

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER BY:** Diehl 7:30 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Diehl: Chair, present, Vice chair:, Pfile present Trustee Bixler: present, Bill McCluskey, Fiscal officer, present, Jesse Baughman, fire chief, present. Rhonda Lippy, zoning, present. Emily Dumas zoning., present.

Guests : Jeff Grudosky, John Stephens, Judy French, Joe Dillon, Hugh Kuhn, Terri Buzzelli Robert Grudosky, all listed residents, Heidi Workman, listed resident and State Rep., and Ron Moore,

**I. MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA FOR 5/29/25**

Moved By: Pfile Second: Bixler

Mr. Pfile: Yes Mr. Diehl: yes Mr. Bixler: yes

**II. MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES:**

**A. FOR 5/5/2025**

Moved By: Pfile Second: Bixler

Mr. Pfile: yes Mr. Diehl: yes Mr. Bixler: yes

Mr. Diehl introduced Heidi Workman State Representative (Rep Workman spoke and read very fast during her speech, difficult to hear all words). She introduced herself and said she is touring townships in District, she said she wanted to let people know what is happening at the state level. She said obviously the most important thing is Property taxes, and she sent out a survey and wanted feedback. She said she was wondering if she hit that nail on the head and said she did of course. She said that is the biggest issue that is driving discussion at home and at the State. Some discussion that property tax reform is the number one issue. She discussed some anecdotes relating to property taxes. She discussed she has co sponsored every bill they are pushing through and mentioned the following Bills. Discussed Ballot petition regarding eliminating property taxes. Said the state would how 1.5 months to do something as it would kick in January first 2026, to solve the crisis at the local level. She said property taxes bring in 12 billion dollars and stay at to the county local government, not a penny goes back to the state. Discussed possible funding options to replace the lost revenue.

She said if we eliminate property taxes, if we can get it on the ballot, that's a very good thing for our residents, I don't think any of our seniors should be paying property taxes. But to eliminate property taxes for our seniors and disabled veterans would cost the State, 1.5 billion dollars. Stated she is on the DOGE committee at the state level to try to DOGE government, to eliminate government waste, put 35 amendments in for state budget, with about 13 accepted.

Mentioned the following bills with explanation, that she feels will help the property tax situation, to begin in 2026.

HB 28- eliminates replacement tax levies,

HB 129- modifies the calculation of 20 mil 4, how we fund our public schools. 70 percent of property taxes go to our local schools. It guarantees school district a minimum tax rate regard less of (Value needed?) (?) undiscernible. More discussion.

HB 186- address broader School funding formula. Reducing tax payor burden by shifting the weight of local school funding of property owners every way we can any way we can.

HB 309- revises processes reweighted to placing property taxes on the ballot and enhances tax payor transparency. Addresses appraisal practices, exemptions, and the role of the County Budget Commission in local tax oversight, Commission has the authority to regulate unvoted property increases, in this case unvoted property tax increases and if this is not needed at the local level it can be returned to the tax payor. Empowering the local County Budget commission to return money to the tax payor. 38.1 million dollars excess reserves in school funds, in Portage County alone. Summarily limiting fund carry over at 30 percent. More discussion regarding different school districts and anecdotes regarding need to save for maintenance and improvements at the schools. She wants to reevaluate

excess resources at the schools, where can we cut. Where can we get more DOGEY at the local level as well.

Discussed if property taxes are eliminated there is nothing the Governor can do about it. If it passes local government will be decimated. There will be no money at the local level for services provided by local government. She said that will mean the State will have to intervene and State will receive massive increase in power and authority in local government.

Said another bill is looking at the state picking up more funding for local schools. She discussed other bills she is working on relating to echeck standards, some discussion, self reporting. And a prior authorization bill where she reported after an insurance company approves a procedure through prior authorization, the insurance company is coming back and denying the procedure coverage after it is completed.

She opened the floor for some questions. Attendees (attendees did not identify themselves prior to questions/statement) responded with questions relating to Echeck with stories and interactions with EPA, Emissions, regulations. Office number given to attendees.

Again review of the HB discussed related to property taxes. Reviewed replacement levies versus renewal. Appraisal by county appraisers, general discussion. Resident stated he believe increased value was due to Covid, decreasing houses for sales. More discussions and anecdotes. Guest stated the appraisal are very arbitrary by appraisers.

