

Huntington Township Regular Meeting  
March 14, 2023

President Gary Hopkins called the March 14, 2023, meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. 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 February 14, 2023, meeting minutes.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to approve the February 28, 2023, special meeting minutes.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

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

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

**GUEST:** TJ Oyer, Fire Chief, approached the Board with multiple items to discuss.

1) He asked for approval of nine (9) purchase requisitions, as follows:

#1 VCNB Walmart	\$125.31	Bedbug Decon supplies
#2 VCNB Amazon	\$41.98	Replace alarm batter
#3 VCNB Ohio Bd of Pharm	\$443.50	Drug License renewal
#4 Jon Nesser Contracting	\$300.00	Gutter repair
#5 All State Termite/Pest	\$300.00	Bedbugs
#6 VFP Fire Systems	\$360.00	Annual monitoring
#7 O'Reilly Auto Parts	\$453.27	Batteries 901 & 916
#8 Willis and Sons	\$1366.80	Lift pump septic (ARPA)
#9 VCNB Amazon\$	\$610.77	Power washer, hose, reel FD

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, seconded by John Cottrill, to approve the ten (10) purchase requisitions as requested by Chief Oyer. (Snyder noted that since the tax advance was received, most of this would be charged against the Fire Fund.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

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2) Oyer asked the Board to move the minimum staffing at the fire department from 1 person to 2. He shared that effective March 1 the staffing moved to 3 people the first 12 hours and 2 people the second 12. He felt it had gone well with minimum call-offs. FO Snyder advised the Board that the staffing change meant we were back to 840 hours each bi-weekly pay period. Oyer's specific request regards minimum staffing which he explained meant that there must be 2 people at the station at all times, not 1, and that mandatory overtime would be used if necessary. This statement was a cause of concern for Trustee Cottrill and Snyder. Both expressed concern about keeping the correct balance of hours between FT and PT. Snyder said FT should be around 336 hours and PT should be 504 hours to make up the total 840 a pay. Oyer said insisted that a minimum staffing of 2 is necessary. He said that we would have to make sure the OT did not get "out of hand." Cottrill expressed concern regarding FT overtime. Oyer said that would never be permitted to be there more than 60 back-to-back hours. Snyder felt that was too much, as that would be 36 hours of OT. Cottrill asked Oyer to define "Out of hand". Trustee Hopkins said we do not want to be where we were last year, and that we should table this vote. Oyer felt that was a dangerous decision. He spoke of Paxton helping us out with mutual aid on a run to Skyver. Chrisman, retired from the State, made a statement that whether the posts were filled or not, we must have 2 EMTS on a site. Resident Brett Clark asked how it would work with a 3 man crew. Chief explained that all 3 respond to a call, 2 with the squad and 1 in a chase vehicle. If not needed, it is still in service and if a second call comes in, that person will respond and while they cannot transport, they can be there to help. Oyer said we live in a world of "what ifs".

3) An application for Timothy Owens was presented to the Board by Oyer for a part-time paid crew member at \$11.49 an hour. He is a FFV/EMT-B.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, seconded by John Cottrill, to hire T Owens to the paid part-time crew at \$11.49/hour.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

4) Oyer asked the Board to the resignation of Andrew Uhrig from the paid part-time crew, and to move him to volunteer status. He has not been able to work a 12 hour schedule each month.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins, to move Andrew Uhrig from paid part-time to a volunteer without pay.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes



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- 10) At this point in the meeting Chief Oyer discussed rank pay for the Department, and provided a job description for each officer. The Chief receives \$600/month; the Assistant \$300/month (currently vacant); 2 Captains \$200/month; and 4 Lieutenants \$100/month. Each position has unique responsibilities that are in addition to their on-duty responsibilities. Oyer and the previous chief, Larry Cuckler, gave a brief history of officers and the benefit of having them. Before Oyer, officers were unpaid and job tasks were undone. Vehicles would be out of gas, equipment would not operate, but now that we pay our officers, these things no longer happen. When Snyder asked Cuckler why he didn't have rank pay during his time as chief he replied "I never thought about it. It was TJ's idea. It is a little bit of money, and I cannot say that I disagree with TJ's choices."

**Other Business:**

- 1) **Trustees Cottrill and Hopkins** discussed 2023 chip and seal program for township roads. A bid packet will be created, posted on the website, with bids to be returned by Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, to be opened at the May 9 Board meeting.

Roads to be surfaced:

Keiser Road - .4 miles

Hartwood Road – 1.6 miles

Shaeffer Road – 2.1 miles

Pendleton Road - .2 miles

Bethel Road - .6 miles (cold mix paving)

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to proceed with securing bids for chip and seal to the township roads as laid out above.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 2) The Board discussed their intent to use the Issue 1 funds to pave parts of Trego Creek Road and Debord Road.
- 3) The Board discussed changing the start time of all future regular board meetings from 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill, to change the time on all future regular board meetings to 6:00 PM.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

- 4) Cottrill shared that the grant request was submitted to the David Meade Massie organization for \$4100. The grant request was accepted even though it was late.

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- 5) Cottrill stated that the Board is investigating a change of fuel providers from World Fuel Services to Glockner Oil out of Piketon. He will obtain and fill out the credit application. They will review the current pump situation and electricity. Once approved, then he will contact World Fuel Services to terminate our existing agreement with them.

