

# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**Minutes of Franklin Township  
Franklin County, Ohio**

**Regular Meeting**

**Held via Teleconference  
COVID-19 Emergency Declaration  
Ohio's Open Meeting Act**

**October 8, 2020**

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**Call Meeting to Order:**

Chairman Alex called the Regular Meeting of the Franklin Township Board of Trustees to order at 6:30 p.m. on October 8, 2020, via teleconference (ZOOM).

**Opening Prayer:** Led by Trustee Fleshman

**The Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Trustee Horn

**Roll Call:** Alex, yes; Fleshman, yes; Horn, yes.

**Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** No minutes to approve.

**Old Business**

*Mark Meadows, Southwestern City School District (SWSCD), Coordinator of Property Services – new Finland Middle School building*

Meadows provided a brief overview of the new school site. Meadows shared that the construction began on September 20, 2020, just west of the current school structure. The location of the new school is where the former sports facility is located. Once the new school is built the new sports facility will be on the property where the current Finland Middle School building is located, Meadows said.

Meadows stated that more information and a prototype of the new building and sport complex can be found on the SWCSD (Southwestern City School District) website at [www.swcsd.us](http://www.swcsd.us).

Alex asked if there were any questions or comments from the audience. With no questions or comments from the audience, Alex moved to the next speaker.

*Dave Reutter and Nathan Ralph, Franklin County Soil and Water*

Reutter introduced himself and shared that this week is Storm Water Awareness Week and welcomed Ralph to speak. Ralph reminded everyone that his office accepts sewage complaints even through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alex asked if the Board had any questions or comments for Reutter or Ralph.

Fleshman thanked Reutter and Ralph for their continued commitment to Franklin Township.

Horn asked if Administrator Potts could have their contact information so it could be added to a future township newsletter.

Fleshman asked Reutter and Ralph if they handled eroded creek beds. Reutter explained creeks are handled on a case-by-case basis depending on if the creek is located on private property.

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With no additional questions or comments, Alex moved to the next item on the agenda.

SWACO Consortium II - tabled until next meeting. Fleshman asked Chairman Alex if public comment could be welcomed at the next meeting. Alex agreed.

With Consortium II tabled, Alex moved to the next item on the agenda.

The Fiscal Officer recommended the following resolution:

**Resolution 2020-185**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Trustees of Franklin Township, Franklin County, Ohio, that the Board approves the accounts payables in the amount of \$209,231.66 and payroll ending on 10/09/2020 in the amount of \$157,096.50 for a total of \$366,328.16. From check number 64419 to 64528 and electronic vouchers from #486 through 535-2020.

*Alex moved. Fleshman seconded the Resolution; with no discussion, the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows. Resolution passed.*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

With no discussion, Alex moved to New Business.

**New Business:**

**Police Department Report:**

*Byron Smith, Police Chief provided crime statistics from the last few weeks:*

The Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the Special Investigative Unit have been working on several drug complaints, explained Smith.

They spent several hours in the MonEBak area which resulted in a few arrests, vehicle impounds (including a camper), and several other citations. They are also working the area of Harrisburg Pike just north of Eakin Road for meth and fentanyl, a search warrant is possible in this area in the future, said Smith.

*Deputy Carter from the FCSO shared:*

The work in the MonEBak area resulted in several arrests: one of a known person with several felony warrants. They were located and arrested, but posted bond, said Carter.

The stats for the last two weeks are:

- 5 drug related offenses:
  - Plainview
  - Westland Mall property
  - Harrisburg Pike
  - (2) traffic stops on Harrisburg Pike
- 1 burglary
  - Leesburg

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- 4 stolen vehicles
- 1 recovered stolen vehicle
- 7 weapon related runs
- 7 fired shots in Township
- 1 robbery
- 13 thefts
- 469 calls of service
- 38 reports
- 15 arrests

Carter reminded everyone not to leave their cars unoccupied while running and to ensure their valuables are locked away.

