

MINUTES OF THE HOWLAND TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Howland Township Board of Trustees held their regular meeting virtually on November 18, 2020 at 6:00 P.M. via the Howland Township Web Page www.howlandtownship.org

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – Present
Dr. James LaPolla - Present
Rick Clark - Present

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to suspend the reading of October 14, 2020 meeting minutes and accept as written.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Rick Clark - yea

A motion was made by Rick Clark and seconded by Matthew Vansuch authorizing Fiscal Officer Robert Costello to pay all outstanding invoices incurred and approve all warrants issued.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Rick Clark - yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to vote on Resolution **2020-112:**

Per the recommendation of Police Chief Nick Roberts, the Board of Trustees of Howland Township “DO NOT” request a hearing for the new D3 liquor permit from Ray & S LLC 1556 N. River Rd. NE., Howland Township, Warren, OH 44483

D3 Spirituous liquor for on premises consumption only until 1:00am.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Dr. James LaPolla - yea
Rick Clark - yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to vote on Resolution **2020-113:**

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Public Works Director David McCann, accept the bid for the 2020 Road Resurfacing Program from R.T. Vernal Paving & Excavating, Inc., 11299 South Avenue, North Lima, OH 44452 for the amount of \$467,933.50.

<u>Other Bids Received:</u>	Shelly & Sands	\$469,828.00
	Chagrin Valley Paving	\$595,182.00

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Dr. James LaPolla - yea
Rick Clark - yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to vote on Resolution 2020-114:

Per the recommendation of Township Administrator Darlene St. George, approve to pay the Police Department's Patrolmen and Officers a one-time hazard pay, in the amount of \$1,000, from COVID Fund 2272.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Dr. James LaPolla - yea
Rick Clark - yea

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to vote on Resolution 2020-115:

Per the recommendation of Administrator Darlene St. George and Police Chief Nick Roberts, accept the letter of retirement from Patrolman William Barna effective December 1, 2020. Bills last day of employment with the Township will be November 30, 2020.

Summary of Meeting:

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

We have Maria Anastasiades with us this evening. She is a senior in high school in the Multi-Media class. Instead of the 3rd graders coming down during the day she's going to be putting a presentation using this meeting for the 3rd graders. As I introduce each department head I am going to have a couple of questions that she sent to me that I am hoping that you might be able to answer for her so we can get a nice presentation.

I am going to ask Rick, since you have the tenure here. She would like to know what your job is and how you become a trustee.

Trustee Rick Clark

Normally, you become a Trustee by election. I began in 1994 when I was appointed to fill an unexpired term. Howland Township is a big enough township that we also have an Administrator along with the three elected Trustees and an elected Fiscal Officer. It is like a business, we have one hundred-plus employees, a post office, fire department, police department, road department and we are charged with supervising all those departments and providing all the services that you receive like plowing the roads, cemetery, police and fire safety.

Trustee Rick Clark

Do you have any other comments for the meeting?

Trustee Rick Clark

I would like to congratulate the Howland boys soccer team for their first ever Trumbull County state championship.

Trustee Rick Clark

Jim, I am going to you next. In addition to any comment you might have if you wouldn't mind answering what are the two or three most common problems in our township and what is the worst part of your job.

Trustee Dr. Jim LaPolla

We don't have many problems but I would say maintaining the safety of the township is key. Howland has a problem with water being the fact that we have a hill on one side and Mosquito Creek on the lower part; we do have a problem with rain water. Mr. McCann along with the county make sure we can preserve as many basements as possible so they don't get flooded out.

The best part of my job is to work with the fine character of people you see on the screen. The worst part of my job, there really isn't any. When I finally got elected, I chose to help the people in Howland Township. It is constantly rewarding. I am very content. It is a great job and there is nothing bad about it.

I would also like to congratulate the boys' soccer team from Howland for winning their first state title. Good luck to JFK in their state bid in football.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Maria, I would like to answer the rest of your questions here.

Who could become a trustee?

Anyone who resides in the township that is 18 years or older can run for election. You have to get twenty-five signatures to get your name on the ballot.

