

COVENTRY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting of March 13, 2025

The Coventry Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Thursday, March 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Coventry Township Community Center, 335 E. Willowview Drive, Coventry Township, Ohio 44319.

Call to Order:

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes

250313-01 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting and Workshop of February 13, 2025, and Special Meeting of February 25, 2025. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Public Hearing: Request to Amend the Zoning District Map

Edward Diebold announced the beginning of the public hearing and asked anyone wishing to speak to stand to be sworn in. He swore in everyone who stood in the audience.

Zoning Inspector, Rob Henwood, explained that the applicant, Mark Ferguson, Four Points Architectural Services, 2850 Arlington Road, Akron, OH 44312, is requesting a change in the zoning district for 1252 Robinson Avenue, Barberton, OH 44203, Parcel Numbers 1906518 and 1904896. The parcels contain 1.01 acres of land and are currently zoned B-2 Local Business District. The request is to change the parcel's zoning to B-3 General/Regional Business District. This had previously gone before Summit County Planning on Dec. 19, 2024, who recommended that the Coventry Zoning Commission approve the request. The Coventry Zoning Commission held its public hearing on January 21st and unanimously denied the request. They are recommending that the Board of Trustees deny this request. It is now before the Board of Trustees for a final vote.

Rob Henwood read a letter he received prior to the meeting into the record from Lois Nemeth, 3211 E. State Street, opposing the recommendation and asking the Board of Trustees to disapprove the request.

Mark Ferguson, applicant, explained that this property sits on the edge of Coventry and Barberton and is currently zoned B2, which doesn't allow gas pumps. His client, the owner, needs them to make his business viable, and B3 allows them. Summit County planning approved this change 100%. Coventry Zoning Commission 100% disapproved. He understands the concerns and the petition from the neighbors. They did design something more compatible with the B2 district as a compromise. He understands the traffic concerns, as traffic is heavy with over 10,000 cars. Proper buffers would be placed. B2 is limited to 3000 square feet. The existing structures are over 4000 and do not meet setbacks. The applicant wants to design and build something that fits the B2 description. Essentially a neighborhood store with gas pumps. The dumpster would be on the remote side of the property, further from residential. They want to keep B2, but allow it to become a gas station. Site lighting would be cut-off fixtures, pumps with no voice recording to minimize noise. He mentioned a clause in the zoning code regarding keeping the site as is because it used to be a gas station. George Beckham and Rob Henwood explained that the clause he referred to, grandfathering it as a gas station, may not apply due to inoperability for more than two years. It has been vacant for several years and was previously occupied by other businesses.

Shaun Jaber - 570 Harrington Rd. Barberton – Owner of Rocky's Gas Station stated he purchased the corner property and has driven by for years wanting to return it to a gas station. This is a \$2.5 million project. It has not been easy to get a loan for this. He wants to be a good neighbor to these people, not to argue. His family runs stations, his nephew is about to take over his brother's station, and they've never had any violations. He stated he was shocked the neighbors were against this and had a petition. Mrs. Gotto's name is on the petition, but it is not her signature. He explained that this is not a 24-hour station; it will close by 10:00 PM. He addressed concerns over deliveries being made at all hours of the night and explained that they are only received during open hours. The new pumps don't have speakers or

intercoms, so the noise should not be an issue. That corner needs help; it looks bad. He wants to clean it up, and he and his family promise it will not cause a problem. He stated that they run a small business. He wants to be involved in the community. Edward Diebold commented that he has had a number of people call and vouch for Shaun, he stated 'Your character is not in question, sir.'

Melissa Nagic – 74 27th N.W. Barberton, OH - Sean Jaber's coworker addressed the petition that was sent around and stated she was not able to go around to speak to the residents. She tried to talk to the neighbors and was told she didn't have a soliciting permit, so she is curious how a petition was circulated. They want to have the opportunity to clean up the corner. She listed convenience items that their store will provide for the neighborhood, such as Amazon drop off, produce, dairy, etc. The traffic is terrible. She drives it. She looked up the AMAT study, and that is a main thoroughfare, but that is not Mr. Jaber's fault. They are reputable businesses; they don't tolerate trash or loitering, and they are a community-driven business.

