

**BRUNSWICK HILLS TOWNSHIP**  
**TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATIONAL**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**January 8, 2026**

The Brunswick Hills Township Board of Trustees met in Special Session on January 8, 2026, at 4:00 PM for the purpose of the Annual Organizational Meeting.

Board of Trustees Ryan Nixon, Thomas DeCastra, Tony Destro Fiscal Officer Bob Roksandich, Police Chief Tim Sopkovich, Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo, Service Department Foreman Cory Schultz, Zoning Inspector Daryl Lucien, Township Administrative Assistant Julie Riffle, and 5 members of the public present.

Trustee Nixon called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM, noting it was properly advertised.

DeCastra moved to nominate Nixon as the Chair of the Board for 2026. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon moved to nominate DeCastra as the Vice Chair of the Board for 2026. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 1-2026** Establishing the Meeting Day and Time for 2026, noting that they are the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM with Work Session prior to the Regular Meetings starting at 6 PM. Destro seconded. DeCastra - yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 2-2026** Accepting the Elected Officials Policy Manual. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 3-2026** Transferring the Police Fines from the General Fund to the Police Fund. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon - yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 4-2026** transferring the Star Ohio Interest from the General Fund to the Fire Fund. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon - yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 5-2026** to Proceed by Force Account when Necessary. DeCastra seconded. Nixon – yes. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 6-2026** Setting the Longevity Pay at \$75.00. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon offered **Resolution # 7-2026** Accepting the Trustee and Fiscal Officer Compensation Set by the State Legislature. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Department Liaisons:	Zoning	DeCastr
	Service Dept.	Nixon
	Fire Dept.	Destro
	IT	DeCastr
	Storm water	Destro
	Police Dept.	Nixon
	Cable	DeCastr
	Rubbish	Nixon
	Buildings, Grants, Cemetery and Open Space to be shared.	

Fire Chief Anthony Strazzo stated that he does not feel it is appropriate to have Trustee Destro as the Fire Department Liaison given the history between himself and Mr. Destro. Mr. Destro made a formal complaint against me in which he stated, "I want you fired". Trustee Nixon stated he understands and can see both sides. I will open up for comment now. Trustee DeCastr stated he also can see both sides and understands the history that is there. Trustee DeCastr stated he had a conversation with Trustee Destro, and I know he can be unbiased toward the activity of the Fire Department. A liaison is only a main point of contact and if that main contact is not working or isn't available, any of the trustees can work with any of the departments. I can understand the hesitation. We can see how this first year goes. Trustee Nixon stated I do see both sides of this, but I don't want this to be a situation like we had previously where one Trustee could not be the liaison for one department because of conflict of interest. We can't keep kicking the ball down the court with Trustee Destro. Chief Strazzo stated that's true, but Trustee Destro has a definite conflict, he has filed two complaints against the department. Both of which have been unfounded by both the Police Department and the Board of Trustees. That shows there is a bias there toward the Fire Department. Trustee Destro stated that he can be fair, I won't treat you any differently than I would anyone else, even with our history. I don't harbor anything I accept the decisions that were made. I can be fair and I think we can get along. Chief Strazzo stated he would like this reflected in the minutes.

Nixon moved to continue with Gary Fuller as the Cemetery Sexton. DeCastr seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastr – yes. Nixon - yes. Motion carried.

#### 2026 Budget Review by Department:

##### **Zoning**

Zoning Inspector Daryl Lucien stated he has decreased the budget due to seeing some unnecessary spending in the past budget for things like travel expenses. Trustee Nixon asked about the Postage item in the budget. Since moving to the three-letter violation system, do you think that the \$500 is still appropriate or do we need to increase that? Zoning Inspector Lucien started by describing what the three-letter violation system is. Also discussed the need for a Law Director to help solve some of the Zoning issues in the Township.

## **Police**

Chief Sopkovich stated that Employee Salaries will be increased to \$1.5 mil for 2026. Included with that will be Employee Retirement, Hospitalization and Uniforms. Total budget for 2026 is \$2,987,600.00. Other purchased services are staying the same with the exception of Property Insurance which increased significantly in 2025. Fuel supply for the Township would save a lot of money. Trustee Nixon stated that it will be on the agenda soon. Trustee DeCastra asked why the significant increase in Salaries. Chief Sopkovich stated this is anticipating adding two full-time officers. Trustee Destro asked what the Levy income is for the PD. Chief Sopkovich stated it is 2.5 Mil and that every year he always has a carry over from the year before.

## **Fire**

Chief Strazzo reported that there will be some increases in items on the budget for 2026. Strazzo stated that the increases will be to the following;

Salaries – to accommodate for annual raise

Medical/Hospitalization – annual increase

Repairs and Maintenance Scheduled – SCBA bottles needing to be hydrostatically tested in 2026

Payment to another Political Subdivision – increase in dispatch fees

Property Insurance premiums - significant increase in 2025

Improvement of Sites – station alerting system for station 2

Chief Strazzo highlighted the following department activities for 2026:

Advertise for a new Fire Inspector

IAFF Local 5566 contract negotiations

Community CPR classes to be scheduled and provided by BHFD personnel. Fee schedule to be determined

Volunteer Firefighter Dependent Fund Representatives (annual appointment)

2 Legislative members: Trustee Chair and FD Liaison

2 FD Members: Assistant Chief Haas and Mike Drum

1 Community Member: Darly Lucien

Strazzo emphasized the need for the Township to build a new fire station on the recently acquired property on Substation Road.