Smith said that since Deputy Carter has been assigned by the FCSO as the Township's Community Liaison there has been an increase in arrests. We could not ask for a better deputy to partner with the township, said Smith.

Horn reminded everyone that beggars' night is scheduled for Thursday, October 29, 2020, and asked Smith if patrol could be stepped up that night. Smith said he would make sure beggars' night was covered.

With no further discussion, Alex moved to the fire department.

## Fire Department Report:

*Jim Welch*, Fire Chief shared that he has been working with Rosenbauer, the manufacturer who built Engine 192. The engine is having paint issues and it is under a ten (10) year manufacturer warranty. In speaking with Rosenbauer they are asking for the engine to be returned to South Dakota for a short period of time to get resprayed. Rosenbauer is unsure as to why there are paint issues with the engine, so that is why they want to have it brought back to South Dakota, said Welch.

Fleshman asked Welch how long Rosenbauer plans to keep the engine in South Dakota. Welch said, they anticipate two (2) to three (3) months. Fleshman asked if Welch had a backup engine in place. Welch said he has the 2010 Pierce ready for use when Engine 192 goes to South Dakota. The Pierce is also on the waiting list to go back to Pierce Manufacturing to have the framework completed as discussed previously this year, said Welch.

Fiscal Officer Rhinehart asked Welch if there was any cost to fixing the Pierce or is it under warranty. The Pierce framework will incur a cost outlined in a previous resolution, said Welch. Fleshman said the board approved a prior resolution for \$50,000.00 to have the Pierce engine framework completed. This was guidance the board received from Chief Welch as well as the Ohio Township Association.

Welch asked the board to approve placing employee N. Thornton on the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), effective 10/01/2020.

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Alex moved for the following resolution:

## ***Resolution 2020-186***

*BE IT RESOLVED* by the Board of Trustees of Franklin Township, Franklin County, Ohio, that the Board approves employee N. Thornton to be out due to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), effective 10/01/2020.

*Fleshman seconded the Resolution; with no discussion the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows:*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

Assistant Fiscal Officer, Robyn Watkins provided the resolution number which was previously approved by the Board of Trustees to perform the framework on the 2010 Pierce fire engine. Watkins explained that Resolution 2020-109 approved \$36,122.00 for frame work to be done on the Pierce.

Welch asked the board for a motion to approve the resignation of employee Mike VanCleaf effective 7:00 a.m. on November 9, 2020.

*Alex made a motion to accept the resignation of employee Mike VanCleaf effective at 7:00 a.m. on November 9, 2020. Fleshman seconded the motion. With no discussion the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows. The motion passed.*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

Welch asked the board for a motion to approve the resignation of employee Thomas Smallsreed effective 7:00 a.m. on November 7, 2020.

*Alex made a motion to accept the resignation of employee Thomas Smallsreed effective at 7:00 a.m. on November 7, 2020. Fleshman seconded the motion. With no discussion the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows. The motion passed.*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

Both of these employees are moving to Liberty Township in Delaware County, said Welch.

Welch said he is expecting another resignation in the coming weeks. This employee is waiting until it's closer to their hire date before giving me their two weeks' notice. With that being said, that will be a loss of three (3) firefighters this month with a total loss of six (6) so far.

Welch reminded the board that they gave him the responsibility to staff the stations and departments in a way that is in the best interest of the township. Welch said he had put together another manpower letter. With the decrease in staffing it's best to leave Engine 193 go out of service at this time. Welch said he emailed the Board a de-escalation letter depending on which staff members are off and on, and their assigned unit. The reality is

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---

Engine 193 will be out of service approximately sixty percent (60%) of the time now, said Welch.

Fleshman asked Welch if we are planning on replacing the two (2) firefighters who are leaving. Welch said no, based on previous discussions throughout this year the goal of the fire department is to get down to twenty-nine (29) firefighters. As we continue to move forward we are getting closer to hitting that goal by the first of the year. This goal will assist us in avoiding layoffs, said Welch.