Lisa Devenport – 3235 E. State Street, Coventry Township, explained that she is a neighbor, four houses down the road, and also runs a business right across the street from Mr. Jaber's Barberton Gas station. Traffic should not be his problem. He has been a good neighbor, supporting her business with camera footage when a generator was stolen; he went above and beyond to help. She feels that a gas station at that corner may actually slow people down and bring awareness. There is never one piece of trash at his Barberton store. The school is right there, it's a safe house for kids going to school. He's already zoned for most of these things. Please think about all the other things that could go in there if he doesn't. He would be a great neighbor to have.

Bebe Heitic – 249 Elson, Barberton, Council-At-Large, stated that he looks out for his neighbors, including Coventry, and he wanted us to know that they are redoing their development code. He asked the Board to consider the fact that if this owner is denied and wants to annex to Barberton, a bigger building could go in and could spiral into bigger things. He explained that his term is ending, he's not running for re-election, but he still wants to be a good neighbor. He doesn't want to see something where these people are powerless to stop.

James Picard, 1247 E. State St., explained that he lives directly across and is in favor of the gas station. It's a busy area, and he signed the petition to prevent the gas station. However, the gas station will not change anything that causes issues in the area. Mr. Jaber seems to be a reputable businessman. He's ponying up \$2,000,000 to put a gas station where one used to be.

Zachary Herber, 959 Robinson Ave., stated he wants the gas station because it would be convenient for him and his family. That corner is ugly. He would rather have a successful business than that mess.

Ed Boggs - 1257 Robinson Ave., stated that his grandfather built his house, and he remembers Lawson's and the old gas station. Traffic is terrible, and I have had to go around Akron View. Traffic is going to get worse. He's witnessed break-ins to those businesses and homes, and he's worried about property values going down, trash, and the strain on traffic. He favored it at first, and Mr. Jaber seems like a decent guy, but he just thinks that, as much as it would clean it up, it's going to be too much. He said he is concerned about the fact that now he's hearing that if we don't do what Mr. Jaber wants, Barberton can just take that property for the City and they can do whatever they want. He grew up in Coventry and watched a lot of it get annexed. He's lived there his whole life, but he'll move if that's how it's going to be.

Bebe Heitic clarified to the Board and to the audience that at no point has Barberton made any comment that they have any intention of annexing parts of Coventry during his tenure in Barberton.

Sally Cole - 1227 Robinson explained she is against the change of B2 to B3 she did not like how the architect explained the change he confused everyone's misleading that only adding pumps she is against changing from what it is giant eagle is only a mile away Circle K and Acme on Manchester road she goes where gas is cheaper this is our home leave us alone.

Tony Stopera - 1240 Robinson stated he is the adjacent owner to the east and stated that Shaun's integrity is not the point. Barberton and politics shouldn't be a part of this conversation. If we're being annexed, it's the first he's heard of it. He stated that he is against this for noise, environmental reasons, and safety concerns. He commented that nobody wants to live next to a gas station. Way back a mechanic had a service station and sold to Holland Oil. The neighbors didn't want tobacco or alcohol so it moved to Manchester Road. He had all kinds of problems when it was here. Theft, harassment, lights, etcetera. There is no real control of the light no matter what fixtures you put on them. This type of business just breeds issues. If you put a business next to my house, my property value is going down. Zoning is supposed to separate business and residential. There's no way to camouflage a gas station. When he purchased this, it was B2, and he knew it couldn't be a gas station. A Lawson's worked. Just those two buildings can function just fine. Once it becomes B3 it can be anything. If it's rezoned they're not

obligated to do what they're saying. They can turn around and sell. He stated he has a concern over safety. Gas stations are #4 on the list for crime. The petition has 70 signatures, and all those people are local. He explained that he had Lisa Devenport's elderly neighbor's daughter sign for her when he was questioned about the validity of her signature. He stated that the Summit County Planning Commission is not familiar with Coventry. The Coventry Zoning Commission voted against this unanimously because they know the community. He is asking the Board of Trustees to agree with the Coventry Zoning Commission, which knows the area.

Dave Cole—1227 Robinson explained that he and his wife moved into their home in 2013. He feels that putting a new gas station there and comparing it to the old one is like comparing apples to oranges. He feels that rezoning just to put a gas station there just feels like it's not what they paid for. They bought the house knowing that it was B2, and certain things couldn't go there. Changing it to B3 just doesn't sit well with the neighborhood.

