

BRUNSWICK HILLS TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
January 9, 2024

The Brunswick Hills Township Board of Trustees met in regular session on Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at Brunswick Hills Township Town Hall.

Board of Trustees Chair Patrica Murphy, Trustee Vice-Chair Ryan Nixon, Trustee Christina Kusnerak, Fiscal Officer Katherine Esber, Zoning Inspector Evelyn Czyz, Police Chief Tim Sopkovich, Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo, and Service Foreman Cory Schultz present.

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

PRESENTATION:

Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo presented Firefighter Brayden Crider with the 2023 Brunswick Hills Firefighter of the Year Award.

Trustee Chair Trica Murphy introduced the new Trustee, Ryan Nixon. Nixon announced that his contact information can be found on the Brunswick Hills Township website.

MINUTES:

Murphy moved to approve the 12/26/2023 regular meeting minutes. Kusnerak seconded, but did note that typically she would abstain from the approval for a meeting that she did not attend. However, Kusnerak reported that she did watch the recording of the meeting to ensure the minutes documented discussions that took place. Nixon – abstained. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy motioned to approve the 1/3/24 special meeting minutes. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon - yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy provided off camera summary.

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Zoning Department:

Zoning Inspector Evelyn Czyz provided the monthly report for December, 2023. She reported that \$895.60 was collected during the month. Czyz provided the Board with statistics of permits granted by the Zoning Department.

Czyz also reported that six violation notices had been sent to residents encroaching on open space owned by the Township.

Murphy added that the notices had been mailed to residents who have structures placed on Township owned property, giving them a timeline to remedy the situation. The Trustees received feedback from

two of the residents and at the December 26, 2023 meeting, they extended the deadline to April 15th for those two residents.

Some of the other residents were in attendance at the January 9 meeting and addressed the Board.

Samira Hasan, 590 Blackberry Circle, Brunswick, OH 44212 requested that the Board allow she and her husband to keep the three planting areas and fountain that are built on Township owned property.

Don Saxon, 582 Blackberry Circle, Brunswick, OH 44212 also addressed the Board. Mr. Saxon has a swing set and garden built on Township owned property. He stated that the swing set was there when he purchased the house 20 years ago. Mr. Saxon asked that if he is required to remove the property, he is requesting that the deadline be extended to a time that the weather is more conducive to working in the back yard. Mr. Saxon also asked if purchasing the land behind his house is an option.

Trustee Kusnerak explained that once per year, the County Conservation Department personnel go out and inspect the conservation areas within the Township. If there are any areas of encroachment on that land, the Board is required to send letters to the resident involved in the matter. Kusnerak suggested that the Board discuss how to proceed from there. She also told Mr. Saxon that purchasing the land probably will not be an option because it is a conservation area.

Todd Faughner, 600 Blackberry Circle also addressed the Trustees. Mr. Faughner stated that he put up the swing set in 1997 and is confused as to why this is being brought up when the structure has been there for almost 27 years. Mr. Faughner also stated that he had sent the Trustees a letter requesting more time to dismantle the swing set, but still has not heard back. Trustee Chair Murphy explained to him that they were in receipt of his letter; however, such business can only be discussed at a public meeting, which is why it is being addressed now.

After much discussion amongst the Board members, it was agreed that they will contact the County Conservation Department to inquire about the encroachment, and also discuss grandfathering in the current structures due to the amount of time that they have existed. The Board will also explore liability issues if they allow the structures to remain.

Trustee Murphy asked Zoning Inspector Czyz who had reported the structures on Township owned land and Czyz responded that it had been noted by the former Service Department Foreman.

Kusnerak made a motion for the Board to pause the deadline given to residents to remove structures from Township owned property until they are able to gather more information. The properties affected include 580 Blackberry Circle, 582 Blackberry Circle, 590 Blackberry Circle, 600 Blackberry Circle and 820 Glencairn Lane. Kusnerak amended her motion to include the 30-day notice. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Police Department:

Chief Sopkovich acknowledged both Sergeant Piekut and Canine Officer Ted Makrinos for reaching 10 years of service with the Brunswick Hills Police Department.

