

COVENTRY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting of November 10, 2022

The Coventry Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Coventry Township Community Center, 335 E. Willowview Drive, Coventry Township, Ohio 44319.

Call to Order:

Chairman George Beckham 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, (absent/excused for vacation). Two Trustees were recorded present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes

221110-01 George Beckham made a motion to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Workshop of October 13, 2022. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Public Hearing – 4087 Greenbay Drive

George Beckham explained that Daniel Grable Trustee, PO Box 633, Lakemore, OH, 44250, & L. E. Prewitt Trustee, PO Box 633, Lakemore, OH 44250, have requested a public hearing pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 505.86 concerning the property at 4087 Greenbay Dr., Akron, OH 44319. He explained that the structure was damaged by fire and the Coventry Township Board of Trustees previously declared the structure a nuisance and ordered the removal, repair, or securance of this insecure, unsafe, and structurally defective building at the September 8th, 2022 Regular Meeting. He advised that this hearing gives the owner of the property the opportunity to address the Board and at which time, the Board of Trustees may dismiss the matter or direct the removal, repair, or securance of the building or other structure. The Board of Trustees shall make an order deciding the matter not later than thirty days after the hearing.

George Beckham swore in those wishing to speak for, or against the issue.

Laraine Prewitt, owner of the property resides in Springfield Township. She stated that she wants to sell the property, but doesn't have the option to sell until she knows the timeline for demolition or if she has the option to rehab the building. She stated she will sell it with or without the house. She didn't get any of the insurance money until September and she used that to pay off the mortgage and cover bills since she wasn't getting any rental income. She explained that COVID has caused other renters to not pay so she needed those funds.

George Beckham asked if she felt after being inside the structure if it could be rehabbed.

Laraine Prewitt stated she felt it could be.

George Beckham stated he doesn't see the value in keeping the structure and noted that Ms. Prewitt contacted the Fire Chief about using it as a burn demo.

Chief Adam Rockich explained that the house would have cost too much to prepare it to be used safely as a burn demo due to the amount of debris.

Laraine Prewitt commented that she has had the inside of the house cleaned out after he was last inside.

Chief Rockich stated that clean, or not, the structure is not safe due to the amount of damage. We would have to invest a significant amount of money to make it safe for our firefighters to use for a training burn. It's not worth the benefit of training. If a fire would occur at this time, he would fight it defensively and wouldn't let anyone enter the building. There have been calls to the Sheriff's Office as well.

Lt. Mike Lowe from the Sheriff's Office noted that there have been 46 calls for service this year, to date.

George Beckham stated that if the Township razes the house, the cost will be assessed to the property taxes which may give you time to get COVID money from your renters to pay. We've done these in the past, and he estimated the cost would be in the \$10-\$15,000 range.

Laraine Prewitt asked if there was grant funding available.

George Beckham stated that the Land Bank had a program, but it's no longer offered for demolition. Even when they did, half of the cost was the owner's responsibility. He also mentioned a large amount of debris around the old garage from a previous fire that was never cleaned up.

Debbie Donahue - 4099 Greenbay Drive - has lived in the neighborhood for 23 1/2 yrs. She presented a petition from Greenbay residents declaring 4087 a nuisance. The house has been in rehab for years. The County records division has a file thicker than an old-school phone book. This house has always been a nuisance. The foundation is made out of railroad timbers and it's been neglected for years. We have a neighborhood full of contractors so we know what is proper. She asked how long they have to put up with this. She mentioned reports of drugs and other issues with the tenants who have lived there over the years. She stated that she lives closest to the property and is scared for her own home. There have been five fires at this address over the years.

Nick Torio - 4075 Greenbay Drive - asked that the Board not give the owner a window of time to repair. He moved in right after the garage fire and there is still trash everywhere. No reputable contractors have worked there since he's lived there. He stated that the fire at least got rid of the people who were living there so thankfully there haven't been any more sheriff's visits in the middle of the night. He stated that he doesn't want this to continue.