Fleshman said he just saw a video from an online meeting from the Greater Hilltop Business Association (GHBA) where they interviewed a union representative from the City of Columbus Division of Fire explaining the impact on Columbus Fire if the Franklin Township Fire levy does not pass. They also quoted some alarming stats on the runs that the township takes into the City of Columbus. The representative asked the GHBA to support them in asking the Columbus City Council for funding to build a new fire station in the area.

Fleshman asked Chairman Alex if he and Administrator Potts could reach out to the City of Columbus. They are looking at \$20 million to build a new station and get it up and running in our area. Fleshman said he would like to see if the Columbus City Council would entertain the idea of subsidizing Franklin Township \$1 million a year so we can continue business as usual with the burden taken off the township taxpayers, said Fleshman.

Welch said he saw the same video and the representative is the vice president for the Columbus Firefighters local union, and his point was that Columbus needs to do something to build their union and to get more people in their union. The numbers he provided were a little skewed and his goal was for the Greater Hilltop Business Association to put pressure on city council which would be more numbers for his local union, said Welch.

Fleshman said the township has an opportunity here to ask the City of Columbus for \$1 million a year for the next twenty (20) years, the township could be made whole and would be a win-win for everybody. The city would not need to come up with \$20 million to build a new fire station, plus manpower, said Fleshman.

Welch said he agreed with Fleshman and that the township has over thirty (30) years of dedicated service to the City of Columbus with automatic response and believes the township should be able to sit down at the table with the city and have a conversation.

Fleshman returned back to Chairman Alex to obtain permission to reach out to the city. Alex said he and Administrator Potts have already reached out and began conversations with City of Columbus council members. The City of Columbus Public Safety Committee is reviewing options. Our follow up will be in early November, said Alex. Horn said he has spoken with the area commission as well to engage others in our situation.

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---

Fleshman asked Welch a question from the ZOOM chat room asking how is Franklin Township going to continue to make runs into the city with only one engine in operation?

Welch said that Engine 192 is centrally located in the township and what this means if we are busy is that those runs will be switched to the next closest fire station such as Station 12, Station 10, Station 3, etc. In turn, run volumes have been an issue, with only Engine 192 operating this will lessen our runs into the city substantially. Fleshman said that the township currently receives over \$900,000.00 annually from runs taken in the city from EMS billing, so when we go down to one engine we will lose revenue. We do not take runs into the city for free, said Fleshman.

Horn confirmed with Welch that Station 193 will maintain a medic on the day to day operations. Welch agreed that Medic 193 will remain in service but confirmed that Engine 193 will only run intermittently.

Alex said that he is not happy with the actions we have to take and it is disappointing that the previous levy failed. It is a critical priority to have two engines and two medics in this township. We are in a spot in the township where we work with what we have been handed. It is not ideal, but it does provide a basic service and is hopeful that the levy passes and additional revenue is found to regain our full-service fire stations. Alex said he is looking for creative solutions.

Horn wants to ensure our residents receive truthful information and not second-hand garbage. Horn said all residents can call him to gain the truth. Alex said the board is not fighting among themselves but there are rumors outside and Horn is referencing them. Fleshman said the residents are looking at the board asking what the board is going to do. Fleshman believes having a conversation with the city will be helpful. Fleshman said he understands where Horn is coming from because based on the pictures that come up on Facebook with the word "closed" across the front of all of the fire station doors leaves a perception to the viewers that the entire fire station--including the medic--is out of service. Fleshman asked the fire department to change the photo to reflect just a fire engine which is the actual depiction of what is going on.

Welch said the root of the problem started ten (10) years ago when the State of Ohio stopped taxing businesses and defunded local government. In Franklin County percentage wise, Franklin Township was the hardest hit. We lost a total of \$1.1 million in the fire budget. The state expects us to maintain services with less revenue, said Welch. We have a plan in place to reduce staffing by ten (10) firefighters and this plan is working, said Welch.

With no further discussion, Alex moved to the road department.

