

Franklin Township Trustees
Tuesday, October 8, 2024
Special Meeting Minutes

At 7:00pm Chairman Glenn Russell called the meeting to order. The purpose of the meeting was stated as to engage in discussion about township business and services and to answer questions or share concerns regarding those services including but not limited to, questions or concerns about the upcoming fire levy replacement with an increase on the November ballot.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ernest Roso – 646 Judson Road – shared his concern about the per call rate of \$1500 charged for 911 response for fire and emergency services. He explained that he believes the cost should be absorbed by the user of the service, not the township. Lisé Russell explained that the City of Kent utilizes Life Force Billing services for all of their fire and ems billing. And a percentage fee is charged by Life Force per incident and that fee is passed on to Franklin Township for each call/incident billed through them. Any reimbursements that are received from the person's insurance company, Medicare, or Medicaid are then credited to Franklin Township. The balance of the cost per call is absorbed by the township. Mr. Roso believes the person who used the 911 service should pay the balance, as do residents in other entities; the Valley Police and Fire District for example. Scott Swan shared some information about how the contract has worked historically and how Franklin Township was in a position at one time to assist with equipment purchases for the department. Mr. Swan also shared concerns about how expensive it is to maintain a fire department and that being the reason we contract with the city for our needs. He also described the paramedicine program now in place to help alleviate the 'frequent flier' calls being responded to that could be using other medical and social services. Mrs. Russell then responded directly to Mr. Roso's question stating that when asked about why Life Force and the City of Kent do not pursue collection directly from residents who have large balances due after insurance reimbursement the response is the cost of collections makes it prohibitive. Mr. Roso then inquired about the leaf recycling fee that appears on his tax bill for leaf recycling services provided to Franklin Township residents. He does not utilize the service – blowing his leaves into wooded areas of his property instead of getting them upfront for pickup. He asked if it is possible for residents who do not use the service to be exempt from the assessment. Leaf pickup/recycling has been a service provided to our residents for a long time. Many of our residents depend on this service, as they have no other workable solution on how to dispose of their leaves. Open burns are prohibited by Ohio Revised Code. Most disposal companies no longer pick up bagged leaves. It was explained that because it is seen as a service that meets the need of the greater good that all property owners are charged for the service, much the same as maintain roads and bridges, schools, libraries, etc.
- Colleen Cornici – 757 Johnson Road – shared her concerns about the recent reappraisals conducted in Portage County and referred to a significant increase in her tax bill. It was explained to her that this was not a local government decision but a state tax structured mandate that all counties be reevaluated for reappraisal every six years. Fiscal Officer Lisé Russell explained that the county auditor has determined that the average increase in appraised value of Portage County properties increase about 33%, some higher and some lower. While no dollar figures have been given to townships and villages it is anticipated that each entity could expect about a 15% increase in revenue from this reappraisal round. All Ohio residents who are interested in seeking changes to the state tax structure are encourage to contact their state representatives and ask for HB 190 to be changed and the Homestead Exemption Act as well. The way Ohio funds schools needs to be fixed in a manner that eases the burden of Ohio property owners. Mrs. Cornici also inquired about the completion of Hudson Road and asked if bike lanes would be included in the project. Glenn Russell explained that the project was put out for bid with bike lanes and fuller depth repairs last year and not a single bid received was within 10% of the county engineer's estimated cost, thus prohibiting the trustees from accepting any of the bids. It has been redesigned without bike lanes this time and ready to go out for bid in very early spring. The trustees have not ruled out adding bike lanes at a later time should grant funding become available.

As no other questions were raised at 6:50pm a motion for adjournment was made by Scott Swan; 2nd Kellie Kapusta. All three trustees voted yes.