

# WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP ADVISORY BOARD

1030 NORTH LINCOLN STREET SUITE 1400

GREENSBURG, IN 47240

ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

July 23, 2024 5:00 p.m.

Attendance: Bev Rivera- Trustee  
Randy Hoeing- Advisory Board President  
James Stewart – Advisory Board Member  
Nathan Stoermer – Greensburg Fire Chief  
Lori Garringer - Clerk

The meeting was called to order and the pledge of allegiance was said.

Minutes of the June 8, 2024 meeting were reviewed. Jim made a motion to approve the minutes. Randy seconded. Minutes were approved.

## Old Business:

- **Lake McCoy Properties Remaining – Any offers:** We have not had any offers on the remaining properties at Lake McCoy. The plan currently is to wait until the October tax sale listing. All properties behind on their taxes are going up for tax sale. If someone buys a property adjacent to ours, we may approach them about purchasing our lots. If the properties are not sold on tax sale there will be a commissioners' sale. If someone buys property on the commissioners' sale adjacent to ours, we will again have the opportunity to approach them about buying our remaining four properties.

## New Business:

- **Meeting Recordings:** Bev reported starting in July 2025 all meetings will need to be recorded and either livestreamed or saved and posted. This is a new requirement for all governmental units. We will work with Daniel Fayette and Dave Henderson to get that accomplished.
- **Additional Appropriation for Lake McCoy:** Bev reported the advertisement for the additional appropriation for Lake McCoy did not get printed in the newspaper in time, so we will need to move the vote to the September meeting. As a reminder this is an additional appropriation to the rainy-day fund to cover the expenses incurred of the selling of the Lake McCoy properties as approved by the board in our June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- **Greensburg Fire Department Requests:** We have \$53,000 in our budget that is available for the Greensburg Fire Department to use for their equipment needs. Chief Stoermer attended the meeting and presented the following requests to the board with priority in the following order:
  1. **Wireless Headsets for Ladder 1 and Tanker 1:..... \$18,000 - \$19,000 (total for both sets)**
    - a. The wired sets are getting damaged because since firefighters have a wireless set and really use them, when they get into a truck with a wired set they forget they are tethered and are pulling the cords, getting them caught in doors, etc.  
There are currently 2 headsets that need to be replaced because of this.  
The wired sets are also a different type of radio

**2. Red Hawk™ Thermal Scanner (Fire Finder)..... \$ 800**

- a. This will be replacing the one currently on the ladder truck. The current one was the original and is no longer functional (past 2 months). To repair it would cost almost as much as a new one.

**3. Three Gas CGI Monitor x 2 ..... \$ 3,000**

- a. They have one but it is not very accurate, so it would be a replacement and a second unit. These would be placed on Engine 2 and Ladder 1
  - i. Centerpoint Energy recommended this monitor because it has a sniffer with a long whip and sensitivity to go around corners.

**4. Photo Ionization Detector Gas Monitor..... \$ 8,000**

- a. This would be placed on the rescue truck because it makes most of the hazardous materials responses.
- b.

**5. High Pressure Air Bags..... \$ 9,200**

- a. These would be placed on rescue 1. The current bags are 16 years old and may fail at any time. This is the large kit, 2 large, 1 medium and 2 small. These are used to inflate and put under a vehicle to pull someone out from under a vehicle. So far there have not been any calls that require them and someone like Sweet's Wrecker or Tommy's Diesel would have some low pressure bags. The high pressure bags are a little more specialized and it becomes a response time issue.

Chief Stoermer also said the repair on the sensor to the tanker truck was covered under warranty so we can stop payment on the \$2,000 check we wrote for the repair. This will bump our budget back to \$55,000 for the fire equipment.

Trevor Cooke came to Chief Stoermer late in the list of items being put together and asked for a chassis to replace the brush truck owned by the Township. Chief Stoermer would like to get some estimates but it would not include lights, striping and other items. The chassis would probably cost approximately \$50,000. This would take everything else off the table for the list they already put together.

Chief Stoermer's preference would be to plan this out and roll twenty to thirty thousand of the budget over and once we have enough money to purchase everything at the same time, go that route. There are some things on the old truck that will not retrofit to the new truck and then there are more add-ons and cost. It would make more sense to purchase a turnkey truck with everything included rather than purchase a chassis and keep buying different parts with an expense every year to buy needed add-ons.

The brush truck is still in very good shape. It is 30 years old but only has 11,000 miles; however, it is a stick shift which is a drawback for some of the fireman. It is on the radar but it isn't cost effective to just buy a chassis. In Chief Stoermer's opinion there are other higher priorities this year. Chief Stoermer is working with the city to purchase an aerial apparatus and rescue apparatus as those vehicles are becoming more unreliable, so he cannot ask the city to help with the brush truck expense.