## Road Department Report:

*Jim Stevens*, Road Superintendent said that the road crew has been working on five (5) major drainage issues within the township.

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---

Fleshman asked Stevens about the property located at Fisher and Wilson Roads (former go-kart track) on where this stood under House Bill 50. Stevens said that there is a timeline that needs to be followed and we are following the timeline, everyone will need to be patient, said Stevens.

Alex said that his favorite time of year for the road crew is the leaf collection and he is looking forward to riding with the crew. Alex asked what the timeline is for the leaf collection season. Stevens said the tentative schedule is to begin leaf collection on the week of October 5, 2020 and concluding on December 4, 2020.

Fleshman asked Stevens if we have enough equipment to have something ready to go if an unexpected change in weather occurs. Stevens says we always make due if snow comes during leaf collection season. We will do the best we can, said Stevens.

With no further discussion, Alex moved to the trustee reports:

## **Trustee Reports:**

*Aryeh Alex*, Trustee reported that the Auditor of State representative conducting our audit, and the township attorney recommended freezing all credit cards.

*Alex made a motion to freeze the usage of all credit cards by all township employee's and to return all credit cards to the fiscal officer by 9:00 a.m., October 9, 2020.*

Fleshman asked what happens when the employees need to get fuel. Alex said this motion is not for the gas cards, this is only credit cards.

*Fleshman seconded the motion, with no further discussion the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows. The motion passed.*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

Alex said AeroClave Disinfecting Machine is needed to perform COVID-19 preventative measures. Alex asked Potts to explain the reason for the purchase of this machine. Potts shared that there is a similar machine used at Station 192 and it would be helpful to have a machine available at Station 193. Potts said he is collecting quotes. Alex said Potts may present the quotes at the next regular meeting.

*John Fleshman*, Trustee said that a resident provided information to the board to assist in passing a No Knock resolution. This resolution would require entities to obtain a permit before soliciting/knocking on doors in the township.

Alex said it would be a good idea to share the resolution at the next meeting and then schedule a public hearing to obtain public comment and then schedule a board vote at the following meeting.

Fleshman asked if the board would approve Nick Soulas, from the Franklin County Prosecutor's Office to come in to go over the information with them

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---

that we have received from the Auditor of the State's office. Alex asked Potts to try and arrange such a meeting.

*Ralph Horn*, Trustee, said he hopes to get everyone on the same page. He has felt a lack of continuity in the staff.

With no more discussion, Alex moved to the fiscal department:

Fiscal Department Report:

*Mary Rhinehart*, Fiscal Officer tabled the conversation about the change in the health insurance broker.

Rhinehart summarized the comments made by the Auditors of the State Office such as the freezing of credit cards. This will be a big change but we will work through it. The next area is proper purchasing such as utilizing purchase orders correctly. It will be challenging due to the end of the calendar year but we will figure this out, said Rhinehart.

The township will be receiving their third draw from the CARES Act funding this week for \$350,483.65. The township has until November 20, 2020 to appropriate the funds and receive the purchases by the December 30, 2020 deadline. Anything that is not appropriated or received by the deadlines, we will lose the funding, said Rhinehart.

With no discussion, Alex moved to the administrator report:

Administrator Report:

*Mark Potts*, Administrator reminded the board that the next regular meeting is scheduled on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 which is beggars' night in the township and asked if the board would like to discuss changing the date of meeting.

Fleshman asked if the board thought that folks would be participating in beggars' night under these circumstances. Alex said that the Franklin County Public Health has provided guidelines for beggars' night such as everyone is to wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and candy is to be individually wrapped, etc.

*Alex made a motion to move the regular meeting scheduled from October 29, 2020 to Thursday, October 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Fleshman seconded the motion, with no further discussion the roll was called for its adoption and the vote was as follows. The motion passed.*

**Alex:**  YES/ NO

**Fleshman:**  YES/ NO

**Horn:**  YES/ NO

Potts explained to the board that tomorrow is the last day for our temporary staff at the front desk. Tomorrow another temporary staff member will be coming in to be trained. Also, Potts shared that he has received templates on creating a job description and job posting for the permanent Administrative Assistant position and will be bringing this to the board's attention in the near future.