Sopkovich requested a purchase order in the amount of \$8,924.72 for TAC computers, which is the

dispatch reporting system that ties in the Township's reporting system with Brunswick City's dispatch system. Chief is requesting quarterly invoices from TAC instead of paying the entire amount at one time. The invoices would be paid from line item 2191-210-370-0000, Payment to Other Political Subdivision. Kusnerak moved to approve the purchase order as requested. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Sopkovich requested a purchase order to Strohman Enterprise in the amount of \$1,019.98 for an Alpha 300i handheld and K9 tracking collar from line item 2191-210-430-0000, Small Tools & Minor Equipment. Murphy motioned to approve the request. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Sopkovich requested payment to Lighthouse Solutions in the amount of \$3,900.00 for Microsoft 365/Business and Basic, as well as the set up and migration of emails. The purchase order would be paid from line item 2191-210-319-0000, Professional & Technical Services. Kusnerak made a motion to approve. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Chief Sopkovich requested approval to send Patrolman Fairhurst to Sexual Assault Investigations training on April 9 and 10, 2024 at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) in London, Ohio. The cost of the training is \$250 and will be paid from line item 2191-210-318-0000, Training. Hotel and travel costs will be in addition to the training fee. Kusnerak moved to approve as requested. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Sopkovich also requested approval to send Patrolman Fairhurst to Crime Scene Bloodstain Evidence training from May 6 to May 10, 2024 at OPOTA in London, Ohio. The cost of the training is \$850 and will be paid from line item 2191-210-318-0000, Training. Hotel and travel costs will be in addition to the training fee. Murphy motioned to approve as requested. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Chief requested approval to send Patrolman Fairhurst to Crime Forensic Aspects of Death from July 28 to August 2, 2024 at OPOTA in London, Ohio. A purchase order to OPOTA in the amount of \$850 is requested from line item 2191-210-318-0000, Training. Hotel and travel costs will be in addition to the training fee. Kusnerak made a motion to approve the request. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Lastly, Sopkovich requested an Executive Session with the Board of Trustee to discuss wage compensation for the police department personnel.

Fire Department:

Chief Strazzo presented the Run Review for December, 2023 and reported that \$11,799.74 was collected in that month. \$232,370.36 was collected during 2023.

Strazzo requested approval for Firefighter DiSalvo to attend Ice Rescue Training, which is being sponsored by the Cuyahoga Falls Fire Department. The class will be conducted by Dive Rescue International, which is a nationally recognized water safety training program. Cost of the training will be \$525, and will be paid from BC #44. Nixon moved to approve the request. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Strazzo also requested for four members to attend the Annual First Responders Technology & Protocol Training related to auto extrication and vehicle safety on February 29, 2024 at the IX Center. There is no cost for the training. Murphy motioned to approve the request. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Chief announced that the Brunswick Hills Fire Department received the 2024 MARCS Radio Grant in the amount of \$1,140, which will cover the MARCS user fees for the Department’s radios. Strazzo requested that he be permitted to sign the agreement on behalf of the Board, and Kusnerak made a motion to approve for Chief Strazzo to sign the MARCS agreement on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Strazzo also announced that the Fire Department will again host the Citizen Fire Academy, beginning on March 6, 2024 and continue for five weeks. April 3rd will be the final class. Please contact the Fire Department to register.

Strazzo announced that the State has granted the Chief’s request to have a driving simulator on-site from March 27th through March 29th. The simulator will allow Fire Department personnel to practice fire apparatus driving.

Strazzo reported that they are currently working on the following initiatives:

- Interviewing for two additional full-time firefighters and have 19 applications thus far.
- Looking to add additional staffing of one more person in the first quarter to work from 9 AM to 9 PM, which are peak hours. Two firefighters will be located at each station.
- The Fire Department is looking to replace two stair chairs in the ambulances. Chief will make application to the Bureau of Workers Compensation and if approved, will utilize those funds to pay for the stair chairs, which cost approximately \$5,000 each.
- Strazzo is also looking to replace two thermal imaging cameras, which cost approximately \$5,000 - \$7,000 each.
- The Department will continue to work on their building pre-plans.
- Strazzo is looking to expand training opportunities for personnel.
- The Department’s records management system will need to be updated or changed to a new vendor due to changes made by the company currently in place. The annual cost will increase from \$3,000 to approximately \$10,000.
- Chief Strazzo stated that the Department will be purchasing a mask fit testing machine to replace the current one as it is no longer serviceable. The new machine will cost approximately \$4,000.
- The Department is continuing to prepare for the new tanker in the first quarter of 2025 as well as purchasing some minor equipment.
- Chief stated that the replacement of Fire Station One is a priority for him due to the deteriorating condition of the current building.

Lasty, in observance of National Law Enforcement Day, Strazzo thanked Chief Sopkovich and the

Brunswick Hills Police Department for all that they do to keep the resident safe.

Service Department:

Service Department Foreman Cory Schultz reviewed the procedures that his department follows for snow plowing and salting the Township roads:

- They take a proactive approach and try to be sure that salt is put down prior to expected snow fall events.
- Main roads and hills are the top priority so those are serviced first.
- They then attend to the bus routes followed by subdivisions, and then the cul-de-sacs.
- If there are unsafe road conditions that arise in the evening or after hours, the Police Department contacts Schultz, who then brings the other crew members into work.
- The Service Department consists of Schultz and three full-time employees.
- If residents need to contact Schultz, they may call 330-220-4784.

