

COVENTRY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting of February 11, 2021

The Coventry Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in an online, public forum via Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Call to Order:

Chairman Jeff Houck called the meeting to order and asked Administrator, Anna Bryant to record the following Trustees present: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. All Trustees were recorded present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes

210211-01 George Beckham made a motion to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Workshop of January 14, 2021 and special meetings of January 28, 2021 and February 5, 2021. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

Jeff Houck swore in anyone wishing to speak either for or against the request and explained that Mr. William Cummings, PO BOX 175, Bath, OH 44210, has requested a public hearing per Ohio Revised Code 505.86. The Coventry Township Board of Trustees previously declared the vacant dwelling at 604 Pear Dr., Akron, OH 44319 (parcel# 1904090) a nuisance and ordered it to be razed. The owner wishes to present evidence as to why that resolution should be given time to correct the situation.

John Sebe - 2335 Pine Lake Trail explained that he wants to purchase the property from Mr. Cummings and save it. He explained that he cleaned up after the fire, which was mostly smoke damage. He took out the floor and wants to remodel the house. The well and septic are ok and he has plans drawn up to give to the County if the Township approves it. He stated that he is a carpenter and has rehabbed and owns 30 houses. He also has licensed contractors to work for him. He wants to revitalize and spruce up the area.

Jeff Houck stated that he has driven by the property and it appears to be pretty badly damaged. He stated that he also understands that the metal roof and air conditioner were stolen.

John Sebe explained that he wants to take the necessary steps to rehab and make it structurally sound. He feels it has potential and he has experience in rehabbing fire damaged properties in the past. He's willing to take a chance on this.

Mark Dodd - 588 Apple Drive stated that this house, which was always affectionately known as "Grandma Manda's" has been low-income housing and a problem for years. It's become a rough neighborhood up there as far as trash, graffiti and he has concerns over the class of people who rent. The cost to rehab would be extraordinary.

Evelyn Burkhart - 654 Fruit Drive stated that what they're proposing sounds nice and she's not sure if it will be rented or sold, or how much it would cost to renovate a \$12,000 house. It was in horrible disrepair before the fire and has had all kinds of safety issues over the years. She would like to see the house go away. She wants to see the neighborhood improve and, in her opinion, razing it would be the best option.

Mike Harrison, Zoning Inspector noted that this hearing is in response to the condemnation order by Summit County Building Department.

John Sebe stated that he does have a sales agreement with Mr. Cummings and feels that it would be a major improvement to the neighborhood. He intends use it for his family and will not be renting it out.

Jeff Houck asked how long it would take for the renovation.

John Sebe stated he felt it could be completed by June 1st or 4th of July. The exterior would be taken care of first. He would clean everything up so there would be no more trash or shanties.

George Beckham stated that he is concerned over all of the debris that is still there from the fire. The house hasn't been secured for the last 6-7 months.

John Sebe explained that he didn't want to spend the money if he wasn't going to be approved. If he's approved, the exterior will be cleaned up in a week.

Jeff Houck asked him how soon he can have a sales agreement?

John Sebe stated he can have a quit claim deed in a week.

George Beckham asked him if this was his livelihood?

Evelyn Burkhart asked if the owner of the property isn't present, why are we even discussing this?

John Sebe explained that the owner is old, and frankly a slumlord. He doesn't want to be bothered with it.

George Beckham stated that there is also the option of tearing it down and building a new house.

John Sebe stated if he tears it down, then a new house won't be approved because of lot size.

Jeff Houck asked Mike Harrison his opinion on the structure.

Mike Harrison stated the residential building inspector will have a third-party inspection done. He's not sure how long that will take.

John Sebe discussed feasibility of remodel versus complete tear-down and rebuild. He wants to remove the eyesore and needs to at least have the Board's permission.

Jeff Houck stated if we put you on the bubble and we come back to this next month, can you have everything cleaned up?

John Sebe stated he can get this cleaned up in a week and wanted to know if he could then get a permit?

