

# Huntington Township Regular Meeting

## October 17, 2023

President Gary Hopkins called the October 17, 2023, meeting to order at 6:03PM at the Fire House.

Roll Call:	Gary Hopkins	Present
	John Cottrill	Present
	Larry Kellough	Absent

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve the September 2023, regular meeting minutes.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to approve payment of the September 2023 bills.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

### Guests

**Brett Clark – resident:** Asked a question about the SAFER Grant that the Twp was awarded recently. He asked if the new funding would permit full-time coverage for our residents, only, at all times, and the SAFER funding be used for mutual aid calls when necessary. Snyder said that the Board has various scenarios to consider, but has not begun the discussion yet. Cottrill said that the schedule had “not been determined, but we are dedicated to the same procedure

**Emily Schmidt – Ross County Sheriff’s Office:** Here to say hello from Sheriff Lavender’s office, and to see if the community had any concerns that she could take back to the Sheriff.

**Jeff Marks – Ross County Prosecutor:** Introduced himself as the prosecutor, and that he took office in 2019. He said that he was present to answer any questions that those in attendance might say. He stated that he has reviewed Huntington Township’s levys, and that nothing in them restricts jurisdictional boundaries. He said that the “ORC gives every right to provide Fire & EMS services outside the township boundaries with or without an agreement. Nothing prohibits it in the ORC.” Marks said that “the language in the 4 levys states for the “benefit of Huntington Township” and that benefit includes helping other townships, and those who help us. He suggested reviewing ORC Section 2744 regarding liability outside our township boundaries. He shared that he drafted the agreement for Twin Twp that was signed by Huntington, Bainbridge, and Scioto.

**Fearl Crissman – resident:** Explained his position regarding the Twp agreement with Twin Twp. He said that he doesn’t want to pay for the services offered in Twin. That their trustees made the

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decision to not offer EMS services. He said that he has voted for every levy, realizing that we need it since there are no businesses here, and we rely upon the residents for tax funding. He says that “we pay for it” in Huntington Twp. Not Twin Twp. Stated that we were “promised 24/7 coverage”.

**Marks** commented that what the Twp is doing with the funds from our levys is legal.

**Crissman:** We should not pay for runs in Wavery, Twin, and Pebble. He feels that they are “parasites”. He asked how much Twin is paying us for each runs. Snyder answered \$250 for non-transport and \$350 for transport. He said that was more than he had been told, that he had been told it was “\$75 a run”.

At this point Mr. Crissman escalated his voice, said the word “fuck” directed towards Chief Oyer, and Deputy Schmidt immediately moved towards him and stated that he needed to calm down, watch his tone, and the words he was using.

**Crissman** cited a Supreme Court decision in 1964 for NY Times vs Sullivan regarding language and tone, and that he was entitled to speak in this manner.

**Marks** said that even if Twin cannot pay for our services, the Twp is helping others and may still go. He said that there are people who just sit, versus people who want to help, and that Huntington Twp’s FD personnel want to help regardless of the boundary.

**Crissman:** Money and times are getting tough.

**Cottrill:** if everyone in the county had that attitude it would be bad. He said at times it wasn’t that we were out of the Twp on mutual aid, but that we were returning from the hospital after transporting a resident and another call came in. We needed Scioto Twp to help us.

**Crissman:** “I am not against mutual aid”

**Cottrill:** Scioto has told us that “we are not coming if you don’t help us”.

**Crissman:** “Twin is not mutual aid. They cannot help”

Assorted people responded “They do help with Fire mutual aid”.

**Crissman:** “They voted to stay out of it. The people spoke – they voted it down.”

**Stephanie Crissman** stated that she “has been a nurse for 27 years”, and she “is passionate to help others”. That her first patients were from Huntington Township.

**PC:** Does support mutual aid.

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**Crissman:** We are using “our dollars to help people didn’t want it to begin with”.

**Cottrill:** Explained that in February 2023 he was against the agreement, and “all voted no”. In the meantime, his “position changed” as he watched Scioto respond into Twin 5 or 6 times a month, but then when Scioto got a call, we were sent to Scioto. Scioto was paid by Twin for that service but we were not paid for runs into Scioto.