Trustee Nixon stated that he has spoken to Fiscal Officer Roksandich and asked him to look into our general fund, to see if we can start paying the Dispatch fees for both departments out of the general fund. If we can pick that up out of the general fund, we can help the departments pick up some extra funds for the year. Trustee Nixon stated we will look at a resolution for the next meeting.

## **Service**

Foreman Cory Schultz reported that there will be an increase in these budget items for 2026: Fuel will go from \$20,000 to \$22,000, Hospitalization/Medical will go from \$83,000 to \$95,000 and Property Insurance Premiums will go from \$10,500 to \$12,000. The budget for 2026 will be \$1.357 million with a carryover of \$211,500. There could be a need for a new plow truck roughly \$250,000 in 2026.

## **General Fund**

Nixon moved to approve all the requested 2026 POs and BCs. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon moved to approve all the Departmental 2026 annual expenses. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon moved to adopt **Resolution # 8-2026 Temporary Annual Appropriations**. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon moved to adopt **Resolution # 9-2026 Annual GovDeals Requirement**. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon moved to adopt **Resolution # 10-2026 Authorization for the Brunswick Hills Township Fiscal Officer to manage all Township investments**. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon moved to adopt **Resolution #11-2026 Authorization for the Brunswick Hills Township Fiscal Officer to adjust Departmental Funds as Needed During the Fiscal Year 2026**. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Nixon moved to adopt **Resolution # 12-2026 Request for Advance of Taxes Collected Municipalities, School Districts, Township Revised Code Section 321.3.4**. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Resolution adopted.

Trustee DeCastra stated he has several items he would like to look at taking care of this year. The first item on his hit list is IT. DeCastra stated he has been working with Lighthouse to get a lot of information from them. One of the things that most departments will have to look at this year is replacing hardware. Most of the laptops were purchased at the same time and are 5-10 years old.

The 5-year Police Levy from 2021 ends at the end of this year. We cannot replace it but we can renew it. It would keep its current value of \$845,000. If we foresee needing additional funds than what we are currently taking in we would have to look at placing a new levy on the ballot. We can have discussions about different avenues to investigate. But if we want to hit the May primary, we have to have everything turned into the Board of Elections by February 4<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Nixon stated he feels that a renewal is easier to sell to the residents than a new levy. Chief Sopkovich stated that he appreciates what the Trustees are looking to do and has brought the idea of a new or replacement before the Board several times. Chief Sopkovich gave the history of the current level and a brief description of where the department is at now. There was some continued discussion on the idea of a levy for the future and the needs of the Township. The decision was made to have further discussion and to go for a renewal levy on the May Ballot.

Chief Strazzo stated that since he has worked here there has never been a plan for the Township as a whole. Strazzo suggested to maybe sit all the department heads down and start the plan for the township as a whole. Chief Sopkovich suggested maybe we look at a Public Safety Levy to place on the November Ballot. The public safety levy would benefit all of the departments.

Fire Chief Strazzo and Service Department Foreman Schultz requested an Executive Session with the Trustees to discuss Employee Compensation.

Nixon motioned to go into Executive Session at 5:33 PM for the Purpose of Discussing Employee Compensation. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried. The Board invited Chief Strazzo, Service Foreman Schultz, Chief Sopkovich and Fiscal Officer Roksandich to join them.

Nixon moved to come out of Executive Session at 6:41 PM. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Foreman Cory Schultz to an annual salary of \$78,000.00. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for the part-time Road Department members to an hourly rate of \$19. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Adam of \$.50 to take him to \$20.50 per hour. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Carol Bianchi Fire Department Administrative Assistant of \$1 to \$21.00/hr. Destro seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon noted in regard to Fire Chief Strazzo no action taken at this time.

DeCastra moved to approve a pay increase for Police Chief Tim Sopkovich to an hourly rate of \$52.10 which is an annual salary of \$108,368.00. Nixon seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

DeCastra moved to approve a pay increase for Ellen Young Police Department Administrative Assistant to \$29.25/hr. Nixon seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Lucy West of \$.50/hr. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Julie Riffle Township Administrative Assistant of \$1 to \$21.00/hr. Destro seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon moved to approve a pay increase for Zoning inspectors Daryl Lucien and Wes Humphrey of \$.75/hr. DeCastra seconded. Destro – yes. DeCastra – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion Carried.

Nixon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:46 PM. Destro seconded. DeCastra – yes. Destro – yes. Nixon – yes. Motion carried.

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Ryan Nixon, Trustee Chair

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Thomas DeCastra, Vice-Chair

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Tony Destro, Trustee

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Bob Roksandich, Fiscal Officer