

New Carlisle Town Council
124 E. Michigan Street, New Carlisle, Indiana
Special Meeting, February 8, 2022, 6:00 PM

The Special Meeting of the New Carlisle Town Council was held jointly with Hudson Township and Olive Township at the New Carlisle Library, 408 S. Bray Street, New Carlisle, Indiana.

The New Carlisle Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by President Rush with Vice President Kauffman, Council Member Budreau, and the Clerk-Treasurer present. Council Members Doll and Colanese were absent.

Also in attendance: Andrea Halpin, Bob Middlebrook, Brian Gray, Kathy Aurenz, Will Miller, Pete Agostino, Carol Hesch, Susan Buford, Cathy Rea, Diane Richardson, George Bollhorst, Doris Bollhorst, several members of the NCFD

The joint meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Olive Twp. Trustee Will Miller announced that Advisory Board Member Tom Keen has stepped down from the Executive Board and they have appointed Bob Middlebrook to serve as his replacement on the board.

Attorney Pete Agostino explained that an initial step in the fire territory process is to develop and adopt an interlocal agreement and prepare resolutions/ordinances that are identical for adoption by each entity. The interlocal agreement that he prepared for review tonight is a modification of the existing agreement and identifies all aspects of the territory and its organization. Copies of the modified agreement were distributed to all.

Pete explained that modifications to the agreement include a couple of different procedures, most notably how the budget process will work. Olive Township remains the provider unit and Hudson Township and the Town will be the participating units. As the provider unit, Olive Township is responsible for hiring and paying employees, receiving the levy and processing that per the terms of the agreement. They are the provider unit for the Equipment Replacement Fund as well. A uniform rate for each entity will be set for the territory and the ERF.

Pete explained that the Executive Committee is an important feature and will have seven members, including two from each entity and an additional seventh person rotating from the respective units annually. One change included is that the president/chair, picked by board each year, must be from a unit with two members and not the entity represented by three. The vice chair must be from an entity not the same as the chair but may be from the unit with three representatives. He said that the executive committee has intermediate level of control. This modified version of the agreement gives more control to the executive board than the previous version, but does not go as far as the state allows, as that would have the executive board handling everything in place of the provider unit.

The old agreement had the executive committee and Olive Township working out the budget. The amended agreement requires the Chief of the territory to come up with the budget and that budget be presented to both Hudson Township and New Carlisle in addition to Olive Township, prior to August 31. Pete explained that this could be done individually with each entity or in a joint meeting of all three entities. Additionally, the new agreement requires that everyone be given a monthly report of the financial standing, including not only balances but receipts and disbursements.

Hudson Township Trustee Brian Gray cited Item J Section 7 regarding hiring and asked if there is a way that everyone can be part of the hiring process. Pete responded that they are actually employees of Olive Township although there are ways for everyone to be involved, particularly the Executive Board. He explained that the number of people hired is an Executive Board decision but when it comes to the actual person hired, it is up to the Chief. Chief Schweizer responded that he is more than happy to involve everyone. They currently do an interview process and testing is administered for general knowledge and some psych by a national company. Candidates are then ranked and the results are presented to Olive Township.

Brian asked if there isn't a merit commission and Pete responded that there is not but that the agreement does allow the executive committee to establish a safety board if they choose to do so. With no safety board, by default as the provider unit, Olive Township serves as the safety board under the agreement. Pete said he feels that there are both advantages and disadvantages to having a safety board. While it does add some expense, particularly in the discipline process, if you are an employee you would probably prefer a safety board. He said that the entities can decide if they want to go with a safety board at any time.

Pete continued that the modified agreement requires more reporting, provides more authority to the executive board, more steps in the budgeting process and will include detailed presentations to each unit. He feels that this will improve things when everyone is involved and is fully informed. The agreement also adds an annual joint meeting prior to Jan 31 for overall reporting of the previous year financials in addition to the budget. Andrea suggested quarterly meetings for review and Brian agreed that the more the better. Pete added that we need to be clear on when those meetings will be and added that township government is the only form of government in Indiana where the public has a right to participate. For other governmental entities the public has the right to attend but not to participate. He feels that it is important that the Fire Chief present directly to the Town and Hudson Township on the status of the department, including service call stats. Josh responded that the Chief's report is currently given at the Olive Township meeting but can be moved to the joint meetings.

There was some discussion regarding the August 31 deadline to review the budget and Cathy said that they have everything set to meet with the DLGF the first part of July. Pete said that if earlier deadlines are wanted those dates can be changed but the requirement is no later than August 31 currently. Andrea said that there had been discussion of using Baker Tilly for assistance with

budget prep previously and asked if that was still being considered because their process may include different dates as well. Cathy said that they did budget for that and she has spoken with Paige from Baker Tilly.

The three dates for the upcoming public hearings were reviewed and confirmed by each entity as: February 24, March 13 and March 28.

Public Comment:

- George Bollhorst, Hudson Township

Mr. Bollhorst said that he has been told that with Hudson Township being part of La Porte County, they are taxed twice. Hudson Twp. Trustee Brian Gray responded that he didn't have the numbers with him but the amount included in property taxes is very minimal and the only option they have is to drop EMS from La Porte County. Mr. Bollhorst commented that he didn't hear discussion regarding equipment but knows that it is a major expense and questioned if there was a plan in place. Brian responded that there is an Equipment Replacement Fund that is a cumulative fund for that purpose.

There was no further public comment.

Upon a motion by Council Member Budreau and second by Vice President Kauffman the meeting adjourned at 6:54 PM.

Samantha Rush, President

Attest:

Susan I. Moffitt, Clerk-Treasurer