intersection's reconstruct, they will also smooth out the hump that is currently in the northbound lane.

Trustee Biehl had conveyed his disappointment to ODOT about them not reaching out to the township when they were considering a signal improvement at the Cobblestone roundabout intersection. Trustee Biehl feels that the township could assist ODOT when they detect a safety problem on one of the state routes. Whether it be an enforcement or speed issue, our police could be of assistance in mitigating the problem. ODOT was unhappy to learn that no one knew about their project until after the safety funding was secured and will work to be more communicative to the township.

Trustee Biehl and ODOT also discussed an unhappy resident and many emails to the township regarding work on the project as it relates to her home. He feels that this is out of the township's hands. Given the sensitivity of the situation, Trustee Biehl feels that the township has done all we can do to help in the sense that we engaged ODOT and expressed her concerns and we are not privy to the

conversations between the resident and ODOT. We have done everything we can as a township to work with our local government partners to try and help her.

Regarding the landscaping idea that the Trustees have been considering for a sense of arrival to Montville Township, Trustee Biehl told ODOT that the township is just now starting to think about possibly doing something. It could be ODOT right-of-way or next to ODOT right-of-way. Understanding that safety is always first, once the township decides on what they want to do, Trustee Biehl asked whether ODOT would be a partner in the project and they have agreed. Trustee Biehl will get back to them once the township has formulated a plan.

Trustee Albrecht asked whether Trustee Biehl had any ideas for completing Montville Township's side of Route 18. It must be low maintenance and we need to be mindful of safety and road salt. Trustee Biehl asked whether the township had received a copy of the construction plans which would be a good starting point with the right-of-way plans. Trustee Albrecht said that we did have a copy of the plans. Mr. Jeffers will provide them to Trustee Biehl for reviewing.

Trustee Albrecht said that Michael Rubino who had been on the zoning board and was a landscape architect gave her a picture of the areas where we may be able to do something. She believes that he had advised the Trustees to wait for the restoration time to discuss it because that is when ODOT would be ready to talk about it. Trustee Biehl said that ODOT would want to complete their project first; their project is scheduled to be completed by the end of July.

Trustee Albrecht will talk with Mike Rubino and try to find the drawing and see if they can come up with some ideas so the Trustees can discuss them at the next meeting.

Separate from the ODOT meeting, Trustee Biehl said that there had been a resident's request for a hidden drive sign on Wadsworth Road due to their hidden driveway. Trustee Biehl recalls that ODOT's traffic control manual has not permitted hidden drive signs since 1970 due to research indicates that they do not cause motorists to lower their speed and it gives residents exiting their driveways a false sense of security that motorists are slowing.

Mr. Jeffers spoke with the couple at the Wadsworth Road residence to let them know that a sign will not be put up and to give them advice on what to do to try to identify their driveway so that southbound traffic will begin to realize that there is now an active driveway at that location.

Trustee Albrecht said that the Trustees had previously talked about the Boyert's taking care of our roundabouts and taking care of the landscaping in the front of the Administration building. She asked whether anyone had done that. Mr. Kosman responded that he would contact Boyert's.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fiscal Officer Pawlowski reviewed the February bank reconciliation and financial reports, including both month and year reports. Copies of the February

reports provided for each Trustee: Fund Status and Fund Summary; Appropriation Status; Revenue Summary and Payment Summary. The Fund Status report as of March 12th was provided to each Trustee.

Fiscal Officer Pawlowski requested, and **Trustee Albrecht moved Resolution 031224.03 approving supplemental appropriations as presented. Trustee Biehl seconded the Resolution. The Resolution was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Biehl made a motion paying \$3,272 to Slicker Farms for fertilizer. Trustee Albrecht seconded the motion. In discussion, Fiscal Officer Pawlowski said that this is for a current purchase that was higher than expected due to inflation. **The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.**

Trustee Albrecht made a motion approving BC & PO's and paying bills totaling \$112,941.16. Trustee Biehl seconded the motion. The motion was passed, 3 ayes, 0 naves and 0 abstentions.

Fiscal Officer Pawlowski presented to the Trustees the ARP reporting with the available balance of \$140,35732. At the bottom is the actual available balance of \$444.00 reflecting the projects that are in the process of being completed. The report shows what has been spent to date for 2024 ARPA reporting due April 1-30, 2024.

At 10:18 p.m. Trustee Brandon adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Klafczynski

Approved By:

Date:

Attested:

Date: