

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS



PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

April 19, 2023 - REGULAR MEETING 7 :00 PM 23 MAPLE DRIVE, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43228

Trustee Doug Stormont called the meeting of the Prairie Township Board of Trustees to order on April 19, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall with Trustee Cathy Schmelzer, Trustee Rod Pritchard, Fiscal Officer Natalie McKay, Township Administrator James Jewell, Road Superintendent Dave McAninch, Recreation Director Michael Pollack, Zoning Director Dana Scott, Fire Chief Allen Scott, HR Director Randi Good, and Sheriff Deputy B. Haren 1078 present.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Stormont opened the meeting and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes -

Mr. Stormont asked if there were any changes or additions to the April 5, 2023 meeting minutes.

Comments/Issues: None

Mr. Stormont made a motion to approve the April 5, 2023 , regular meeting minutes . Ms. Schmelzer seconded. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Franklin County Sheriff 's Office

Sheriff Deputy B. Haren 1078 gave the Sheriff's report for the last two weeks.

From 4/5/23 - To 4/19/23	Total
Total Calls for Service/Self-Initiated Runs	512 (-76)
Total Reports Taken	70 (+4)
Arrests/Citations	44
Thefts	11 (-2)
Suspicious Activity Stops / Calls	66 (+8)
Traffic Stops	52 (-19)
Stolen Vehicles	3 (-1), 1 recovered stolen vehicle
Drug Related Arrests	6 (+3)
Overdose	1 (-5)
Burglaries	2
OVI	2

Deputy Haren reported:

- Early in the morning of April 8th Deputy Carter noticed a vehicle parked in a business on Old Village Rd. with gardening equipment setting on the ground next to the vehicle. Deputy Carter investigated further and found a male asleep behind the wheel. Deputy Carter was able to discover narcotics inside the truck and the individual was ultimately arrested for possession.
- On the evening of April 7th Deputy Palumbo responded to a call of an unresponsive female at 465 Amity Rd. When he arrived, we witnessed an unresponsive female on the basement floor and a male performing CPR on her. Deputy Palumbo jumped in and took over performing CPR.

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Medics arrived and took over for Deputy Palumbo and were able to regain a pulse. This incident is still under investigation as a possible overdose.

Deputy Haren reminded residents that April 22 is National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. The Sheriff's Office will be sponsoring a location at the Kroger on Cemetery Rd. in Hilliard from 10am to 2pm. If residents have any unused or unwanted prescription medications bring them and drop them off.

Comments/Issues: None

Fiscal Office

Approval of Warrants and Payroll

Fiscal Officer McKay reported this week's warrants list detailed payments to 78 vendors totaling \$283,819.76. She requested the Board's approval to pay all items on this week's warrant list totaling \$283,819.76 along with 4/25/23 payroll of \$203,405.62 for a total cash disbursement of \$487,225.38.

Comments/Issues: None

Mr. Stormont motioned "so moved". Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Voytek Zaleski of 4756 Hilton Avenue asked how many employees are on the township payroll. Ms. Good estimated there are around 175 employees at any time and said she would provide the actual count later if needed.

Standing Business

Fire Department

Fire Chief Allen gave the Fire Department update.

Annual Turnout Rental Agreement: Chief Scott asked the Board to approve the annual turnout gear rental agreement with Phoenix Safety Outfitters. The cost is \$110.00 per set, per month. He said the township will rent 18 sets of gear, totaling \$1,980 per month or \$23,760 per year. The township began renting turnout gear in 2022 for our part-time members who work every 6th day, due to the high turnover rate. The cost to purchase 18 sets of gear would be about \$60,000.00 and those 18 sets would be fitted for specific individuals. The rental program allows us to fit any size firefighter with appropriate gear, without having to purchase new gear for every new member. This rental is the most cost effective and safest way to properly fit our part-time members.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve an annual turnout gear agreement with Phoenix Safety Outfitters at a cost of \$23,760.00 per year and authorize the Fire Chief to execute the necessary documents. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Annual Flower Day Sale: On behalf of the Firefighter's Association, Chief Scott requested permission to

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hold the annual Mother's Day flower sale on May 12, 13, and 14, from 10am to 6pm each day.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board authorize the Prairie Township Firefighters Association to hold their annual Mother 's Day Flower Sale on May 12, 13 and 14 from 10am-6pm each day. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Annual Fish Fry: On behalf of the Firefighter's Association, Chief Scott also requested permission to hold the Annual Fish Fry on Inah Avenue on June 23rd and 24th from 11am to 10pm. They would like to have the beer garden as they have had for the last several years. Chief Scott noted the appropriate insurance riders would be in place prior to the event.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board authorize the Prairie Township Firefighter 's Association to hold its annual Fish Fry, car show and beer garden on June 23 rd and June 24 th from 11am to 10pm each day with the condition that the Association provide proper insurance and meet all legal requirements. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Capt. Cloud Retirement (Res. 17-23): Chief Scott asked the Board to approve a resolution honoring Captain Rob Cloud on his upcoming retirement and said he would present the resolution to Captain Cloud during his Open House on April 27 from 11am-2pm at Station 241.

Mr. Stormont moved the Board adopt Resolution 17-23, "A Resolution honoring Captain Robert Cloud for his service to Prairie Township and congratulating him on his retirement ". Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Discussion:

Mr. Zaleski asked to better understand what is meant by turnout gear. Chief Scott said that turnout gear refers to the protective pants and coats that the firefighters wear when fighting fires.

Community Center

Mr. Pollack gave the Community Center update:

Concerts at Sports Complex: Mr. Pollack asked the Board to approve two concerts at the Sport Complex this summer, and said sponsorships will be sought to pay for the bands. The dates of the events will be Saturday, July 22 and Saturday, August 12 from 6-9pm.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve hosting two concerts at the Galloway Road Sports Complex on Saturday, July 22 and Saturday, August 12 from 6-9pm. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Mr. Zaleski asked if the concerts would be in addition to or instead of those previously held at Carl Frye

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Park. Mr. Pritchard said the concerts at Carl Frye Park were organized by Lincoln Village residents and not by the township. Mr. Pollack said the concerts will be at the Galloway Road sports complex this year and he will consider other locations in the future.

Personal Service Contracts (Res 18-23): Mr. Pollack asked the Board to approve Resolution 18-23, authorizing the Community Center to enter into personal service contracts with the following individuals:

Contractor	Instruction	Effective Date	Rate
Mike Crosky	Prairie Soccer League Field Marshal	4/15/23-12/31/23	\$25/hour not to exceed \$2,500
Mark Cohen	Ballroom Dancing Private Lessons	4/16/23-12/31/23	\$200 for five private lessons and one month of lessons not to exceed \$5,000

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board adopt Resolution 18-23, "A Resolution authorizing a Personal Service Contract for Contractors in the Recreation Department". Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Announcement - Health Fair: Mr. Pollack announced that the Prairie Township Health Fair will be held on April 29 from 10 am-12 pm at the Prairie Township Community Center. The event is free and open to everyone to attend. No pre-registration is required. The fair will include exercise demos, screenings, massages and information from vendors including Ohio Health, Franklin County Health Department and more. He advised residents to visit the Community Center's website to learn more.

Discussion: None

Roads, Cemeteries, and Parks Department

Mr. McAninch gave the Roads, Cemeteries and Parks Department report.

Hiring of Part-Time Road Laborer: Mr. McAninch recommended the Board approve hiring James Estep to a part time road laborer position. This hiring would be contingent on James passing a pre-employment drug screen. James' starting pay would be \$15.00 per hour based on the part time scale approved by the Board of Trustees on December 15, 2021. James' start date would be April 24, 2023.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve hiring James Estep as a part-time Road Laborer at \$15.00 per hour effective April 24, 2023, contingent upon successful completion of a pre-employment drug screen. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

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Full-Time Road Laborer Step Increase: Mr. McAninch recommended the Board approve moving Justin Bosch to step four of the current road department five step Road Laborer 1 pay scale. This would increase Justin's hourly rate from \$23.03 per hour to 26.65 per hour. This rate would go into effect on May 1, 2023.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve step four of the full time Road Laborer pay scale for Justin Bosch at an hourly rate of \$26.65 effective May 1, 2023. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Part-Time Road Laborer Step Increase: Mr. McAninch recommended the Board approve moving Brandon Higginbotham to step three of part time pay scale that the Board approved on December 15, 2021 effective May 3, 2023. This will increase Brandon's pay to \$17.00 per hour. Brandon's start date was May 3, 2021.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve step three of the part-time Road Laborer pay scale for Brandon Higginbotham at an hourly rate of \$17.00, effective May 3, 2023. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Discussion:

Mr. Zaleski asked when the sidewalk work on Hilton Ave would resume now that the snow has passed. Mr. McAninch said he doesn't know the exact date but he does expect the work to begin soon.

Ms. Debra Kurtz of 217 Evergreen asked if paving would be done tomorrow on Evergreen. Mr. McAninch said it probably wouldn't be paved tomorrow—it was milled today and the plan is for the SAMI crew to follow. She asked if he looked at the alley behind her house and he said he had and that he saw a few holes that need to be patched.

Commercial Building and Zoning Department

Ms. Scott gave the Commercial Building and Zoning Department update:

Zoning Assistant Position: Ms. Scott requested the Board's approval to advertise the position of a full-time Zoning Assistant at the rate of \$21.68 per hour. This position was previously appropriated and approved in the 2023 Zoning Budget.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board authorize the Commercial Building and Zoning Department to advertise for a full-time Zoning Assistant. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. The call votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Discussion:

Mr. Zaleski commented that the Zoning Department already had four employees and questioned the need for a fifth. Ms. Scott listed all the activities her department is responsible for handling and said the volume of work has increased and an additional staff person is needed.

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Ms. Kurtz asked Ms. Scott to clarify some of the differences in the zoning code and asked after the status of a structure off Evergreen and Mount Royal that is covered in graffiti and is an eyesore. Ms. Scott said there is a plan underway to remove the graffiti and that the building itself was there before the zoning code was adopted, however, if the owner wanted to do something to the property, he would need to meet current zoning code restrictions.

Administration

Mr. Jewell gave the Administration update.

Nuisance Assessments :

None

Nuisance Resolutions :

Galloway Village Only:

Address	Parcel Number
4820 Medfield Way	240-004847
4960-4982 Medfield Way	240-004837
4984-5006 Medfield Way	240-004838
111 Schoolhouse Lane	240-004825
44 Sturbridge Road	240-004839

*strike-through addresses not declared

There was some discussion about being right where we were before, when during the winter the trash situation at Galloway Village was out of hand. Ms. Scott said that citations have been issued but not paid, and the township's attorney is currently trying to get a court date in the environmental court to address the matter. She said the attorney believes the court could find the property owner in contempt and award a per day fine to the township, along with court costs and attorney fees.

Discussion continued about what to do in the meantime because if the property owners don't address the trash issue and the township does nothing, it will create health hazards and problems for the residents, not to mention it will begin to stink. Mr. McAninch commented that he's already cleaned up trash sitting outside the receptacles, but he doesn't empty the dumpsters themselves. He also said the work he's doing at Galloway Village is eating up manpower that could be doing other things.

Ms. Scott said that her staff has talked with the Rental management company about the situation and has been told that the owner hasn't authorized the rental company to pay anything.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board adopt Resolution NU-15-23, "A Resolution declaring nuisance and ordering abatement at properties with refuse and debris. " Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Roll Call Votes: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Remaining Nuisances:

Address	Parcel Number
418 Maple Drive	240-000677

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332 Old Village Road	240-003149
272-274 Rome-Hilliard Rd	240-000903
4580 W Broad St	240-004016
4852-4904 W Broad Street	240-004285
8744 Hubbard Drive S	241-000489
259 Evergreen Terrace	240-002253
240-002252 Evergreen Terrace	240-002252
4669 Hilton Avenue	240-004320
4678-4688 Hilton Avenue	240-004278
190 Inah Ave	240-002438
4757 W Broad Street	240-000162

*strike-through addresses not declared

Mr. Stormont moved that the adopt Resolution NU-16-23, "A Resolution declaring nuisance and ordering abatement at properties with refuse and debris. " Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Roll Call Votes were as follows : Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Comments/Issues:

Ms. Schmelzer asked if the business owners in Westland Square need to put their dumpsters inside privacy fencing and Ms. Scott said yes. Ms. Scott also said that the township attorney is working on a letter so we can e-file for court.

Mr. Pritchard asked Mr. McAninch if he was able to talk with Goodyear. Mr. McAninch said yes, he did talk to Goodyear and Liberty Tire and both confirmed they will be getting their privacy fence back in place around their dumpsters.

Road Closure Request: Mr. Jewell asked the Board to approve a street closure permit for one lane of Old Hall Road on Friday, April 28, 2023 from 5:15 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. for Alton Hall Elementary School's annual "Fun Run". All department heads have reviewed and signed off on the request. This is the 5th year for this event, they have not had it since 2019 due to COVID.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve a road closure for one lane of Old Hall Road on Friday, April 28, 2023 from 5:15 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Letter to Budget Commission: Mr. Jewell asked ask the Board to approve sending a letter to the budget commission increasing the revenue in the following funds:

ARPA Fund (2273) to \$427.84

Commercial Building and Zoning Fund (2181) to \$810,950.00

Parks Capital Fund to \$402,584.47

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Mr. Stormont moved that the Board approve sending a letter to the Budget Commission to increase revenue in the funds as presented. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

2023 Summer Youth: Mr. Jewell asked the Board to approve advertising and hiring up to six (6) participants for the 2023 Summer Youth Program. Participants will be working under the Facility Maintenance Supervisor at the Community Center. The hourly rate for the participants will be \$10.10 per hour (minimum wage). The Township's appropriations include \$5,000 for this year's program (not including expenses for supplies). This year's 8-week program will begin on 6/20/23 and end on 8/10/23.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board authorize the Township staff to advertise for the 2023 Summer Youth Work Program and hire up to 6 participants at an hourly rate of \$10.10 per hour. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

