

**BRUNSWICK HILLS TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**September 26, 2023**

The Brunswick Hills Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at Brunswick Hills Township Town Hall.

Board of Trustees Chair John Witthuhn, Trustee Vice-Chair Christina Kusnerak, Trustee Patrica Murphy, Fiscal Officer Katherine Esber, Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo, Service Foreman Cory Schultz and Police Sergeant Przemyslaw Piekut present.

Witthuhn called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and noted the meeting was properly advertised.

**PRESENTATION:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

Murphy moved to approve the August 22, 2023 regular meeting minutes. Witthuhn seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn - yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn motioned to approve the August 29, 2023 special meeting minutes. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn provided off camera summary.

(For detailed information on special or off camera items, review the posted minutes on the website: [www.brunswickhillstwp.org](http://www.brunswickhillstwp.org))

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

**Zoning Department:**

Trustee Murphy commented that the current Zoning Office hours on Mondays are from 1 PM to 5 PM. Assistant Zoning Inspector Wes Humphrey informed Murphy that no one ever comes into the office or calls after 4 PM. Therefore, Murphy made a motion to change the Monday office hours to 1 PM to 4 PM, effective immediately. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

**Police Department:**

Witthuhn moved to approve Chief Sopkovich' s four requests for the disposition of records. Kusnerak clarified for the Board that the items requested for disposition by Sopkovich do not fall under the RC3 records retention policy that is mandated by the ORC. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy revisited the discussion and request by Sopkovich from the 9/12/23 meeting in regard to mileage reimbursement for Patrolman Fairhurst to drive her personal vehicle to a training class in Marion, Ohio from October 10-13. Previously, Murphy made a motion to pay mileage to Fairhurst, but

the motion had failed because there was no second. Murphy stated that because section 36.5 of the FOP contract states that if an employee's personal vehicle is used for police business, they are to be reimbursed mileage. Witthuhn again stated his opposition because the Township's Employee Policy Manual states that if a township vehicle is available, it should be used. Witthuhn also informed Kusnerak that a lengthy discussion on this topic had already taken place. Murphy stated that she had a discussion with Sopkovich after the last Board meeting and he stated his policy is that if the trip is under 100 miles, they utilize a township vehicle, but if it is over 100 miles or longer than one day, he requires the police employees to use their personal vehicle. Witthuhn reiterated that is the Chief's policy, not the Township's. Murphy then made a motion to approve mileage reimbursement for Patrolman Fairhurst to attend Reid Technique of Investigative Interviewing and Advanced Interrogation Techniques from October 10-13 at the Marion County Sheriff's Office. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – no. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

As a follow-up to this topic, Kusnerak said she would like for the Board to take a look at the mileage reimbursement policy. Witthuhn read the policy, which states in part, "Personal mileage will not be paid when a Township owned vehicle has been issued to an individual or department, unless separately approved by the Trustees". Witthuhn mentioned that he had spoken with the Township Administrative Assistant to inform her that when conducting Township business, the Zoning car should be utilized, whenever possible, as she did not know that was an option.

#### **Fire Department:**

Chief Strazzo requested to make application for himself to the Ohio Fire Chief's Association Ohio Executive Training Program, and also that Trustee Vice-Chair Kusnerak sign the required paperwork, which is a statement of nomination and a statement of financial responsibility. Strazzo explained that it is an elite school for fire executives with 22 learning modules in five sessions. Each of the five sessions is one week long and will take place in Columbus. The cost of tuition covers the class, lodging, meals, and everything related to the program. In addition to time spent in class, there is an additional 450 hours outside of class that must be completed in order to graduate. The cost of each session is \$2,100 and to offset the cost, Strazzo has applied for a grant through the Dominion Foundation, which could cover \$1,500 per session. Unfortunately, application must be made and accepted, prior to being notified if the grant money will be awarded. Additionally, Strazzo also explored whether any existing grant money is available and reported that approximately \$789.89 can be used from the EMS grant fund to assist in paying for the training. Strazzo shared with the Trustees that he is also making a personal investment in attending the classes in that he will be taking vacation days from his full-time employer. Strazzo reported that he will be required to write a research paper as part of the training, and Trustee Murphy requested that he share the report with the Board when completed. Strazzo informed the Board that the training will be completed over two-and-a-half years, with two sessions in 2024, two sessions in 2025, and the final session will be in June of 2026. Witthuhn moved to approve the training, as requested, as well as to have Kusnerak sign the required paperwork on behalf of the Township. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