Ralph Waszak - 419 Dorwil Drive, and a Coventry Zoning Commission member, explained he is also a real estate attorney. He stated this was an easy decision to reject the application. He wished that Shaun would buy any of the gas stations in Coventry Township, because he seems like a great guy. This is not about a gas station, this is about changing to B3. A change to B3 is permanent, and it's about future use. Four Points Architect's is listed as the applicant; he asked the Board of Trustees to acknowledge a business relationship with Four Points. George Beckham explained that the Township does have a relationship with Four Points architecture, working on our Logan Fieldhouse project.

Melissa Naglic asked if she could re-address the Board. She wanted to point out to Mr. Waszak that the parcels have been submitted to Summit County for lot consolidation, and new plans have been submitted to keep the property at B2 with a new plan. Mr. Waszak stated he was not aware of that, however, the request before the Board tonight is still to rezone to B3.

Ann Akers-Shrewsbury 1224 Robinson addressed her concern that Rockies sells alcohol and drug paraphernalia across from schools, and now wants them in a residential area. She doesn't think it's right.

Lisa Devenport, 3235 E. State St., stated that all the things Mr. Jaber sells in his Barberton location are legal in the state of Ohio. He is probably more regulated and has better security than any gas station she's seen. She also addressed the fact that she doesn't feel the petition was signed by all of the actual property owners. Many of the signatures were forged.

With no further comments, Edward Diebold asked for comments from the Board of Trustees:

George Beckham commented that it was interesting that relationships with Four-Points came up. When it was initially brought up, he talked with Mark Ferguson about this and told him that he's not into rezoning. He has seen what happens with rezoning, where they've passed based on what people have said they were going to do, and then they flip them. He's rezoned once since being on the Board of Trustees, and the guy sold it one year later. This would be what he calls spot-zoning. Plan or not, you can't look at what you might do there because that could change. He stated that he is struggling with this, having heard all sides, but he is going based on his experience.

Jeff Houck loves to see neighborhoods improved, and that property is not nice now. He looks at it as a residential area. Improving that with a small business would be great and attractive. It would help, but he doesn't think that going to B3 helps the situation.

Edward Diebold stated that the tough part is where the rubber meets the road, not about Shaun's character or plan. It's a permanent change. He explained that he cut his teeth as a Zoning Commission member, so a 5 to 0 vote is significant. He wants to see something without gas pumps. If it changes to B3, then it's B3. He stated that he could not in good conscience go against those guys.

250313-02 Edward Diebold made a motion to deny the request to change 1252 Robinson Avenue, Barberton, Ohio 4420 (Parcel Numbers 1906518 and 1904896) to B-3 General/Regional Business District. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

End public hearing

New Business:

2025 Permanent Appropriations Resolution

250313-03 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve the 2025 Permanent Appropriations Resolution. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Reports by Department Heads

Captain Dave McCutcheon, Summit County Sheriff Representative, reported 1,237 calls for service to date, 25 accidents in February, and 25 arrests. Jeff Houck thanked him for the detailed incident reports he has been sending to the board on a regular basis. They're very helpful.

Chuck Hauber, Summit County Engineer Representative, reported that the water line extension project is going well. They have construction update meetings every Tuesday. He announced that the site plan and pollution prevention plan have been approved for 1684 S. Arlington. They also responded to a report of a dirt pile on Portage Lakes Drive near Peach. That address will need a driveway permit.

Adam Rockich, Fire Chief, reported that they have responded to 429 calls for service in the last month. He has been attending meetings with dispatch centers regarding our move from Green to Summit County.

Dispatch Contract – Summit County Council of Governments

Adam Rockich explained that the Summit County Council of Governments quoted service fees of \$231,663.99 from April 1, 2025, to December 1, 2027. SECC currently receives our calls and then transfers them to our current dispatch center, resulting in delays in being sent out on alarms. The switch to SECC will decrease the time it takes for apparatuses to be dispatched, as well as provide us with cost savings over our current contracted provider. The cost savings will allow us to pay for the Bryx alerting system, which will also aid in faster response and fewer errors with our current dispatching methods.