**PC:** Agreed that doesn’t make sense.

**Cottrill:** Acknowledged that this “caused the falling out with Brett”.

**PC:** Said that at the special meeting where the agreement was voted down “no one got to speak and tell their views”.

**Oyer:** Said that the “contract is not perfect. We cover Scioto, we do not get paid”. He said “Never once was this about profit. We re-evaluate the contract quarterly. We are break-even. It does help support our crew.”

**Shawn Kellough:** Asked how much it costs for us to respond to calls.

**Oyer:** “\$125 for us to take an ambulance down the road. That includes wages, maintenance, cost of supplies, etc.” He explained that we get \$350 to transport a Twin resident, and also bill their resident’s insurance.

**Clark:** Referenced the petition that he has circulated that has “hundreds of signatures” on it regarding 24/7 coverage. He also stated that he is not opposed to mutual aid, but expects that someone is always available to respond to our residents.

**Marks:** Said that the cost agreed upon between the two townships was not something that he gave an opinion on, that his job was to make sure it was a good contract. He also said that nothing in the language on the ballot of any of the Twp levys said “24/7 coverage”.

**S Crissman:** Asked if we could utilize volunteers. For example, if there is a second call within our township, can volunteers take it.

**Oyer** explained how few volunteers we have, but that recently we had a “2<sup>nd</sup> run on Easterday Road that volunteers took”. Oyer explained how the FD uses chase vehicles. **Crissman** asked “rather than chase – why not stay back?”

Discussion then centered around how much we bill Twin for the runs we handle in their township, and that it at least permits us to break even. Oyer said that “Eric Price knows the cost of every run”.

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He said we could “ask for more, but they would have to agree, and we must give a 30 day notice of our intent to change the agreement”. Snyder brought up that Twin has a levy on the ballot this fall, and that levy if passed will cover the payments Twin makes to Huntington, Scioto, and Paxton. Crissman said “if they don’t pay, why would they pass it?” Marks then explained that Twin Twp is using their ARPA money to pay Twin, Bainbridge, and Huntington. That money is about to run out, and they will no longer have the ability to pay.

**Bill Monroe** spoke of what if and we could, but was interrupted by **Crissman** who said “we could what if this to death”. He said why not let Portsmouth Ambulance take care of Twin instead of Huntington.

It was explained again, that it is a protection for us to help with mutual aid because other townships will give it back to us.

The statement was made that Huntington Township has the best fire & ems service.

**Snyder and Oyer** shared that we expect to receive \$215,000 this year in EMS billing receipts from insurance billings.

**Gary Hopkins:** Said that private ambulances were covering our township several years back, and residents were getting upset. He shared that we had volunteers that became upset and left us to go to Franklin Twp. He said that Larry Cuckler and Robin Snyder are the two that worked very hard to get a paid crew up and running.

Larry Cuckler: Shared that Franklin Twp has a squad, but doesn’t get out the door. It is our twp that responds there. He shared the story that one time we showed up and Franklin’s resident applauded that we were the ones that came. He said that when he and Hopkins went to a Franklin Twp trustee meeting, they were kicked out of the meeting and didn’t want to talk to us about an agreement where we would bill then for our services.

A discussion then ensued between Snyder, Oyer, and Shawn Kellough regarding staffing, how much to charge Twin for our transports, volunteers, and some history. Cottrill reminded the audience that the Twp exited the county-wide EMS agreement, and then identified which townships we wanted to sign both an EMS and Fire mutual aid agreement with, versus those townships we only wished to sign a fire mutual aid agreement with. Shawn asked if the 4 volunteers that had been pushed away last summer would consider returning. Oyer informed him that we have 8 volunteers now. Snyder said that the per run rate that we would need to charge Twin in order to have staff member dedicated to Twin for mutual aid would be considerably more than they could afford at almost \$889/run instead of the \$350 we pay now. And that is just for one responder 53 hours a week. It was stated again that our Twp should not bear the consequences of Twin’s decisions. Oyer shared that we are one of the lowest paid crews in Ross County, but still the department members stay. An audience member asked about the budget shortfall that had been identified back Snyder back in July 2021 for 2022. She spoke of the deficit of \$40,000, and how in February of that year we were down to just less than \$25

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in the fire fund. She said that in her mind, this Board is providing 24/7 coverage. That the commitment was not that our squad would be the one to respond 100% of the time, but that we would have coverage for every call, all the time, even if another township responded for us. She said that has yet to hear of anyone in our Twp that did not receive service. Oyer mentioned that he felt the solution for the situation in Ross County may be to consolidate into districts. Twin is small and cannot sustain a paid crew. Someone in the audience asked what our billing rates were for squad service. Oyer nor Snyder could recall, but then Snyder found it in an email and shared these rates effective today:

BLS \$690  
ALS \$850  
ALS2 \$1200  
SCT \$1500  
Mileage - \$20 a mile

**Cottrill:** Said that we needed to wrap up this conversation, but that “Huntington Township has one of the better departments, and we should be proud”.