Jennifer Hensley - 3968 Greenbay Drive - stated that since the home was "rehabbed" it has been turned over many times. This was a quiet neighborhood, until this house. She stated she doesn't believe anything the owner says about insurance money or COVID. She needs to go.

Brian White - 4088 Greenbay Drive - commented that he woke up to graffiti on the house that appeared the morning of Nov. 2nd. No video footage from his or the neighbor's cameras. This house has been such a mess for so long that it doesn't even phase him at this point. There was constant activity with people walking up and down the road, at 2:30 or 3 a.m. People constantly drive past, looking to buy or rent. If the current owner rebuilds it will just be more of the same. She has shown nothing but a lack of decency toward the rest of the neighborhood.

Jessica Thomas - Debbie Donahue's daughter: stated her son has witnessed drugs, fights, fires, tree issues, and more from this property. The neighborhood has had enough.

Ben Thompson - 4100 Greenbay Drive -stated that he has witnessed the same things as the previous neighbors. This property has been a nuisance since day one. Constantly changing tenants, dogs attacking, trash never-ending. He stated he doesn't see anything positive coming from allowing her to fix the property.

Tom Hensley - 3968 Greenbay Drive - Commented that the owner blaming this situation on COVID and rental money not coming in doesn't give her the right to take it out on the rest of us that live in the neighborhood.

Laraine Prewitt asked if anyone had tried to contact her about these issues. All members of the audience emphatically stated yes. She explained that she addressed her tenant's issues. If people pay rent she doesn't bother them but if rent wasn't paid, she had to evict them. With the fire issues, she explained that the tenant had a decent job and left when the garage burned down. There was never an electrical issue. This fire started because the last tenant plugged an AC unit into a power strip. It's not her fault, but she apologized for the problems. She stated that she put money into the property when she bought it. She stated that she didn't know about all of the police issues. At this point, she wants to tear the house down and move on.

Edward Diebold explained that the neighbors have been coming for 6 months and as a Board, we have always given a lot of leeway on properties, but this neighborhood has seen enough.

George Beckham stated that Ms. Prewitt has given us nothing to hang our hat on or reason to give more time on this to fix. If we demo it the cost will be assessed to the property tax.

Laraine Prewitt stated she wants her own demo company to do it if the Board will give her 60 days.

George Beckham stated no, the Township will do it ASAP with our contractor and we will see if we can get anything out of the Land Bank. He stated that he doesn't want to see this dragged out with someone doing a little bit here and there. Our contractor will knock it out in a couple of days at most.

221110-02 George Beckham made a motion to direct the removal of the structure at 4087 Greenbay Drive per Summit County Building Department's recommendation and ORC 505.86. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Public hearing ended

New Business:

Reports by Department Heads

Lt. Mike Lowe, Summit County Sheriff Representative reported 910 calls for service in October, 45 cites, and 30 arrests. Edward Diebold asked if anything stood out that we should be aware of. Lt. Lowe stated nothing in particular. George Beckham commented that an issue with the homeless was discussed during the workshop. We are not happy with the current situation but are doing what we can. Several agencies are keeping an eye on things.

Adam Rockich, Fire Chief reported 1,932 calls to date. There were 203 in October which included mutual aid and structure fires. He commented on issues with burning leaves and reminded everyone that it is illegal. They have seen issues recently with fires caused by burning leaves. He asked everyone to please bag their leaves. He noted that they have been busy with crashes on I-77, responding daily to accidents with injuries due to speed. ODOT will be installing speed cams. He stated that Administrative Assistance Kelly Corbin was recently diagnosed with cancer. Fire Department and Township staff will be wearing pink t-shirts to help support her, and they will be for sale to anyone interested in helping raise funds to assist her and her family as they get through this tough time.

MOU – Automatic Aid Agreement – City of Akron

George Beckham explained that Coventry Fire and the City of Akron Fire Department have reached an agreement for automatic aid which defines mutual aid between the departments.