Potts reminded everyone that Monday, October 12, 2020 is a federal holiday and the township office will be closed.



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---

With no further discussion, Alex asked Potts if there were any questions from the public.

Potts said there were a couple of questions in the ZOOM chat room.

*Robbyne Chaney* asked how the township was going to handle all of the runs with only one fire truck. This was answered during the meeting, said Potts.

Chaney also stated that the photo on Facebook showing Station 193 as closed is going to hamper votes.

Alex said we received an email from resident *Tim Chaney*. Potts read the email expressing Chaney's position on the fire levy. Welch provided clarity to Chaney's email and confirmed that Engine 193 is being shut down to meet the budget. Welch explained that two publications have been issued in the *Westside Messenger* informing the public about the fire levy.

Horn suggests the fire levy information be included in the next newsletter.

Welch agrees that in the past public funds have been used to promote levies, but the union is not funding levy information this time.

Potts reminded everyone that this is a replacement levy with a minimal increase. Fleshman said that the Board of Trustees cannot fund or promote the levy.

Potts checked other communication outlets for the meeting and then opened up the phone lines for comments.

*Robbyne Chaney* said that many people have received the wrong ballot and the township fire levy is not listed on the ballot. Alex thanked Robbyne for her comment. Fleshman said he just dropped off his ballot at the Board of Elections this week and his ballot did not have the township fire levy listed. Fleshman confirmed that he knew the levy was on, but missed the fact that it was not listed on his ballot.

Rhinehart said when you have the incorrect ballot you can take the incorrect ballot to the Board of Elections and you can vote in person.

*Janet Ward* said she watched the Greater Hilltop Business Association meeting and gained information from this meeting that she did not know about the fire levy. What is the board going to do to ensure people are informed on the levy? Ward said if she did not watch the GHBA meeting I would not know what is going on. The board keeps saying that there will not be an increase in the fire levy but in reality, there will be an increase if the levy passes. The newsletter is coming out too late to inform the public about the levy, especially those who participate in absentee voting, said Ward.

Ward also thanked the road crew for fixing the storm drain on her street.

Horn said he is hopeful the newsletter will go out before election day.

*Mike Blevins* stated that he heard one trustee say he would like to work with the City of Columbus, he heard another trustee say that he is working with the

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---

City of Columbus, and another trustee said he has reached out to City officials as well. Blevins said his comment was not a dig but he would ask if the members of the board could work together and communicate their efforts it would be beneficial to all. Blevins also asked about the status of the high school scholarship program.

Alex thanked Blevins for his comments and asked Chief Smith for an update on the scholarship program.

Smith said they did reach out to Franklin Heights High School and they were going to award four (4) scholarships but we have not heard anything from the four (4) students to provide documentation on their acceptance to higher education. Blevins asked, "Since the cameras are not running, will the program continue"? Smith said he is hopeful the program will continue.

*Linda Faulk*, Individual and Group Health Insurance Agency updated the board on the approaching annual renewal. Faulk asked the board if she can ask for different deductible options based on the needs of the collective bargaining agreement. Smith and Welch confirmed that if insurance is changed the plan must be equal or better than the existing plan.

Rhinehart reminded everyone that there is a sixty (60) day notice required when making any changes in the insurance.

Faulk asked to be placed on the agenda at the October 22, 2020, regular meeting of the board of trustees. Alex agreed that Faulk could be added to the agenda as requested.

## **Adjournment:**

With no further discussion, Alex adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Signature on file with original document  
Aryeh Alex, Chairman/Trustee

Signature on file with original document  
John Fleshman, Vice-Chairman/Trustee

Signature on file with original document  
Ralph Horn, Trustee

Signature on file with original document  
Mary Rhinehart, Fiscal Officer