

**BRUNSWICK HILLS TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**December 12, 2023**

The Brunswick Hills Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Tuesday, December 12, 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, Police Chief Tim Sopkovich and Service Foreman Cory Schultz present.

Witthuhn called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and noted the meeting was properly advertised.

**PRESENTATION:**

None.

**MINUTES:**

Kusnerak made a motion to approve the 11/14/23 regular meeting minutes. Murphy seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn moved to approve the 11/28/23 regular meeting minutes. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – 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 reported that total monies collected in the Month of November were \$618.57.

Murphy announced that the term of office for Cliff Kersten on the Board of Zoning Appeals is expiring, and Mr. Kersten would like to renew his term for another five years. Therefore, Murphy motioned to reappoint Cliff Kersten to another five-year term, ending in 2028, to serve on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

**Police Department:**

Police Chief Tim Sopkovich thanked residents for their support of Story Time with Santa that was held on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at the Southwest Baptist Church as well as the Brunswick Hills Police Department and Brunswick Hills Police Association for sponsoring the event. Sopkovich also thanked Santa Frank for donating his time and Trustees Kusnerak and Murphy in addition to Zoning Inspector Evelyn Czyz for helping to distribute refreshments to everyone.

Sopkovich thanked the community for donations of toys and food, and have begun distributing those to the needy. There is still time to make a donation, if anyone is interested. Items can be dropped off at the Police Department Lobby or call the Police Department at 330-273-3722.

Sopkovich congratulated Office Heather Stask, who just completed her 25<sup>th</sup> year on the Brunswick Hills Police Department.

Chief requested Appropriations Reallocations for 2023 so that he can purchase a new Police vehicle in 2024. Sopkovich informed the Board that the new vehicle will be fully outfitted for the Police Department and, therefore, may have a 7% increase over current prices since it will be delivered in a new year. Murphy offered **Resolution 41-2023 Appropriations Reallocations**. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Resolution adopted.

Trustee Murphy made a motion to approve a Purchase Order in the amount of \$62,636.40, made payable to Tim Lally Chevrolet for the new vehicle to be determined in 2024. Kusnerak seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

### **Fire Department:**

Kusnerak read the November Run Review and reported that \$18,371.52 was collected from EMS billing and \$220,590.62 year to date.

On behalf of the Fire Department, Kusnerak motioned to approve a Purchase Order to Huntington Bank in the amount of \$500 from line item 2192-220-420-2420, Operating Supplies - Community and a Purchase Order to Home Depot in the amount of \$500 from line item 2192-220-430-0000, Small Tools & Minor Equipment. Witthuhn seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak stated that Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo had contacted the Board the previous week requesting approval to advertise for applicants for two full-time firefighter and paramedic positions, pending the Board's approval. Kusnerak made a motion to approve the request. Murphy seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried. Trustee Chair Witthuhn clarified that the two full-time positions were created because of the levy that passed in May.

Additionally, Kusnerak stated that Chief Strazzo is requesting approval of the compensation package for full-time and compensation rates for part-time employees for 2024 through 2026, as submitted. The Board agreed that they will discuss the matter in Executive Session.

In his report, Chief Strazzo informed the Board that he received official notification from FEMA that the Department was not chosen to receive the 2022 SAFER Grant Funding.

Witthuhn announced that Meet Santa will be held on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> from Noon to 3 PM at Fire Station 2.

### **Service Department:**

Service Department Foreman Cory Schultz read the monthly report for November, 2023.

### **TRUSTEE REPORTS:**

#### **Christina Kusnerak:**

Kusnerak stated that the annual letter was received from OTARMA regarding risk management. Some of the items they are requesting from the Trustees includes sexual harassment training, motor vehicle

records check for the Fire Department, driving policy, cybersecurity, etc. Kusnerak will need to check into items being requested.