250313-04 Jeff Houck made a motion to enter into a contract with the Summit County Council of Governments for dispatching services from April 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027, with an option to extend through December 31, 2028. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Bryx Station Alerting Equipment

Adam Rockich explained that most of our dispatch centers have switched to using Bryx alerting, which has decreased the number of station alerting errors. The funds will incorporate a new station alerting system, radio speakers and amplifiers, station status boards, and lighting throughout the station.

250313-05 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve the encumbrance of funds in the amount of \$48,000.00 for the purchase and installation of a Bryx Station Alerting System and required components. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Lael Stouffer, Road Superintendent, stated that winter is over and they have a lot of work to get started on. He requested the following motions:

Road Department Repairs & Maintenance

Lael Stouffer explained that this is to cover repairs and maintenance of all road department vehicles and equipment, in accordance with the previously approved appropriation schedule.

250313-06 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve a blanket certificate for repairs and maintenance of road department equipment in the amount of \$ 20,000. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Tree & Brush Removal

Lael Stouffer explained that this is to cover general maintenance and emergency tree removal in Coventry Township's road right-of-ways.

250313-07 George Beckham made a motion to approve a blanket certificate in the amount of \$ 30,000 for the purposes of tree and brush removal. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Contracted Tree Clearing - Linger's Lumberjack's

Lael Stouffer explained that this is for the removal of trees from Township properties. He did receive quotes from several companies, and Linger's was the cheapest.

Trees will be removed as follows:

- 3 Pines at Admin Building \$2,950.00.
- Ingleside Park lot clearing to include all pines \$23,500.00.
- Community Center Hillside lot clearing \$18,500.00.

250313-08 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a purchase order to Linger's Lumberjacks for \$44,950.00. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Drainage Repairs

Lael Stouffer explained that this is for materials needed to perform drainage repairs within the township road easements.

250313-09 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$ 25,000 to Winwater. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Backfill Materials

Lael Stouffer explained that this is for materials needed to perform road and drainage repairs throughout the Township, which include Stone, sand, and topsoil.

250313-10 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a blanket certificate in the amount of \$20,000 for all backfill material necessary for all Road Department operations. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Asphalt

Lael Stouffer explained that this motion supports our road repairs for the township and is in accordance with the previously approved appropriation schedule.

250313-11 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve \$10,000 for the purchase and delivery of hot mix asphalt. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Mowing Contract 2025

Lael Stouffer explained that the following locations are difficult for our staff and equipment to handle, so we are contracting with Ground-Pro for the following locations to be mowed every two weeks. He stated that we don't see a lot of growth in these locations. (Township staff will mow all other parks/grounds):

- S. Main & Killian 16 x \$137.00 = \$2,192.00
- Pleasant Valley 16 x \$200 = \$3,200.00
- Dam Property 16 x 150.00= \$2,400.00
- In the amount of: \$7,792.00

250313-12 Edward Diebold made a motion to award the mowing contract to Ground-Pro, Inc. for the following locations: S. Main & Killian, Pleasant Valley Cemetery, and the East Reservoir Dam

Property and to approve a Purchase Order in the amount of \$7,792.00. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

George Beckham asked Lael Stouffer about possibly getting rid of the old planting bed at the corner of Killian and S. Main Street that isn't used anymore and returning it to grass. Lael Stouffer stated they could take care of that.

Pre-Emergent Weed Treatment – Ground-Pro

Lael Stouffer stated that we typically perform post-weed control at these locations; we are performing a pre-emergent on broadleaf weeds due to public request.

250313-13 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve \$3,480.00 for four Pre-Emergent Turf Treatments at Logan Field and Lockwood Cemetery. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Parks Restoration – Community Center & Ingleside Park

Lael Stouffer explained that this is for restoration work needed to complete the Community Center Foundation/ Drainage project and for tree clearing and clean-up at Ingleside Park.

250313-14 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve \$10,000.00 BC for parks restoration. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Rob Henwood, Zoning Inspector, reported that he has issued 6 Short Term Rental renewals since last month's meeting. One case was heard at the March 11th BZA hearing that requested three sign variances, and all three were approved. April 8th is the next scheduled BZA, but no applications have been received so far. The Zoning Commission will hear three cases at their next meeting: a rezoning request for a gas station on S. Main Street, a text amendment for adult use marijuana, and a billboard text amendment.