**Schmidt:** Thanked everyone for keeping it under control, but said we do need everyone’s opinion.

**Clark:** Shared about the community watch program that has 400 members. He said that there is 24/7 road control and they call-in if they see something.

**Crissman:** Asked if he could meet with the Chief and the Board one on one, but then decided that the trustees only would be best. He said he has a situation he wants to discuss with the trustees. Plan was made for him to meet with Cottrill and Hopkins Wednesday morning at the Garage at 9:30.

### **Fire Department Business – Chief TJ Oyer**

- 1) Full-time hiring is under way, we are open for applications through October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 2) Chief introduced our new Fire Prevention Officer, Kevin Fausnaugh, Jr. Fausnaugh shared a 5 point program.
  - a. A community risk management program that is free, in-house, with materials to assist location businesses.

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- b. Fire inspections for all businesses. He shared that recently they inspected Backwood Oddities.
  - i. Adopt a fire code for the township that permits 3 inspections, but if still an issue, the state comes in.
- c. Shared that 1 out of 22 fires is started by children. There is a diversion program that would permit juveniles to avoid jailtime.
- d. Improve our ISO rating as a township, which would help with our ratings for home-owners insurance. Current rating is a 9.
- e. Offer CRP classes for a small fee to cover the expense of an ASHI card. The ultimate goal is to get the cards free. If a business has to pay someone to do a class, they may as well use our resources.

Requested that the Board adopt the 2017 fire code, and place the link on the Twp website.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second John Cottrill to adopt the 2017 fire code for Huntington Township.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

- 3) Oyer asked the Board to approve Kevin Fausnaugh as the Safety Officer/Fire Prevention Lieutenant with a \$100/month rank pay.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to approve the appointment of Kevin Fausnaugh to Safety/Officer/Fire Prevention Lieutenant with rank pay of \$100/month.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

- 4) Chief Oyer ask the Board to approve the resignation of Alexander Ramey from the paid part-time crew. He has taken a civilian position in St Louis.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to accept the resignation of Alexander Ramey from his position of paid part-time crew.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

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- 5) Chief Oyer asked the Board to approve the resignation of Brad Oates, who has accepted a job at Adena, from his FT job with the township and his officer position. Oates would like to remain as a part-time employee.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to accept the resignation of Brad Oates from the full-time crew and his officer position, yet keep him as a part-time employee at \$12.58/hour wage.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 6) Korey Pauley took this time to present to the Board his resignation as a full-time employee and from his officer position. Pauley also wishes to remain part-time. He said it was a long, hard decision for him, but he felt no pride about working for our Twp any longer, and was not excited to come to work. He spoke of difficulty sleeping at night, and said that financially he cannot make it work. Said that he was tired of explaining the current situation at the department to community members. Cottrill asked if it was a trustee issue, to which Pauley replied "it is everything". He said he is tired of residents being mad at him.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to accept the resignation of Brad Oates from the full-time crew and his officer position, yet keep him as a part-time employee at \$12.01/hour wage.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 7) Oyer asked the Board to approve 7 purchase requisitions totaling \$2,298. The Board reviewed the requisitions.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve all seven (7) purchase requisitions.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 8) Oyer informed the Board that Michael Grooms has submitted an application for the part-time crew. Snyder pointed out that Grooms had been removed from employment with the part-time crew two times previously.

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**Motion** to approve the application of Grooms died because no one made the motion.

- 9) Oyer recommended that the Board terminate the employment of 3 part-time paid crew members for lack of participation:
- a. Deric Howell
  - b. Jace Foster
  - c. Scott Spires

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to terminate Deric Howell, Jace Foster, Scott Spires from the paid part-time crew.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

- 10) Oyer presented two letters from surrounding fire chiefs supporting Huntington Township and mutual aid. Scioto Twp assistant chief Richard Ray and Bainbridge's Chief Branson Leisure.