George Beckham explained that he had a lot of dealings with Mr. Cummings over the years as a slum landlord. He always has properties under contract. He stated that he's having a problem with the way it looks and no sales agreement in place.

John Sebe explained that he has a sales agreement ready and is willing to put \$70,000 into beautifying it. He'll clean it up, he has the money to do it. He just wants a chance and is happy to do the work if he's allowed. He stated this is what he does – he rehabs houses.

Edward Diebold stated that this is a sticky situation. He doesn't want to put Mr. Sebe in a situation where he cleans up some of it and then we tear it down anyway.

Jeff Houck suggested we table it for a month to give him a chance to clean up and secure the building and get it permitted by the County, and then he'll have until June to finish it. He stated that Mr. Sebe will be on a timeline.

John Sebe asked how long they would give him for the siding, windows and roof?

Jeff Houck stated that would be something to discuss next month after he's able to get a permit.

John Sebe stated he will need about a month and a half for the exterior, so around April 1st.

Jeff Houck stated so the outward appearance should look pretty finished then.

George Beckham clarified that the building will be secured. He specifically noted a large hole in the floor that needs to be taken care of.

John Sebe stated he would cover the hole.

210211-02 Edward Diebold made a motion to table Mr. Cummings request to reverse the condemnation process of the property at 604 Pear Drive for one month pending clean up of the exterior of the property, securing the structure and obtaining a summit county building permit. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

END PUBLIC HEARING

New Business:

IAFF Local 2286 – Collective Bargaining Agreement

210211-03 Jeff Houck made a motion to ratify the labor agreement between the Coventry Township Board of Trustees and IAFF Local 2286 as negotiated for a period of 3 years, effective 9/1/2020. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Jeff Houck stated that he is very happy to pass this motion and thanked Brian McClellan, Brian Langenek, Anna Bryant and Chief Dolensky for all of their time and effort.

George Beckham thanked Jeff Houck and Anna Bryant. Jeff stepped in to assist and we really owe him a lot of gratitude.

Non-Contracted Employees – Wages and Healthcare

210211-04 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve the wage increases and health insurance cost sharing for all full-time non-contracted employees as revised in the IAFF Local 2286 agreement effective 9/1/20. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

George Beckham stated that it has been standard practice that the rest of the employee’s piggy-back on wages and insurance that the Fire Department receive.

PEBA - Medical Mutual Group Benefit Plan Renewal

Jeff Houck announced that the Township’s Medical Mutual Group Benefit Plan is up for renewal. There will be 2.82% increase over last year. Through our Public Employee Benefits Association consortium, Burnham & Flowers was able to negotiate the rate down from the initial quote of 7.74%.

210211-05 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve the renewal of the PEBA - Medical Mutual SuperMed Plus PPO Group Benefit Plan effective April 1, 2021 for a total premium cost of \$32,878.84. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

2020 Annual Highway System Mileage Certification

210211-06 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve the 2020 Annual Highway System Mileage Certification as received from the Ohio Department of Transportation for 54.78 miles of Township Roads. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

HVAC Improvements

George Beckham explained that we are looking at installing UV lights in the air conditioning units for clean air quality with CDBG grants. There is no access at this point from the inside of the building and we need to be able to get into the attic space.

210211-07 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve the estimate of Good Built Construction in the amount of \$3,270.00 for the installation of hide-away stairs to access HVAC in both the Administration Office and Town Hall buildings. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Jeff Houck and Edward Diebold thanked George Beckham for working on this.

Reports by Department Heads

John Dolensky, Fire Chief reported that there were 178 alarms in the last month with 227 to date. There have been 3 doses of Narcan dispensed.

Mike Harrison, Zoning Inspector reported that he has issued 2 permits in the last month. The BZA heard 1 case at the February 2nd meeting for a conditional use application. Their next meeting will be March 2nd via zoom - Pick's conditional use renewal and a residential addition will be heard. The Zoning Commission will meet next Tuesday via zoom.

Report by the Fiscal Officer:

Lori Seeman (excused – out of town) – it was noted that the Board of Trustees Period to Date financials were placed in their mailboxes.