After receiving the Fiscal Officer's reports earlier in the day, Strazzo emailed the Board regarding an appropriations reallocation as the Department's Ohio Edison account was low and would need to be replenished. Therefore, Strazzo requested a \$2,000 increase in line item 2192-220-351-0000, Electricity and a \$2,000 decrease of line item 2192-760-740-0000, Machinery, Equipment & Furniture. Strazzo also requested a new purchase order in the amount of \$2,000 for Ohio Edison. Witthuhn offered

**Resolution #33-2023** Appropriations Reallocation as requested as well as a new purchase order to Ohio Edison in the amount of \$2,000. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Resolution adopted.

Strazzo announced that the Fire Department is having an open house on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from noon to 3 PM at Fire Station 2. There will be parking at the Cuyahoga Valley Church on Substation Road and a shuttle bus will be running back and forth to Station 2. Strazzo thanked the church for the use of their parking lot as well as Small Hands Big Dreams Daycare for the use of their shuttle bus.

Strazzo reminded everyone that the Township Bon Fire & Hayride will be held on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> from 5 PM to 8 PM at Plum Creek Park. There will be two food trucks at the event, one serving dinner and the other serving desserts.

Chief Strazzo also reminded residents that the Fire Department has a levy on the November ballot, and he reiterated that it is not an increase, but rather a renewal of the current tax rate and that no new funds are being requested from the residents.

Lastly, Strazzo announced that there will be a national emergency alert system test on Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 2 PM. All electronic devices will be included in the alert.

Witthuhn requested that Chief Strazzo contact the other department heads to ensure everyone is clear on their responsibilities for the Township Bon Fire & Hay Ride.

**Service Department:**

Service Department Foreman Cory Schultz requested an executive session with the Board to interview a candidate for the full-time Service Department open position.

Schultz requested approval for himself and the Service Department employees to attend a Tree Cutting & Trimming class in North Canton on December 12, 2023 from 8:30 AM to 4:15 PM, pending the availability of openings for the class. The class is free for participants and is through the Bureau of Workers Compensation. If the applicant is hired, Schultz and the three departmental employees would attend the class and utilize a Township vehicle for transportation. Murphy made a motion to approve the request. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak notified Schultz that she had emailed the Township’s insurance company and had the new asphalt hot box added for coverage.

**TRUSTEE REPORTS:**

**Christina Kusnerak:**

None.

**Trica Murphy:**

None.

**John Witthuhn:**

None.

**FISCAL OFFICER:**

Esber reported that the financial reconciliation for August, 2023 is complete.

Witthuhn motioned to approve warrants dated 9/26/23 in the amount of \$91,353.93, which he noted includes just under \$30,000 for the Service Department's purchase of the asphalt hot box and employee medical insurance in the amount of \$43,000. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn moved to approve payroll dated 10/3/23 in the amount of \$58,803.13. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn moved to approve the following purchase orders as read by Fiscal Officer Esber. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

- Purchase order to Coverall North America, Inc. for the Police Department in the amount of \$1,500.
- Purchase order to Breezeline for the General Fund from Contracted Services in the amount of \$600.
- Purchase order to Ohio Edison for the Fire Department in the amount of \$500.
- Then & Now purchase order in the amount of \$343.68 General Fund for Fiscal Officer

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Witthuhn again announced that the Township's Trick or Treating will be held on Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> from 6 PM to 8 PM.