- 11) Oyer asked the Board if they would approve the purchase of the 1986 Chevrolet D30 Military P / Brush Truck for \$10,000 from Pebble Township. It has been on loan from Pebble the last month. He feels that the skid unit alone is worth \$17,000. If we are not going to buy it, then he needs to return it to Pebble. Snyder said that if the trustees decide to buy it, she would recommend using remaining ARPA funds to cover the cost.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to purchase the brush truck from Pebble Township for \$10,000, using ARPA funds to pay for the purchase.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

- 12) Oyer asked the Board to approve FFV training for Everett Cox that will cost \$650, but be reimbursable under the firefighter training grant.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve the FFV training for Everett Cox at \$650.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes



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### Fiscal Officer Business

- 1) Snyder reminded the Board that Denver Cemetery has 5 plats, of which only 2 belong to the Twp, and the other 3 to the church. She discussed a letter sent in 2015 to the trustees of the church informing them of the situation. Nothing changed, and the Twp is still paying to have the entire cemetery mowed.
- 2) A reminder that election day is Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. Hopkins will be at the fire house that morning at 5:30 to let the staff of the BOE in.
- 3) A reminder regarding the electrical aggregation meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM at the fire station. Trebel rep Larry Taylor will run the meeting but would like the trustees to be present.
- 4) Snyder asked the Board to approve the following certifications, appropriations, and re-appropriations.
  - a. Certify and appropriate:
    - i. Wrecked truck \$16,000 to 2031.892 Misc. Non Op
    - ii. Appropriated to 2031.330.420 Operating Supplies (chip/seal)
  - b. Reappropriation:
    - i. Fire Fund \$95 from 2111.220.223 Dental Ins to 2111.220.224 Vision Ins
    - ii. General Fund \$10,000 from 1000.760.740 Machinery/Eat to 1000.330.420 Operating supplies
    - iii. Gas Tax Fund \$10,000 from 2021.760.740 Machinery/Eat to 2021.330.420 Operating Supplies
    - iv. Gas Tax fund \$16,800 from Op Supplies to Payroll 2021.330.190 \$15000; OPERS 2021.330.211 \$1500; and Medicare 2021.330.213 \$300
    - v. ARPF \$2120.02 from 2273.290.2111 OPERS to 2273.290.420 Operating supplies
  - c. Appropriate
    - i. ARPF \$53,000 to 2273.290.420 Operating Supplies
  - d. Fire Fund – Certify and appropriate
    - i. Certify \$25,000 in EMS Collections into 2111.299.000 Other – Charges for services. (Higher than expected EMS Collections)
    - ii. Appropriate \$7,000 into 2111.230.323 Repairs & Maint and \$8,000 into 2111.230.420 Operating supplies

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve the certifications, appropriations, and reappropriations listed above.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

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**Road Department and Cemetery Business**

- 1) Cottrill spoke about a Thriving Community Initiative offered by the US Department of Transportation. He met with Superintendent Pete Ruby of Huntington Schools and the two entities are interested in applying for the grant together. It could be \$2-\$3 million dollars over the next 2 to 3 years to pave and repair roads essential to school transportation and for commutes to and from jobs. A letter of interest dated 11/15 will be prepared jointly by the school and the township. A plan will be made for the roads to be considered. He asked for a motion to move forward.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to pursue the thriving community grant in partnership with Huntington Schools.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 2) Cottrill asked that the November meeting be rescheduled to Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 at the Fire House.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to reschedule the November meeting to Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 at the Fire House.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

- 3) Hopkins, Cottrill, and Crissman discussed the bus turnaround on Pendleton, and the culverts, extension across the creek. The mentioned Sonny Seger who has flat land and is willing to work with the Twp on the turnaround. Agreed they would discuss it in their meeting Wednesday.

**Oyer requested that the Board move to executive session to discuss a FD personnel issue.**

Motion by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to go into executive session at 7:55PM

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

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The Board returned at 8:30 and Snyder called roll:

Hopkins Present  
Cottrill Present

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to adjourn the meeting at 8.31 PM.

Vote: Gary Hopkins Yes  
John Cottrill Yes

ATTESTED:

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President

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Vice President

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Trustee

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Fiscal Officer