210211-08 Jeff Houck made a motion to receive all bills and salaries, warrant numbers 72550 to 72636 as certified by Fiscal Officer, Lori Seeman, and subject to audit. (A listing of the warrants will be made a part of these minutes.) Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Budgetary – Supplemental Appropriations

210211-09 Edward Diebold made a motion reallocate funds for the month of January as outlined in the Appropriation Supplemental Report. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Reports by Trustees:

George Beckham reported that he attended the ODNR meeting yesterday about the lakes and it is available on YouTube now for anyone who missed it. He stated that he learned they are planning for the dredge to be here for the next 5 years, focusing on shoreline maintenance. Also, a lot of new guidelines on docks will be coming out. He noted that subletting of residential docks will no longer be permitted.

Edward Diebold thanked Sentry Fence, Cottage Grove Park looks great and they were a great company to work with. He is meeting with 4-Points Architects regarding the Logan Fieldhouse to get some sketches together. Hopefully we'll be able to get this project going in the spring. He gave a shout out to the Stokes family, they've lost a lot of family members this last year. He stated that the new flag at Pick's looks amazing and he thanked Donnie for flying it at ½ staff for Sgt. Stokes. Our extra police car has started. We are having that deputy focus on speeding issues. If we want to sustain this extra coverage we will need to pass a levy increase this coming fall. He wished everyone a happy Valentine's Day.

Jeff Houck stated that he is really happy about the outcome with the IAFF Contract and thanked Chief and Anna Bryant for their work. As most of us are aware, we are the Purple Martin Capital and a lot of people put time and effort into feeding them. Someone broke into and damaged the gourds at the Kiwanis, so he and Lisa have been working on helping to repair the houses. He commented about ice safety and stated with one man through the ice last week, we don't want you or our rescuers at risk.

George Beckham commented that ANR did a great job at Cottage Grove as well with the lighting replacement. Mr. Parker is ecstatic and looking forward to seeing more improvements.

Public Comments:

- Paul Hasel – 349 Vaughn Trail: Requested that the Township declare 2nd Amendment Sanctuary and gave some statistics on other Ohio communities that have already done so. He discussed firearm laws and rights to self-defense. He stated he is happy to learn we have another deputy on our streets. He is asking for this in order to prevent law-abiding citizens from being stripped of our constitutional rights. Jeff Houck state he is not sure we have authority as a Township and are already sworn to uphold the Constitution through our oaths. He listed our main priorities as a Township and explained that they are a bit restrictive and this falls outside of our scope. He stated he would like to walk this slowly. George Beckham agreed with Jeff and stated he would like to see how things play out. This may be better at the County Council or State Rep level. It's something new and he would also like to wait and see. Edward Diebold discussed the symbolic nature of this and stated we will watch it play out and won't necessarily say 'no', but will basically wait and see how things go. Paul Hasel stated

he will be reaching back out to the Sheriff's Office and State Reps as well to take this one step at a time.

- Darlene Street – 277 E, Iris Avenue: Discussed Cottage Grove Park and the talk of turning it into a dumping ground. She appreciates the fencing and the ballfield but what about the rest of the park? It's been let go and is an eyesore. The weeds are taller than her shoulder. She stated that she knows there was a science thing with the schools, but it used to have a pavilion, grills, tennis courts and it was all bulldozed. George Beckham explained the daylighting project and reasoning behind returning it to nature. This was a flood control measure. Since removing the pipe, the flooding has been alleviated throughout the rest of the neighborhood which also improves water quality in the area. Darlene Street stated that it is disheartening to see a grown-up mess out there.
- Dan Whisman – 3590 Birdland Avenue: following up from last month regarding the Onaway fire lane issue. Jeff Houck explained that we are in the process of looking at a few things regarding what we need to do and how that leaves you as a property owner. George Beckham stated we are trying to figure out the best plan. Edward Diebold stated we don't want to put it all on you and the neighbor.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting:

Jeff Houck made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.


Chairman


Fiscal Officer