Our administrator Mrs. St. George is not here tonight. She is a full time Administrator who runs the day to day part of the township. She works with all department heads. We, the Trustees, don't handle all of the human resource issues that come up. If somebody gets injured or making sure everything goes off without a hitch, that is her job. Anyone can become an administrator. You have very good interpersonal skills with other people and other governmental entities. She must be able to work thru problems and figure out how to solve the problems as opposed to creating problems.

Chief Sapp, Maria wants to know what the fire department does and how you become a firefighter or EMT.

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

The firefighters are trained by instructors at the fire department and we also have the Howland Township Fire and EMS Training Center. A lot of our full time and part time firefighters are instructors with the Training Center. Those instructors teach in the high school and at TCTC. We also have adult education classes, where the levels of firefighters are from a 36 Hour Volunteer Firefighter to be a 300 Hours Firefighter I and II certification. Those are all certified thru the State of Ohio and Department of Public Safety.

To become an EMT, we offer the EMT class. In our department every full timer except for two are full time Paramedics which is the highest emergency medicine in the pre-hospital setting that you can attain. You can also become a Paramedic thru hospital-based programs and university-based programs. In order to be a full time Firefighter and Paramedic in Howland Township fire department you have to be a level II Firefighter and a certified Paramedic.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

How many do you have chief?

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

Right now, our full-time roster is at 27 and the part time roster of both level of EMS and Firefighters is 26.

Maria Anastasiades

What does the fire department do?

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

We fight fires. We fight all types of fires from small trash fires to a commercial building fire. We also run on service calls. Service calls could be carbon monoxide detector activations. It could be fire alarm activation in a commercial building. Basically, if someone has any type of emergency the fire department usually responds. If it is a police emergency and it is someone injured or sick the police officers will call the fire department to come with an ambulance or fire truck to assist them. We work as a team. As far as EMS goes, we run four full time ambulances in the township all staffed by Firefighter Paramedics. Whoever calls 911 with any type of medical emergency is what we run on. From cardiac arrest to someone fell off their bike and skinned their knee. We transport patients to the hospital locally. This COVID Pandemic has really got us spinning our wheels. Our call volume is thru the roof right now.

Trustee Dr. Jim Lapolla

How does our call volume relate to other townships and cities?

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

We are the busiest fire department in Trumbull County. We are one of the busiest in a tri-county area. We run out of three fire stations. Bolindale, Morgandale and our main station. I would like to touch on our inspection office. Our fire inspection and prevention office, fire code enforcement, is why a lot of firefighters don't get injured while on the job. If it wasn't for our inspection bureau doing the inspections and keeping everyone in code we would be a lot busier.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Chief Sapp, do you have anything else?

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

In regards to the COVID upsurge in the county and the state this thing is getting close to home. Chief Roberts mentioned the three positives in the police department. We also have people quarantined right now that have positive results. We are following the Trumbull County combined Health District recommendations and the Ohio Department of Health recommendations. We have multiple individuals that are under a mandatory mask and self-monitoring protocol while on duty. They were tertiary exposure. They were not primary or secondary. These individuals are allowed to work but they must wear a mask the entire shift while on duty. They must isolate themselves while on premises and self-monitor for any types of symptoms as well as numerous temperature

checks through the shift. Our crews are doing a phenomenal job. Our disinfection process has amped up ten-fold. We are using UV lights to disinfect the back of ambulances. All of our fire stations are equipped with UV lighting now. We are also using a spray disinfectant at the beginning of every shift. We are doing everything we possibly can to keep our people safe and healthy.

Trustee Dr. Jim LaPolla

Chief, do we do weekly swabs?

Asst. Fire Chief Jim Sapp

We do not. All of our testing is on a voluntary basis unless one of our employees presents with any type of symptom.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Chief Roberts, do you have any comments? I think Maria would also like to know what your department does and how do you become an officer?