Kusnerak announced that a communication was received by the Board of Trustees from Representative Melanie Miller stating that the State of Ohio is offering a one-time investment to local governments for appropriations infrastructure project needs, such as renovations, new construction, land acquisition, etc. The deadline for submission is Monday, December 18, 2023. Murphy suggested that having electronic marquee boards in front of the Fire Stations would be useful. Witthuhn made a motion to authorize Kusnerak to apply for the grant money on behalf of the Township. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

**Trica Murphy:**

Murphy reported that she had spoken with the vendor that they selected for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and they suggested that the Board consider assembling a committee to work on the plan. Murphy recommended utilizing interested members of the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals as well as residents and business leaders from the community. The Trustees discussed the time commitment, frequency of meetings, and whether or not the participants would be compensated for their time. Murphy will work on a plan that will be discussed at the next meeting.

**John Witthuhn:**

None.

**FISCAL OFFICER:**

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

Witthuhn moved to approve warrants dated 12/4/23 in the amount of \$163,685.53. Witthuhn noted that the majority of the amount was payment to Melway Paving for the Township’s portion of paving Kingsbury. That amount was \$159,276.41. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak made a motion to approve warrants dated 12/12/23 in the amount of \$20,687.51. Murphy seconded. Witthuhn – abstained from the \$672.00 payment to Zashin & Rich, but yes to all the rest. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn motioned to approve payroll dated 12/12/23 in the amount of \$95,614.00, which includes bonus payments for various employees. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn moved to approve a purchase order to Cintas from the General Fund in the amount of \$70.00 and a purchase order to ProVison in the amount of \$1,350.00 on behalf of the Police Department. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn offered **Resolution #42-2023 Temporary Appropriations for 2024** for an amount not to exceed \$8,226,850.00 to allow the Township to continue to operate in the new year. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Resolution adopted.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

As very briefly discussed at the previous meeting, the Delta Dental contract will renew on January 1, 2024. The initial increase in the contract was supposed to be 9.5%, but Burnham & Flowers, the company that manages benefits for the Township, was able to negotiate the increase down to 5.5%. Witthuhn made a motion to authorize Kusnerak to sign the Delta Dental contract renewal on behalf of the Township, effective January 1, 2024. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn began a discussion regarding the internal phone extensions, which are for use by the Township employees to quickly call another department by dialing three numbers rather than the entire 10-digit phone number. Police Chief Sopkovich is not in favor of the use of extension calling and said that they have experienced issues with the Department’s internet use from work on the phone lines. After a lengthy discussion, the majority consensus by the Board was to discontinue use of the extensions for departments to call each other.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The Trustees had a lengthy discussion regarding Republic Waste. The previous representative from Republic retired and their replacement is unclear of what needs to be done with the postcard mailing. In addition, the Trustees are considering no longer requiring Opt-Out Forms to be notarized and also allowing residents who always opt-out to do so automatically for the duration of the Republic contract. Witthuhn stated those are contractual issues and it will take time for that to change, and most likely not be possible for the Board to accomplish changes in time for the 2024 Opt-Out process. Trustee Kusnerak will continue to work with Republic on dates and requirements for the opt-out process.

**MISCELLANEOUS & CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

Trustees:	December 26 at 7 PM Organizational Meeting January 3 at 5:30 PM
BZA:	January 10 at 7 PM – Regular & Organizational Meeting
Zoning Commission:	December 13 at 7 PM - PROPOSED MCDONALD’S SITE PLAN January 4 at 7 PM – Regular & Organizational Meeting

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

None.

**OFF CAMERA:**

Witthuhn motioned to go off camera at 7:57 PM for the signing of Warrants & Purchase Orders and any other business brought before the Board. There will be an Executive Session off camera to discuss Employee Compensation. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – No. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

Witthuhn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:28 PM to consider Employee Compensation.

Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to come out of Executive Session at 9:01 PM. Murphy seconded. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak motioned to accept adjustments to the full-time Firefighter compensation and benefits packages for years 2024 through 2026 as noted on the December 1, 2023 request by Fire Chief Strazzo. #1 vacation leave; #3 hospitalization contributions; #4 wage scales; and, #5 uniform allowances. Witthuhn seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Motion carried.

The Trustees signed property violation letters for six property owners referenced in the November 28, 2023 Trustees meeting.

Witthuhn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 PM. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Witthuhn – yes. Murphy – 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