She stated she brought Governor DeSantis to Ohio, two weeks ago and sate privately with him asking the specifics of how they are able to eliminate property taxes in Florida and still have no income tax, And the reason they can do that is that they have 153 million tourist that come in each year and they are spending a lot of money so their coffers are flush. Pointed out that Ohio does not have this level of tourism.

Chris Diehl asked Representative about Homestead exemption modifications, percentages of valuation and income changes in bills discussed.

Again guest discussed how present formulas double house values every 12 years. Guest said he would vote for things like fire levies, Tim mentioned you cannot vote in new levies if property taxes are eliminated. Emily Duma questioned Representative in regards to options for funding if property taxes elimination occurs, voicing concern there will be no local government services and then the State will have to take over everything, Talk of need to increase sales tax and income tax to make the difference up. All parties seemed to voice disapproval of state control at local level.

Mr. Stephens asked if the local government could put a levy on the ballot and get a new tax put in? Representative said yes, of course, anything can go to the ballot. Multiple comments over top of each other regarding this, most general commenting. Tim asked even though you're eliminating property taxes? Representative said you could still put a levy to fund local services. More discussion with Tim pointing out that since levies are funded on property taxes, there would be no money. Generally outcome of discussion of adding a new levy after eliminating property tax possibility reached no agreed upon conclusion. Tim voiced funding we receive from other revenue sources would not be able to support even salary of service providers. Again tax increases brought as only solution. More discussion on service loss. Representative state another bill she is working on is to set the property tax rate when the house is purchased, and no change in rate except for when the house is sold or ownership shifts hands. Again she feels the School funding is the biggest problem for home owners.

Rhonda asked if we could post a link to Representative on our township web page. Trustees discussed we can not host links political in nature own our township webpage, Bill agreed it could be viewed as political, and favoring specific opinions or officials./views. Trustees said no. Representative said they would have to link to her webpage.

Emily addressed issues with the high level of regulations for examples relating to fire equipment and operations, sometimes increasing expenses. Representative asked that township reaches out to her office if problems with funding operations or regulations.

Chris related Emilies comments to the funding carry over for schools, voicing concern that the 30 percent carry over might not be enough to plan to future building and maintenance, Tim interjected with similar issues to how the townships must also plan for buildings and machinery and save rather than need to increase levy's or pay interest if loans are needed. Representative said the State reserve is only 10 percent. More discussion relating to not a one size fits all, and that she loves the schools, but need to look at this funding. More discussions. Representative stated that less than 50 percent of the teachers union is teachers, expression opinion that high level of administration. She stated healthcare costs increased 160 percent since covid. More discussion and anecdotes regarding teacher, staff, programs that are of importance.

Mr, Stephens asked that if the initiative to eliminate property taxes does not pass, will the State still move forward to address the issues with property taxes, Yes or No, Representative stated is doing everything she can and speaks out.

Emily asked if non property owners are allowed to sign the petition Representative said only property owners are able to sign. Representative said she would need to check into it. Others voiced any registered voter.

Representative thanked those in attendance and left at 8:09 pm.

Chris opened the floor to other attendees to speak, some said they were there because they thought there would be discussion about the Fire district.

### III. Correspondence:

Chris again discussed invitation to the Prosecutors office session at NEOMED June 16<sup>th</sup>. Some discussion, Emily said she planned on attending. Tim may go as well.

### Shared NOPEC letter

Letter from OWS the gas well lease regarding need to replace meter at the park. Trustees agreed we are not using any gas at the park, because we were not getting any gas. Chris will follow up with meter issue. Bill said in the past, the well was not producing any gas, so we were not receiving any money for the lease, So then when they were asked to removed their equipment, all of a sudden it was producing again.

Portage County Engineer annual report was shared. Issue 2 Gant discussed, relating to sewer lines, bridges, and long time frames to get information. Chris mentioned annual bridge report to Kevin.

### IV. Old BUSINESS. none

### V. Trustee Report:

Chris mentioned scout campout at the park June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### VI. Department Reports.