Police Chief Nick Roberts

To become an officer, you must attend a state certified police academy. We currently have two in this area. We have the Kent State Branch Academy and the Youngstown State Police Academy. Those academies take roughly six months to complete. Once you are finished with that training, your training goes on throughout your entire law enforcement career. There are certain criteria courses that you have to take yearly and pass, such as fire arms domestic violence training, active shooter training, single officer response to schools training and use of force training. Once you graduate from police officer's academy and get hired by a police agency, you have to be with a field training officer for a minimum of two months. That way you get to know the community, get to know the roads, get to know the businesses and the owners. We are big on community-oriented policing. What I tell our guys to do when they have some down time is to go into stores and walk around and say hi to people.

In order to get hired by our department it's a pretty unique situation we put each person in. Number 1, we put them through a series of interviews and if you don't pass the interview you won't get called back for a second. We have an interview process; one is to get to know you. The second is to throw out different scenarios to see if you have problem solving skills that you can use on the street. The third is a one on one interview with me. It is to get to know you, to see your critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communications skills and interpersonal skills. You have to have a strong moral character to do this job. The police department responds to someone's house alarm going off or an intruder trying to enter. That is the most common call we go on. We'll make sure all the exterior windows and doors are secure. If we do find a door open we enter the house and make sure no one is inside stealing property. We can go from an alarm drop to a homicide. We have shoplifters to deal with; we deal with people who suffer from mental health crisis. All of our officers are trained in crisis intervention where we know how to deal with these individuals. Our department consists of nineteen officers including myself. There is the Assistant Chief, two Detectives, three Sergeants and twelve Patrol Officers. We can have anywhere from two to seven officers on the street. It is a great profession and I enjoy what I am doing. This is the type of job when you go in everyday something different happens.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

And I think chief we have two officers who I think our students know, in the schools.

Police Chief Nick Roberts

Yes, I am sorry. I forgot about those two. We have two school resource officers. Officer Bill Barna is a resource officer who is retiring at the end of this month. I have hand selected David Ritz to train with Bill the next two days. Our other resource officer who goes to the middle school and high school is officer Nick Brancaccio. He is a Howland graduate. He is very familiar with the staff and the ins and outs of the buildings.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Do you have any other comments?

Trustee Dr. Jim LaPolla

I would like to give one. I am proud to say that Nick and the police department have kept Howland one of the safest communities. Although crime is a problem anywhere in the world, we should be proud of our Chief and his department because they do an outstanding job and we are one of the safest communities.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I am going to jump to Ms. Mascarella. In addition to an update if you could describe what you do in the planning department.

Planning Director Kim Mascarella

The planning department is first and foremost concerned with developing and maintaining our comprehensive plan. Communities have a plan and vision of their future. How do they want their commercial corridors to look. How about our transportation corridors. We are looking twenty years into the future to make sure all these systems are reflecting what the community wants. Our last plan we developed was in 2010 and it set some goals and objectives to try to get us to reach our goals and our vision for the township in the future. It lays out policies and goals. The primary role of this department is to make sure the comprehensive plan is not sitting on the shelf but is referenced often and informs all our decisions. Other parts of my job are grant seeking and writing grants to bring revenue into the township to help us realize some of these projects.

Maria, I wanted to say and give a shout out to you because you participated in the Howland Middle School crosswalk project.

Just an update for some recent things going on. The township has had the farmers market for fifteen years. Because of the pandemic we have converted it to an online market. The web site is up and running. We have about seventy people registered and placed an order. The growers, makers and bakers are all local and all are grateful to the trustees for supporting the farmers market. It allows for their business to grow, allows customers to eat healthy and to buy local. You can go to www.howlandfarmersmarket.com, select the shop on line button, register and then you are good to go. Pickup is on Saturday's from 11-1 at the scope building. It is contactless way to shop the market.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Maria, many years ago Kim was responsible for the safe routes to schools grant which lead to the new signage, new lighting and pedestrian walkways that helps you get between the high school and middle school.

If no other questions, Mr. Morgan you are zoning inspector and if you could explain a little about what you do and pepper in some highlights from the last month.