Renovations: Mr. Jewell asked the Board to approve a quote from Hager Construction for the replacement of the remaining white tile flooring in the Administration Office hallways/restrooms and renovating the two restrooms. The tile flooring will be replaced with vinyl flooring that matches what was put in the offices back in early 2019 after the flooding incident in 2018. The restroom renovations include removing the blue metal partitions, adding new sinks and countertops, and fresh paint in the hallways, door frames and restrooms. The quote for the flooring is \$13,443.18 and the remaining renovations are \$14,765.38 which brings the total quote to \$28,208.56. These areas have not been renovated in a very long time and are showing their wear and tear. This work will be completed during non-business hours. Funds are already appropriated in the budget for this project.

The Board tabled the request and asked Mr. McAninch to find out the difference in cost if the work were done during business hours.

OPWC: Mr. Jewell asked the Board to authorize me, the Township Administrator, to pursue OPWC funding for new guardrails. He was at a MORPC meeting recently and learned there are guardrail standards and opportunities within the township where there is a greater than a 3:1 slope that's not recoverable.

Mr. Stormont moved that the Board authorize the Township Administrator to pursue OPWC funding for guardrails. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

CPR/AED Training Thank You: Mr. Jewell thanked Prairie Township Firefighter Zach Maxwell for teaching CPR/AED to our Roads, Cemeteries, and Parks, Commercial Building and Zoning, and Administration Department last week. We now have certified employees in all five of our departments. We will be doing a makeup class for any employee that was unable to attend last week.

Old Business

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Kate Martinez of 445 Emmit gave an update on the Community Garden initiative she's been working on, saying that she spoke with the Mid-Ohio Food Collective and because they have to take the request to their higher-ups, it's taking a while to get an answer. In the meantime, she's asked them if they would be willing to donate any surplus vertigrow towers they might have after they swap out their old ones. Ms. Martinez asked the Board if the residents can go ahead and plant some things in the field while they are waiting for an answer. Mr. Pritchard said that nothing can be planted until a plan is presented and approved by the Board.

New Business

Natalie McKay of 6336 Clover Meadow Court shared that there is debris damming up the Clover Groff ditch behind the cemetery on Alton & Darby Creek Road that might be contributing to the flooding during heavy rains. Mr. McAninch said he would look at it tomorrow.

Ms. Kurtz described a flyer she found which was a plea to petition to stop Prairie Country from regulating small scale homesteading, and she asked if the Board was attempting to regulate small scale homesteading. She said that she has friends in Columbus who are allowed to have chickens. Ms. Scott shared her opinion that chickens don't belong in a subdivision and the current zoning code doesn't allow chickens in a platted subdivision. Mr. Pritchard said there are a lot of jurisdictions who have relaxed their regulations on chickens and honeybees, and Columbus is one of them. He went on to say that it hasn't been part of our zoning code nor has anyone requested a similar change. Ms. Scott said they are revising the zoning code right now, particularly its definition of agriculture—to have chickens, you have to have at least an acre and cannot be in a platted subdivision.

Public Comment

Announcements

Ms. Scott announced the details of the 2023 Spring Clean Up:

Thursday, April 27th 10am to 8pm

Friday, April 28th 10am to 8pm

Saturday, April 29th 10am to 4pm

Thursday, May 4th 10am to 8pm

Friday, May 5th 10am to 8pm

Saturday, May 6th 10am to 4pm

This year residents will be able to drop-off electronics for secure erasing and disposing of by an R2 Certified company that certifies all data destruction. Drop off during regular clean-up hours. No televisions. There will be a shredding station at our clean-up for 3 hours on both Saturdays, Saturday, April 29th and Saturday, May 6th from 10am to 1pm. Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District will be on site at the clean-up Saturday, May 6th 2pm to 3:30pm to teach residents about rain barrels, rain gardens, backyard conservation of stormwater, demonstrate how rain barrels work, and show how proper stormwater practices impact the community. Eight tires per person per day.

Executive Session

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At 8:07 p.m., Mr. Stormont moved that the Board go into executive session per [ORC section 121.22 (G) (1) to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee]. Ms. Schmelzer seconded the motion. Roll Call Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

At 8:11 p.m., Mr. Stormont moved that the Board come out of executive session. Ms. Schmelzer seconded. Roll Call Votes were as follows: Mr. Pritchard, Aye; Ms. Schmelzer, Aye; Mr. Stormont, Aye. Motion passed.

There were no motions or resolutions presented to the Trustees during Executive Session.

Adjournment

Mr. Stormont declared the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Chairman Doug Stormont

Fiscal Officer Natalie McKay