#### 1. Roads:

Roads: The flowers are planted. We mulched everything. The banners are up. We put asphalt down on the porter rd crossover pipe. We put 2 new toilets in the town hall. We are getting ready to start Rd side mowing. We have been working with an Architect on the building. We got a price to paint the garage and are waiting for 2 more.

Park: park has been mowed.

Cemetery: We got everything weed eat and mowed. We have the graves seeded and straw. The flowers are planted and we mulched. We got a bid for the tree work. To take down 2 trees and clean, grind stumps and haul away is \$2325.00.

Chris asked why the road department could not cut themselves. Some discussion

2 Guests at meeting interrupted meeting, asked if anyone would like to sign the ballot initiative relating to elimination of property taxes. Discussion began. Some back and forth discussion regarding property taxes. Trustees voiced this is solicitation is not allowed at a township meeting, however, petitioners were welcome to wait outside after the meeting to ask.

Tim discussed road department painting or not painting garage, Chris said he painted it the last time. Tim will follow up with road department.

## 2. Fire Report

EMS: Mays EMS training was new CPR protocol update from UH. In-house EMS training for June will be Med review and review of new EMS run dispositions for patient care reports.

Fire: Will be conducting a joint rope rescue training in June with Paris and Palmyra.

General:

☐ 1513 passed the pump test. The manual pump cable was replaced.

General service found 2 coolant temperature gauges at pump panel and dash, and front brake chamber. Waiting on the cost of parts said would be less then \$1000.00 for sure for parts and labor. Countryside.

☐ Chief Hastings funeral service. June 14<sup>th</sup> Memorial plans, procession, discussed.

## 3. Zoning: Discussed Keener property, Mentioned possibility of BZA meeting June 26<sup>th</sup>, waiting follow-up on Boat house Marine, 4 permits

**VII. Fiscal Officer:** Shared financial reports, invoices, payments, warrants, ACH EFT payments. Bill asked for approval of visa bill regarding lack of receipts. Jesse shared what was purchased and said he would find receipt.

Jeffrey made motion to approve payment, Seconded by Tim  
Mr. Pfile: yes            Mr. Diehl: yes            Mr. Bixler: yes

Bill brought up another issue regarding charge for MacAfee virus scan, Jesse said he paid for, however Jesse's receipt say 140 but bill was for 160. Bill said these requests or payment receipts need to be looked at closely, as he is receiving emails for renewal for his computer, however, he does not have MacAfee, and it is the state computer, He believes it is possibly a phishing/fraud scam and again try to avoid recurring billing on the credit card.

Bill reminded trustees the 2026 budget will be due at end of July, to be sent to the County Auditor, He asked that trustees consider any changes to equipment, repair, salary's be considered ahead of time, for this budget, rather than waiting for January and needing to redo it again. Property tax issue discussed, Bill voiced that at least the State wasn't coming after township reserves like they are the School districts, as we need to

budget for replacement equipment, maintenance, buildings, and salary related cost increases.

Bill mentioned the remaining grant money will be spent this year, Bill included a PO for the chip and seal for the amount above the 20,000 po from ARP grant. Bill said he has checked the Fema grant and no action is available at this time, since fema grant freeze by present administration. Jesse said Scott said they are still in process going through first round.

Bill said NOPEC Energy grant need approved project for submission, He would like to enter process agreement.

Motion: Resolution 2025-\_\_\_\_\_ for Bill to move forward with NOPEC grant (documents previously shared)

Mr. Pfile: yes            Mr. Diehl: yes            Mr. Bixler: yes

Potential:

LED lighting in Townhall suggested by Chris, Bill said he would help rewire with road department if needed, Road to follow up. New refrigerator also discussed,

Tim made a **motion** to pay the bills, eft and warrants shared; 43878-43899 motion seconded Jeffrey,

Mr. Pfile: yes            Mr. Diehl: yes            Mr. Bixler: yes

Mr. Pfile made a **motion** to Adjourn the meeting 8:40 pm seconded by Jeffrey.

Mr. Pfile:    yes    Mr. Diehl: yes            Mr. Bixler: yes

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Chris Diehl, Chairman

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Tim Pfile,    Vice Chairman

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Jeffrey Bixler, Trustee

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William McCluskey, Fiscal Officer