Zoning Director Dan Morgan

In the zoning office we take a lot of the information that the planning office puts into the planning resolutions. We regulate land use. Everything from residential homes, office buildings and we regulate any land in Howland to insure zoning resolutions are being followed. We issue permits for any new houses or any new buildings along with renovations to those buildings. If they are going to do an addition to the building or make any changes we issue a permit for that to ensure that the resolution is being followed. In addition to the zoning resolution, we also insure that the property maintenance code is followed. That can be anything from a resident not cutting their grass to a dilapidated building. We issue a warning and it could go to citations that the police chief takes to property owners.

In the zoning office we do monthly training. Locally it is thru the Trumbull County Zoning Association and we do monthly training thru the Ohio Township Association. Both associations are critical because you can see what is going on at the local level and at the state level to see how we compare and to see any changes where we could make things better.

One of the challenges has been with the COVID-19. We have gone to an online application system and had to learn to deal with residents without face to face communications. Communication may be over the phone or we might have zoom meetings. We have found it to be a plus because it is more efficient to issue the permits online.

Maria do you have any other questions about the zoning office?

Maria Anastasiades

I wanted to ask what are the different types of zoning in Howland Township?

Zoning Director Dan Morgan

We have residential zoning, we have residential two family, corridor review district 1, corridor review district 2, corridor review office institutional, commercial area and industrial area. Basically, each area has different rules and regulations for new buildings being built and zoning resolutions they have to follow.

We issued twenty-one permits last month for a total of \$709,000 of project cost.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Our Public Works Superintendent David McCann had to step away from the meeting. You asked a little about what he and his department do. I believe there are Dave and nine employees. The public works department is responsible for plowing the roads and throwing salt down. They also do a lot more than that. They take care of the catch basins, do some paving, they maintain the

infrastructure on township roads. There are 80 miles of roads in the township. They make sure all the signs are up. They get a lot of questions about flooding. The township can only go fix flooding if it affects the road and have to tell resident we can't help you with flooding on your property. Public works also cuts grass on the properties people don't maintain or they have moved out or become vacant. They put up the flags on East Market Street and they also sweep the streets.

Maria Anastasiades

Does the public works department answer a lot of questions?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

They are not questions, they are complaints. Dan has helped Dave set up an online portal so people can submit those directly to the department without having to call. They can take pictures and send them to Dan.

The last person that is up here is Bob Costello who is our fiscal officer who keeps track of the money that the residents pay.

Fiscal Officer Bob Costello

I was like Rick Clark as I was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the prior fiscal officer who resigned. I have two fantastic ladies, Vanessa Stroup and Linda Vannelli who help me immensely on the day to day operations. Tomorrow I will go in and listen to this tape and record the minutes, type them out, journalize them and put them online. On the 1st and 16th of each month we have payroll. We prepare the payroll for approximately 110 employees. Then we have to submit the federal and state withholdings and any other type of voluntary withholding from their paycheck and submit them to the proper agencies. We pay bills several times a month. In government you have to appropriate money in order to spend it. Everyone has to submit purchase orders which are setting aside the money prior to the commitment to purchase. Once we receive the purchase orders (approved by administrator and trustees) we prepare the checks and make payments to the proper vendors. Daily we receive receipts. It might be from the fire department for squad runs or permits; police department could be for reports or impound lot fees. I get receipts from zoning for building permits. We have to record those and deposit them every 24 hours. Usually I have to make a trip to the bank to deposit funds. We also receive property tax settlements, gas tax, motor vehicle tax, and court fines thru the Trumbull County Auditor. They are ACH deposits which are direct deposits to our bank account. We have to record them to our accounting system. We are under new accounting software thru the State Auditor's Office called (UAN) Uniform Accounting Network. Everything we enter is sent to their mainframe so they have electronic access to all our records. I think that is everything in a nutshell. We prepare end of the year reports and have to submit those to the State Auditor's Office. We just finished up with our bi-annual state audit. We are required by the ORC to be audited every two years.

Maria Anastasiades

Is there a budget?

Fiscal Officer Bob Costello

Yes, over the past several years our annual budget has been over 10 million dollars a year which makes us one of the larger townships in the area.

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I will open this up to the residents so if you will unmute yourselves I will refer to you by name.