We need to be able to get some of the other trucks paid down. Bev asked what the total might be with a brush truck with everything added. Chief Stoermer said it would probably run around \$75,000 to \$85,000 using the current pump and replumbing what we have, taking parts that will work from the old truck to the new. If we truly replaced everything we would be looking at possibly \$100,000 for a full replacement. Trevor is looking at a 1 ton or 1 ½ ton extended cab, not a crew cab.



The fire budget was reviewed with Chief Stoermer and we expect to move our fire contract up to \$180,000 next year. From the fire equipment budget, \$160,000 needs to be used to pay on the fire truck loan we have because we will not get the revenue to support the payment in the debt service category. If we save \$15,000 to \$20,000 this year we would have an additional \$20,000 to \$30,000 next year. The other option we have is to raise our levy a little more to get an additional \$10,000 to \$15,000. Chief Stoermer is fine with keeping the old truck until we have the money to pay cash for a new one. We would also be able to get some value from selling the brush truck through sealed bids and that money could go to helping pay for a new truck. New Point fire did approach Greensburg about the engine. We are not sure they could use the brush truck as is or if they only would want the pickup to retrofit to their needs. This can be a future discussion with them.

We can look at replacing the brush truck next year or so by rolling money over and moving some other things around in the budget. Bev has heard a lot of comments about the brush truck and believes it probably should be replaced. Purchasing a gas truck, rather than diesel will also save some money. Chief Stoermer would like to have a discussion with the apparatus committee to determine what is needed rather than wanted. He would like to take some time for proper planning for a possible purchase next year or the following year.

After a discussion it was decided to purchase items 1 through 4 from the list for the fire department and roll the remaining money to next year.

Jim Stewart made a motion to purchase for a total cost of approximately \$30,000 the following items:

**Wireless Headsets for Ladder 1 and Tanker 1**  
**Red Hawk™ Thermal Scanner (Fire Finder)**  
**Three Gas CGI Monitor x 2**  
**Photo Ionization Detector Gas Monitor**

Randy Hoeing seconded the motion. A vote was taken: Jim – aye, Randy – aye. Motion passed. Chief Stoermer will work on getting exact quotes and start putting truck items together for a future purchase.

Randy asked if the mobile radios are up to date. The current radios are phase 1 and Imsic is going to a phase 2 system. All 8 mobile radios and desk units will need to be replaced next year and Chief Stoermer is working with the city on those. The new station radios are already phase 2. The move in date for the new station is set for August 19<sup>th</sup> with an open house to follow at a later date.

Bev asked if the baby box was taken care of or if the township office needed to help with the move from the old station to the new station. Chief Stoermer said all the construction, prework and moving, etc. was included in the bond for the new station. There are funds in the county but that money could be used for the annual fees going forward.

➤ **2025 Budget – first draft:** Bev and Lori met with Vickie Neely from DLGF on Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> for the 2025 Budget Workshop. Bev sent a copy of the proposed budget to the board for review. Bev explained we did increase our levy and the amount we are asking for is \$15.00 per hundred thousand dollars per taxpayer on their property taxes. She did not ask for the full amount of \$30.00 per hundred thousand dollars per taxpayer in trying to be aware of hardships on the taxpayers over the last few years. We can add another \$10,000 to \$15,000 to our budget without affecting the taxpayers too much.

We increased cum fire last year and we did have 1 phone call last year. Bev explained to the taxpayer we had the loans at the bank and we were really just taking the tax back up to where it was before Christian took office since he zeroed the tax levies. They were satisfied with the explanation Bev gave them.

In the firefighting budget, we will have \$24,000 from this year that we can ask for next year. We will plan to raise the fire contract from \$170,000 to \$180,000. We are also buying equipment for the fire department, which has not always been done.

If we could sell the current brush truck for \$15,000 we could potentially buy a new truck next year, but it would take all the money and we could not buy any other equipment for the fire department next year. Jim suggested we raise our budget by another ten to fifteen thousand dollars to give us a little more cushion. If we do ask for more we need to make it clear to the mayor that the extra money is going to buy a brush truck and not the fire contract.

We will have \$24,000 from this year to move over. If we move things around we would have \$83,000 next year and we could put another \$10,000 under equipment by increasing the levy. Jim suggested we pursue that and see if we could get it approved from DLGF. We could potentially by the airbags next year as well if we could get the increase. This will bring next year's budget to \$10,000 more than we had this year in total. Randy did not think this was out of line. Bev agreed asking for \$10,000 more than this year is not that much. Jim agreed a 1 ½% increase is viable.

Bev asked the board's opinion of purchasing a new brush truck. A discussion took place regarding purchasing a gas truck over a diesel. The price difference would be \$15,000 to \$20,000 and the performance would not be that much different. Randy said it should be fine. It will be an extended cab not a crew cab. Randy will talk to Trevor Cooke to discuss the options.