**FO Snyder** then addressed the Board about several matters, as follows.

- 1) Provided each trustee and the fire chief with a copy of the township's public records requests policy and reviewed it for clarity and understanding.
- 2) Informed the Board that the advance on our first half property taxes had been received and deposited.

**At this point in the meeting, Resident Brett Clark addressed the Board with his concerns with the department giving mutual aid to other areas around our Township. (The highlights of the ensuing conversations are captured here.)**

Clark: Why are we paying rank pay when the tasks could be done during on-shift work hours? It amounts to \$10,000 a year.

Cottrill: The work was not getting done

Clark: Why not discipline the person for not getting the work done?

Oyer: Who would discipline?

Clark: You Is that unreasonable?

Oyer: Yes it is unreasonable. With all the tasks we have to get done, plus squad runs and fires, it is unreasonable.

Clark: I know about those things.

Hopkins: We are getting things done that we were not before.

B Pauley: Quality Control of our reports submissions is much better. Some people would not come in on their day off, so the run submissions were behind and not accurate.

Pollock: there are no volunteers any longer, but even then, we do not do this for the money. It is because we are passionate about it. The township supports us, there is pride in our township because of our department.

Clark: Why can't the crew on call do this work? If they cannot get it done, then the next on call crew could finish it up.

Oyer: The change of hands on these tasks does not work. Eric Price makes sure our drugs in the drug bags on the squads are not expired, that is one of his rank pay tasks.

Cuckler: It is \$.10/hour.

Snyder: OP&F is paid on the rank pay for our 3 full time people.

Clark: When we run mutual aid, our residents are uncovered.

Hopkins: No mutual aid? If we don't give it, we won't receive it. Even with 24/7 coverage at our station, there is still need for us to receive mutual aid.

Clark: EMS money, are you running this place like it is a business? Is there enough?

Oyer: Enough?

Clark: Enough money from the levy to pay 2 people without mutual aid

Oyer: If you can find the money, I will do it. I also work at Pebble Twp and will "roll the house" to get help to us. There is no animosity. Our EMS billing is a big factor, but our moral compass is the biggest.

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Hopkins: I do not like all this nit-picking. It is why other townships do not have what we do.

Oyer: There needs to be a way to disagree, a middle ground. Do not vilify this department. My door is open. I am a PT FF and get \$20/day for being chief. I won't ask for a raise myself. The social media posts have to stop.

Clark: Times have changed. I served here through 4 chiefs. The trustees were in control, but they are not in control now.

Hopkins: We hired TJ to run the department. We get involved when we need to.

L Cuckler to J Cottrill: Richmondale person does not let the fire department run the township. Closed door disagreements, remained professional, and never made a decision without us.

Snyder: Sounds like there is nothing here to vote on; just differing opinions.

Resident Richard Magill: Supports mutual aid. Said "I am a tax paying resident just like you, and I want us saving lives no matter where they are".

Oyer gave some history:

2014 – 100% volunteer crew. We had 619 EMS calls of which 310 went to private ambulance.

2020 – 919 EMS calls and only 4 went to private ambulance

2021 – 1,016 EMS calls and 2 private ambulance

Private is no longer to be had. B Oates – they are never available because they are taking people to appointments, not handling emergencies.

**Guest: Rodney and other residents on Keiser and Pendleton Roads** came to the meeting about the condition of their roads. There are no ditches for water flow. Road is clay with gravel. Twp did chip and seal, dug 2 ditches, but then snow plows ripped out the asphalt and filled the ditches. At the end of Pendleton, they call it "Logan's bay". Rick Magill who was at the meeting, said he is the bus driver on that route. He discussed the difficulty in turning the bus around. It has been his route for 20 years. Hopkins said that we would build a turnaround. Resident agreed to provide the space for it. Discussed how sometimes the road is a sheet of ice.

### **Trustee Cottrill shared a statement:**

I am a steward as a trustee for our township. It is only a little bit of pay, I am not in it for the money. I work daily at the garage and the fire department, trying to do the right things. During the Twin Twp contract discussions people were saying that I was in Brett Clark's pocket. I am not in his pocket. We have had some serious discussions, the two of us. I didn't vote for the agreement because of the way they threw it into our laps. I don't understand why they cannot handle it. I do know that we have to help others in order to get help when we need it. I did ask Brett's opinion, but on this one subject, we cannot agree. Our department is respected and envied, they work hard, 24/7 with 3 people beginning March 1<sup>st</sup>. We lost Larry, but he built a lot here. TJ picked up the pieces and has done an excellent job. He is transparent. TJ was ready to resign because of all the rumors. My son was at a crash scene, said Brad took over and was the most professional EMT he has ever seen. We have a good thing, let's not ruin it. We have great service. What would happen if we did away with EMS? We are not giving up.

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General items under discussion:

- February 2023 Run Statistics: 93 calls of which 80 were EMS and 7 were fire. We gave 31 mutual aid and received 12. That number is high due to the significant house fire on Chester Hill road. Chief Oyer stated that yes, we give more than we receive of mutual aid we never want to “leave our township high and dry”.
- Oyer will have the inventory to FO Snyder at the April meeting.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 P.M.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes

ATTESTED:

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President

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Vice President

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Member

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Fiscal Officer