221110-03 George Beckham made a motion to approve the Automatic Aid Agreement for Fire and EMS Services between the City of Akron and Coventry Township as approved by Township legal counsel. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Lael Stouffer, Road Superintendent stated he had no report and requested approval of the following motion:

2022 Road Resurfacing

221110-04 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$53,098.03 from the General Fund (1000) to cover the final cost for the 2022 Road Resurfacing Project that was over the original estimate from the County Engineer. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Anna Bryant, Administrator made the following announcements:

- **Township Resident Leaf Drop-Off Events:** Saturday, November 19th from 9-3 at Cottage Grove Park on Daisy Ave. Bagged leaves – no dumping before or after the event.
- **Zoning Commission Alternate and Portage Lakes Advisory Council Representative:** We have one seat available on each of these boards – anyone interested in filling either should submit a letter of interest to Administrator, Anna Bryant.
- **Clock Tower Tree Lighting Event** – Sunday, December 4th from 4-7 at the Clock Tower. Anyone interested in participating as a volunteer or event sponsor can contact me, or McKayla at Picks.

Community Center HVAC

Anna Bryant explained that the HVAC system at the Community Center is at the end of its life. A new unit if ordered now has a 6-month lead time for delivery/installation. The existing unit should make it through winter but the air conditioning function will not work once we hit warmer weather. We will be able to re-coup about 50% of this expense with the 2023 NOPEC Energized Community Grant next year.

221110-05 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$19,692.00 for Luxaire Ecobee HVAC system from Hybrid Heating and Cooling for the Community Center. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Phone System – AT&T Contract

Anna Bryant explained that Kelly Corbin has been working on converting our contract from a previous promotional rate which expired and increased, to a lower rate. This change has also converted our phone lines to VOIP which is preferable. We will be paying significantly less with this new contract.

221110-06 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a PO in the amount of \$4,253.00 to cover the contract and VOIP conversion with AT&T. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Report by the Fiscal Officer:

Anna Bryant advised that David Gissinger was absent due to illness. The Board has received their period-to-date financial reports.

221110-07 George Beckham made a motion to receive all bills and salaries warrant numbers 74647 to 74737 as certified by Fiscal Officer, David Gissinger, and subject to audit. (A listing of the warrants will be made a part of these minutes.) Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Budgetary – Sheriff’s Policing Contract P.O.

221110-08 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$200,000 to cover invoices from the Summit County Sheriff through the end of the year. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Budgetary – SAFER Grant

Adam Rockich noted that we will be reimbursed by the grant for these expenses.

221110-09 George Beckham made a motion to approve a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$60,000 to cover SAFER payroll expenses. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

Reports by Trustees:

Edward Diebold noted that the Parks Levy failed by 234 votes so the Board will be discussing re-running it in May. We’ve got a decent start on re-doing the parks and we’d like to keep the momentum going and just knock them out so we don’t have to piecemeal things over the next ten years. He asked everyone to take advantage of the leaf drop offs instead of blowing leaves into the lake or burning them. The Clock Tower Christmas Tree lighting will be bigger and better this year. We’ll have adult beverages and more food this year. Donnie and McKayla have done a great job and he expects it to be a really fun event. The Coventry Fire Department Fill the Fire Truck Food Drive will be at ACME on November 21st. All of your donations will go to the Lockwood Food Pantry to help those in need. He wished everyone good health and a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jeff Houck (absent – on Vacation)

George Beckham reminded residents that leaves can not be burned or put in the lake. Next Wednesday evening at 6 pm we will hold a meeting over a community well that will be condemned. We are meeting to try to help homeowners come up with a solution.

Public Comments:

- Brian White – 4088 Greenbay Drive: Thanked the Board of Trustees, Fire Department, and Sheriff’s Office. He stated he is pleased with the result and asked if the neighbors would be informed on when the demolition would take place. George Beckham stated we could let everyone know and explained the demo process.

Motion to Adjourn the Meeting:

George Beckham made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; and Edward Diebold, yes. Motion carried 2-0.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.


Chairman


Fiscal Officer