Lastly, Schultz read the Monthly Report for December, 2023.

TRUSTEE REPORTS:

Christina Kusnerak:

Kusnerak reported that the Road Mileage Certification was received, it is not yet ready to be approved and signed as there are questions.

Kusnerak moved to approve an invoice in the amount of \$960 from Gary Fuller, who is the Cemetery Sexton, for his services in 2023. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes.

Ryan Nixon:

Nixon reported that he is currently working with Lighthouse on IT issues.

Trica Murphy:

None.

FISCAL OFFICER:

Murphy moved to approve payroll dated 1/9/24 in the amount of \$77,794.57, which is higher because it includes the uniform allowance for Police personnel as well as longevity pay for Township employees. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy motioned to approve warrants dated 1/9/24 in the amount of \$9,700.85. Kusnerak seconded. Nixon – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak made a motion to approve the following purchase orders, then & now purchase orders, and blanket certificate as reported by the Fiscal Officer. Murphy seconded. Nixon – abstained. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

- Purchase order in the amount of \$1,250 payable to Ohio Police Officers Training Academy. The expense was initially approved in January, 2023, but the funds were used for other training purposes.

- Purchase order in the amount of \$528 payable to Evelyn Czyz for reimbursement of stamps purchased with her personal credit card because there was an issue with the Township credit card.
- Then & Now Purchase Order from 2023 in the amount of \$99.06 payable to State Industrial Products on behalf of the Fire Department.
- Then & Now Purchase Order from 2023 in the amount of \$102.53 payable to WB Mason on behalf of the Fire Department.
- Then & Now Purchase Order from 2023 in the amount of \$327.23 payable to Shred It.
- Blanket Certificate approved at the 1/3/24 meeting in the amount of \$2,500 for the Service Department.

OLD BUSINESS:

Kusnerak asked the Board about holding a public meeting to discuss the Fireworks Law. Fire Chief Strazzo stated that he believes that some education needs to take place first and his suggestion is to put together a presentation explaining the Fireworks Law, and dispel some of the misconceptions that exist regarding fireworks usage. Strazzo continued that after the presentation is ready, the Board could discuss holding a public meeting. The Board then decided to delay scheduling a public meeting to discuss the Fireworks Law.

Kusnerak stated that the Trustees have not announced anything regarding the Republic Waste Opt-Out process for 2024 because they have been working with Republic management to amend the current contract to extend it for the next three years. The Trustees are trying to revise the amendment so that it eliminates the opt-out forms needing to be notarized. In addition, they would like to include residents who have currently opted out of the trash collection to automatically carry over each year, until further notice, until the end of the contract period. Three years remain on the existing contract.

Trustee Chair Murphy then added that she is in agreement to eliminate the need for residents to opt-out every year and get their form notarized. However, the only issue with the contract modification is the Republic has increased pricing for trash pick-up for each year going forward. Murphy reported that approximately 90 households opt out of the trash collection services each year and there are approximately 3800 – 4000 residential units. She does not believe it is fair to the residents who pay for trash collection to be penalized with higher costs in order to simplify the opt-out process for those 90 residents.

Trustee Vice-Chair Nixon added that he does not agree with the price increase because by eliminating the opt-out process for residents, Republic is saving money by not having to mail out postcards to all of the Township residents.

After discussion, the Trustees agreed to send the contract over the Medina County Assistant Prosecutor Brian Richter for review. Based on Mr. Richter’s feedback, the Board will proceed with a decision.

Darl Fuller, 1959 South Carpenter, Brunswick Hills addressed the Board. Mr. Fuller asked if residents

still need to opt-out of the trash collection. Trustee Kusnerak responded that for the 2024 year, they will continue to require residents to submit a notarized opt-out form, but if anything changes, he will be contacted. Kusnerak also said that all residents who previously opted out will be contacted by the Township.

NEW BUSINESS:

Murphy reported that the annual letter was received from the Medina County SPCA stating that 14 animals from Brunswick Hills Township were cared for by the SPCA, at an average cost of \$336.74 per animal, for a total expense of \$4,714.36. Historically, the Township makes an annual donation of \$2,000. Kusnerak moved to approve a donation to the Medina County SPCA in the amount of \$2,000 and issue a purchase order as such. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy reported that Medina Planning Services will be holding five classes pertaining to Zoning. The Trustees require that Board members attend a minimum of two training classes per year. Board members receive pay for attending the training. After discussion, Murphy motioned to approve for the Zoning Board members, the Zoning Inspector, Assistant Zoning Inspector, and Zoning Secretary to attend the class on January 18th to learn about Zoning Board Basics, as well as the class on March 18th, that discusses comprehensive land use plans. Kusnerak seconded. Nixon – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy announced that the Board received a recommendation from the Zoning Commission regarding Hoffman Tree Service. The Zoning Commission received a site development plan from Hoffman Tree Service for property located at 916 Pearl Road, for the construction of a new building. The Zoning Commission did make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to approve the site plan request.