Ed Palumbo – 201 Sanctuary

Where do we stand on annexation this month?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I have not had any communications with the City of Niles this month. They have not made any efforts to make our residents to sign onto a development incentive agreement. We are still at a standstill.

Ed Palumbo

There is one thing I don't understand is that this has been going on for a year and there are three TV networks downtown Youngstown and nobody has stuck a microphone in your face or the mayor's face or county commissioner's face. This is a big deal why aren't showing any interest in this?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

Given the last election, I know there was a candidate Ms. Frenchko who ran on the annexation issue and I know that she did very well in Howland Township and I have not had a chance to speak to her about that as to what she might be able to do thru the county commissioner's office. I would extend an offer to her to do that to see if she could break this impasse but right now the mayor has been quiet and city council hasn't take any action to revoke the ordinance.

Ed Palumbo

Has the congressman stepped in or have you asked him to step in to resolve it?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

No, we have not asked him to step in. At this point I think all the pressure has been put on the mayor and he's not budged.

Ed Palumbo

I have a few questions for Chief Roberts. If you can't answer this it is fine and I understand. I have been watching a lot of TV and seeing a lot of riots, seeing buildings burning with reports saying this is a peaceful protest. In most of these places people are taking a beating, police departments are taking a beating and sometimes results in the chiefs quitting their jobs. What happen then, the chief of that area says you won't let me defend my people; you won't let me bring law and order. Who makes the call, is it the mayor?

Police Chief Nick Roberts

It is up to each community to make a decision what type of enforcement action they are going to deploy. Should we ever find ourselves in that particular situation and it's my belief that some of these police chiefs and mayors don't seem to get along when they don't see eye to eye. It gets to

the point where the mayor wants the law enforcement to look the other way when police chiefs don't want to look the other way. There is obviously some conflict there and I think that is what is having these police chiefs resign. I am pretty confident that I have a great relationship with our administrator and trustees that we would be able to work out any differences we had should any problems of any significance should arise in the future.

Ed Palumbo

I look at flipping and going the other way. If there's a bunch of peaceful protestors and the mayor says to the chief, go break it up. What happens then?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I can tell you we maintain a wall between the two buildings and we view how we would like the department to operate in a professional manner and with the policies and guidelines they have. I don't think you would ever see myself, Rick, Jim, or Darlene out there directing Chief Roberts or Chief Urso to do or not do something.

Bruce Gump – 1441 Springwood Trace

My question has to do with annexation to some degree. There was an effort to switch the electric supplier over. Has there been any movement?

Trustee Rick Clark

There hasn't been any movement Bruce. We are having some preliminary conversations with Ohio Edison and they have asked us to provide them with some information on how much power Niles supplies to the township. We are trying to get that number from the City of Niles. We are exploring a couple of other ways to possibly figure out how much power they provide to the township.

Trustee Dr. Jim LaPolla

We sent a records request to Niles Power and it was denied.

Bruce Gump

Is there a next step to that? Is there any time frame of getting information from Niles?

Trustee Rick Clark

Their law director refuses to give us that information and cited the ORC that says they do not have to provide that information. We did confirm that with our law director and they are within their rights.

Bruce Gump

My second question is when we walk our dog on our street and neighboring streets we noticed quite a number of very small pieces of glass that just kind of sit on the asphalt. I was wondering if there is a way to run a vacuum or street sweeper to get that off?

Trustee Matthew Vansuch

I am going to walk you thru how you can submit that. On the township page under public works tab it says service request. Click that, it will have some drop down boxes and you can put the address and specific issue that you have and you can even take a picture and attach it to the service request.

A motion was made by Dr. James LaPolla and seconded by Rick Clark to adjourn the meeting at 7:10: P.M.

Roll Call: Matthew Vansuch – yea
Dr. James LaPolla - yea
Rick Clark - yea

Approved by: Robert M. Costello Dated: 12/10/20
Robert M. Costello, Fiscal Officer

Approved by: Matthew Vansuch Dated: 12/9/2020
Matthew Vansuch, Chairperson-Trustee