Witthuhn shared that a while back, there was an issue on the proper protocol to follow when the police and/or fire departments encounter a death on one of their calls so the Board reached out to the Medina County Prosecutor's Office to review the current procedures and request their advice. A response had been received from the Prosecutor's Office and Kusnerak stated that she felt the protocol was very clear. Chief Strazzo stated that the Fire Department responded to a DOA call right before the meeting. They followed the protocol outlined in the Prosecutor's memo, and Strazzo stated that they did not encounter any issues. Discussion continued on the topic. Chief Strazzo assured the Board that both the Police and Fire Departments, as well as Dispatch, are now all of the mutual understanding that when a death occurs, the Fire Department automatically gets called to the scene. From that point on, the protocol outlined in the memo from the Prosecutor's Office will be followed. Sgt. Piekut acknowledged the Police Department is in agreement.

Kusnerak brought up scheduling a meeting to discuss the Fireworks Policy, but Witthuhn and Chief Strazzo agreed that they would prefer to wait until Chief Sopkovich was present at a Board of Trustees meeting to discuss a date. Kusnerak then suggested that an email be sent to all of the department heads to decide on a date for the meeting, and Chief Strazzo agreed to write and send the email.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Murphy stated that the Medina County Sanitary Engineers’ Office will be installing a new water tower and booster station near the Brunswick Hills Township’s Service Department building on Substation Road. As part of the work, they will be closing Substation Road as well as the intersection of Substation and Route 303 in order to open cut the road. Kusnerak asked Service Foreman Schultz to take pictures prior to the work beginning in 2024, and to ensure that Substation Road is restored to the same condition as it is prior to commencement of the construction. Chad Stima from the Engineers’ Office has requested a letter granting the variance from the Board approving the work. Therefore, Witthuhn made a motion to approve the request by the Medina County Sanitary Engineers’ Office acknowledging the work and the variance that they are requesting. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Previously, Assistant Zoning Inspector Wes Humphrey presented the Board with information and photos of six properties currently encroaching on land owned by the Township. Two residents have erected accessory buildings on Township owned land without permits and others have built swing sets, fire pits, etc. Kusnerak moved that letters to residents who are encroaching on Township owned land be sent to the six residents who have been identified by the Zoning Department. In addition, letters from the Zoning Department are also to be sent to the residents notifying them that accessory buildings cannot be constructed without an approved permit. Witthuhn seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

The Board of Trustees received a liquor license request from the True North Service Station located at the corner of Marks and Center Roads. The Police Department and Trustees have no issues with the license. Fiscal Officer Esber will complete the form noting no objections and return it to the licensing agency.

Witthuhn announced that the Township and Zoning Offices will be closed on Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> in observance of Columbus Day.

Murphy mentioned that the Board had previously received a request for group sharing data with Medical Mutual, and Fiscal Officer Esber said she had forwarded the request to Ellen Young to handle.

Murphy stated that she had an invoice for the City of Brunswick from the previous meeting in the amount of \$21,080.82 for the franchise fee. Murphy motioned to pay the invoice, which was for 4th quarter 2022. Esber reported that the Township had not previously received nor paid the invoice. Kusnerak seconded the motion. Witthuhn – abstained. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

**MISCELLANEOUS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

Trustees:	October 3 at 6:30 PM – Special Meeting
Trustees:	October 10 at 7 PM
BZA:	October 4 at 7 PM - CANCELLED
Zoning Commission:	October 5 at 7 PM

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

None.

**OFF CAMERA:**

Witthuhn motioned to go off camera at 7:50 PM for the signing of Warrants & Purchase Orders and any other business brought before the Board. There will be three Executive Sessions off camera to discuss a land purchase, conduct an interview, and discuss security matters. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:55 PM to conduct an employee interview (invite Service Department Foreman Schultz and the applicant); land purchase (invite department heads and representative); and discuss security matters. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak - yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to come out of Executive Session at 9:05 PM. Witthuhn seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

No action will be taken at this time regarding the land purchase.

Witthuhn motioned to offer Daniel Rowe a full-time Service Department position pending successful completion of all pre-employment requirements. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy made a motion to make copies of the Zoning Office keys to be kept in the Trustees’ office lock box. Witthuhn seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:21 PM. Witthuhn seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

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John Witthuhn, Chair Trustee

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Christina Kusnerak, Vice-Chair Trustee

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Patrica Murphy, Trustee

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Katherine Esber, Fiscal Officer