Hank and Brad Hoffman addressed the Board regarding their request to construct a new building on their property located at 916 Pearl Road. Mr. Hank Hoffman explained that the new building will be utilized to store equipment that is currently located in two other locations. Mr. Hank Hoffman also reported that they have also received approval and permits from Medina County for water mitigation. The new building will be 80’ wide x 120’ long. Zoning Inspector Evelyn Czyz stated that there was an issue with the lot lines at the rear of the property where it backs up to a residential area. Mrs. Czyz, Fire Chief Strazzo, and Service Department Foreman Schultz do not have any issues with the site plan and intended structure for the Hoffman property. Trustee Kusnerak offered **Resolution #12-2024 To Accept the Recommendation of the Zoning Commission and Approve the Site Plan Application for Hoffman Tree Service.** Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Resolution adopted.

MISCELLANEOUS & CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Trustees:	January 23 at 7 PM
Zoning Commission:	February 1 at 7 PM
BZA:	January 11 at 7 PM – Organizational & Regular Meeting

PUBLIC INPUT:

Sam Turnea, 4373 Grafton Road, Brunswick Hills, addressed the Board. Mr. Turnea is the owner of Sam's the Man Tree Service and purchased the property at 4373 Grafton Road. Mr. Turnea is seeking information from the Brunswick Hills Township Zoning Department as to what business he can and cannot conduct on the property that he believes is zoned Commercial. Zoning Inspector Czyz clarified her prior conversation with Mr. Turnea regarding the installation of driveways from his property to the road, safety concerns with entering and exiting the property, access by the Brunswick Hills Township Fire Department, approval of the driveways by both the Township and Medina County. Czyz will be contacting the Medina County Highway Engineers Office to discuss the driveway situation. Trustee Kusnerak commented that she is not familiar with the property nor the driveway situation, and therefore, could not speak intelligently to the matter. Mr. Turnea is still working on the site plan and did not have anything in writing to present to the Board or Zoning Department.

Wes Humphrey, 451 Substation Road, Brunswick addressed the Board. Mr. Humphrey is the Assistant Zoning Inspector and reported that he had spoken with Sam Turnea previously and instructed Mr. Turnea that he was in need of a site plan for the property before anything could be approved. Mr. Humphrey also informed Mr. Turnea that if he required a variance, he would need to speak to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Kusnerak requested that the Board hold an Executive Session off camera to discuss employee compensation and a land purchase.

OFF CAMERA:

Murphy motioned to go off camera at 8:45 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 a land acquisition and employee compensation. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:03 PM to discuss employee compensation and a land acquisition, and invited Service Department Foreman Schultz, Fire Department Chief Strazzo, and Police Department Chief Sopkovich to join them. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to come out of Executive Session at 11:25 PM. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon motioned to increase part-time firefighter wages on a three-year scale at 4% for 2024, 3% for 2025, and 3% in 2026; Fire Chief pay adjusted for one year at a 5% bump; Assistant Fire Chief wages increased on a three-year scale at 4% for 2024, 3% for 2025, and 3% in 2026. All of the 2024 increases are effective with the current pay period. Kusnerak seconded. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy moved to approve wage increases beginning with this pay period for the Zoning Inspector and Assistant Zoning Inspector at a 2% increase, and to increase the Zoning Secretary's pay to \$900 per month. Kusnerak seconded. Nixon – yes. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to increase cleaning wages by 2%, and increase wages for the Trustees' Administrative Assistant and the Fire Department Administrative Assistant by 3% beginning with the current pay period. Murphy seconded. Nixon – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Murphy motioned to increase wages beginning with the current pay period for part-time Police Officers by 4%; the Police Department Administrative Assistant by 4%; the Police Chief by 5%; and, to increase sick leave for the Police Department Administrative Assistant and the Police Chief from 3.69 to 4.6 hours. Nixon seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Murphy – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon made a motion to increase wages for the Service Department's part-time employees to \$17.00 per hour; increase the Service Department Foreman's pay by 4.5% and sick leave for the Service Department Foreman from 3.6 hours to 4.6 hours, beginning with the current pay period. Murphy seconded. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Murphy – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak moved to table a request for Juneteenth to receive premium pay for further evaluation for Fire, and also table a request for OPERS time for the Service Department Foreman. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Kusnerak motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 PM. Nixon seconded. Murphy – yes. Kusnerak – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Patrica Murphy, Trustee Chair

Ryan Nixon, Trustee Vice-Chair

Christina Kusnerak, Trustee

Katherine Esber, Fiscal Officer