The remaining part of the budget was very similar to last year. The only expense that really increased was the office rent.

The township assistance is being lumped into general because we do not have enough levy to get the money in township assistance and probably won't get any more in this area in the future. The township assistance total with the general fund township assistance is \$47,000. Jim asked how the requests have been for assistance. Bev explained at mid-year we were below 50% of our budget, but the last couple of weeks we have had a lot more requests again. We are making sure they qualify before giving them assistance.

Lori will be working 2 hours per week less next year, but will continue with the same annual salary which gives her an increase in pay without increasing the budget.

Bev increased the budget for funerals because the funeral directors are losing money at the current rate of \$600 we are paying for cremation. The funeral directors are ok with \$1,000 for a cremation for next year's budget. Bev stated we have only done cremations so far, but our guidelines allow us to pay for funerals, so if that happens it will take more of the budget. The amounts for funerals will be updated in the guidelines for next year and voted on by the board at a later date.

Randy and Jim were fine with the proposed budget. Bev will send the updated budget to Angie with the changes to the fire amounts. The board will vote on the budget at the September meeting.

- **Cemetery Rules:** Bev has been working on a draft of cemetery rules. We had a recent request for a cemetery plot and Porter funeral home asked if we required a vault, since the State of Indiana does not. This brought up other questions and so Bev decided that cemetery rules were necessary. We were not able to find any rules from previous trustees so we are in the process of creating the guidelines. She is also working through some questions with Sean Mang.



Bev looked at SBOA, DNR, South Park, Green Township and Kingston Cemetery rules and is getting input from others to create rules for our cemeteries. This is still in the early stages, but we hope to have a draft for board consideration at the September meeting.

Randy asked Bev if she knew what plots were available at Sandcreek Cemetery since it is still active. Bev replied she and Mike Porter looked at the documents Christian had paid for but it was still difficult to tell where there were open spaces. They did identify one entire area that could be used for burials. There is another fairly large section where the Sandcreek church was previously located that probably does not have one buried there.

Bev would like to have an area designated for a scattering garden. This is a place for people to scatter ashes if they do not want to pay for a burial. This was an idea found in one of the cemetery rule documents. Logistics for this will need to be worked out.

Bev relayed to the board the township has signed up with the optimist group for flags to be placed at Sandcreek and Springer through their Avenue of Flags program. She also worked with Scheidler/Neal monuments and they are creating benches with a saying about veterans and honoring them. There will be a U.S. flag on the bench back and those will be placed in Springer and Sandcreek cemeteries for a year-round memorial rather than spending over \$500.00 per year on the Wreaths Across America program. Even though the wreaths are nice, someone has to take them out and place them and then go back and clean them up as well as it being a temporary memorial as well as an annual expense.

- **Mid-year financial statement:** Bev presented the mid-year financial statement for 2024 to the board and asked them to look over it and let her know if there were any questions or concerns. Randy and Jim both reviewed it and didn't have any questions.
- **Permanent office location:** A discussion was held regarding whether or not to look for a permanent office location. We are currently paying \$10,000 per year in rent and in a few years we might be able to save the township some money if we could buy something not terribly expensive. Bev is thinking about a \$60,000 to \$70,000 range. The township office has moved so many times and it would be great to have a permanent location. The space we are in is a great size and the location is perfect. However; if the building would be sold the future of our space might be unknown.

If we could find a small piece of land in the township or a small building we could potentially create a permanent location for the township office. Bev prefers not to take an affordable home that someone else could buy, but would like to start looking for something.

Bev inquired about the area over by Maddux auction that has been empty for years. They were asking \$90,000 for it but that is out of the question because we would need to put a building on it. She is keeping an eye out for a piece of property.

Randy and Jim agree this could be a viable option and are ok with Bev pursuing her idea. They would need to approve anything that is considered. Everyone agreed it would need to be in town. Bev will keep the board updated on anything she finds.

- **Resolution for Rainy Day fund:** We will have a resolution for the board to sign at our next meeting regarding spending money out of Rainy Day Fund. Vicky Neely from DLGF suggested we write a resolution regarding how the money in Rainy Day can be spent. Once a resolution is created we could put it in the budget if we wanted to spend it. Bev found one on the ITA website and will work on it. Jim did not remember there being any policy for Rainy Day in the past.

Jim made a motion to close the meeting. Randy seconded. Jim- aye, and Randy- aye.  
The meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

**2024 Meeting Schedule: (all meetings will be held at 5:00pm at the township office)**

September 24 at 5 pm – present 2025 budget  
October 15<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. – approve 2025 budget  
December 17, 2024 – may or may not be necessary

Randy Hoeing

Randy Hoeing, President

Angie Morrow

Angie Morrow, Secretary

James Stewart

Jim Stewart

9-24-2024

Date of Approval