Anna Davis, Administrator, requested the following motions:

Administration/Fire Department Retaining Walls & Landscaping:

250313-15 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve a BC in the amount of \$40,000 for new retaining walls and landscaping in front of the Fire Department and Administration building. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

2025 NOPEC Energized Community (NEC) Grant

Anna Davis explained that this grant is provided by NOPEC to help communities implement energy savings or energy infrastructure measures. We have used this in the past for projects like HVAC replacement and window replacement. The current grant award is \$6,481, which will reimburse a portion of the cost of the Fire Department Garage Door replacement project completed last year. (we planned to use this grant to cover the project for three years – 2024, 2025 and 2026)

250313-16 Edward Diebold made a motion to authorize the filing of an application for the 2025 NEC Grant for \$6,481 to be used to reimburse a portion of the cost for the Fire Department Garage Door Replacement Project from 2024. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

ODNR – Capital Improvement Community Park, Recreation, or Conservation Project Pass-Through Grant Agreement

Anna Davis explained that this motion is to accept our grant award amount of \$294,000 out of the \$300,000 of Capital Improvement Project Funds allocated for the Portage Lakes Dam and Clock Tower Improvement Projects we have completed over the last two years. (\$6,000.00 of the amount appropriated for the Project will be retained by ODNR to cover administrative costs.) This includes the landscaping and walkways that were installed last year and the retaining walls and new landscaping around the Clock Tower in 2023. PLAC originally applied for and received the go-ahead for this funding back in 2019.

250313-17 Edward Diebold made a motion to authorize the signing of the Capital Improvement Community Park, Recreation, or Conservation Project Pass-Through Grant Agreement as approved by Township Attorney Irv Sugerman and to authorize Administrator Anna Davis to execute the agreement. Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

PEBA - Medical Mutual Group Benefit Plan Renewal

Anna Davis explained that the Township's Medical Mutual Group Benefit Plan is up for renewal on April 1st, and this year, we will see a 10.08% increase (last year was 13.09%).

250313-18 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve the renewal of the PEBA - Medical Mutual SuperMed Plus PPO Group Benefits Plan effective April 1, 2025, for a total premium cost of \$59,919.62. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Report by the Fiscal Officer:

David Gissinger advised that the Period-to-date financial reports have been presented to the Board.

250313-19 George Beckham made a motion to receive all bills and salaries, warrant numbers 77357 to 77443 as certified by Fiscal Officer, David Gissinger, and subject to audit. (A listing of the warrants will be made a part of these minutes.) Jeff Houck seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Budgetary – Purchase Orders

250313-20 Edward Diebold made a motion to approve a purchase order for the Summit County Sheriff in the amount of \$ 187,587.31 for Policing Services. George Beckham seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

250313-21 Jeff Houck made a motion to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$40,000 to Burnham & Flowers for HRA expense. Edward Diebold seconded the motion. Roll call: George Beckham, yes; Edward Diebold, yes; and Jeff Houck, yes. Motion carried 3-0.

Reports by Trustees:

George Beckham explained that last year, he worked with the Parks Advisory Committee and helped start "Food Truck Monday." The Committee is planning on doing it again three times this summer: June, July, and August. He stated he was at the BZA meeting last Tuesday when they approved the variances, and he wants to look at implementing an architectural review board.

Jeff Houck noted that the weather is breaking and the parks will be getting busy. He asked people to be aware and be careful. We had a close call on the ice a few weeks back. Although not in Coventry, it was still in our Lakes community. Please be careful on and near the water. He thanked Captain McCutcheon again for the great communication.

Edward Diebold stated that tonight was one of the difficult parts of being a Trustee. You have to take the emotion out of it and look at the black and white. There were friends here tonight who probably are not happy with the decision, but he always tries to look at the big picture. He hopes Mr. Jaber can develop something the neighbors will be happy with.


Public Comments:

- Lori Kreitzburg—Greer Road: She asked the Board how to get Akron water. Anna Davis explained that it is a petition process, with a percentage of the property owners on her street needing to agree to sign up with Akron. She told her she would get her information after the meeting to follow up.

Motion to Adjourn the Regular Meeting:

Jeff Houck made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. George Beckham seconded the motion. 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 8:18 p.m.


Chairman


Fiscal Officer