



ROSS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES APRIL 9, 2018

The Ross Township Board of Trustees met in special session to discuss all facets of a possible 2018 Police levy.

CALL TO ORDER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

Present – Keith Ballauer, Ellen Yordy and Thomas E. Willsey.

Attendees: Acting Chief Jack Tremain, Administrator Bob Bass, Police Clerk Dan Horgan, Fire Chief Steve Miller, Residents Shawn Van Winkle, Keith Kleinfelter, Mark Droke, Jerry Hilbert, Georgia Horgan and Mark Demeropolis.

PROCEDURAL ACTION

Trustee Willsey announced that the purpose of the meeting was to gather information to determine the need and amounts for a 2018 Police levy. He further announced that no final decisions will be made at the meeting.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department

Acting Chief Jack Tremain presented the following address:

In 2013 the township asked the taxpayers to approve a 2.75 mill operating levy for the police department and upon approval the department set out to provide Ross Twp. with a professional 24/7 department that gives the citizens the service that they expect and deserve. The police department has not wavered in this commitment and has remained steadfast in improving all of the police services provided to this Township. Up to this point, this commitment has been met by the utilization of part-time police officers to provide 24/7 coverage.

Moving forward in 2018, full time and part time Police Departments throughout the country are now experiencing increased difficulty finding qualified personnel to fill vacancies. The changes in policing in the last few years have caused prospective police candidates to turn to other occupations. This problem has been accelerated for those agencies attempting to provide police protection through utilization of part-time personnel. The Ross Twp. Police Department has experienced these issues and has struggled more and more to find the qualified personnel to fill vacancies left by officers seeking full time employment.

On a positive note, the department has worked hard and has developed into a professional agency that hires and trains prospective officers that become those qualified candidates that full-time police agencies are seeking. All of this comes at a cost to the Twp. The initial hiring process involves an interview, thorough background investigation, polygraph, psychological examination, and a fit for duty physical. This initial process comes at a cost of

approx. \$1,000 per candidate. In addition, there is the cost of training which brings the price even higher.

The department has an excellent training program and qualified supervisory personnel that help to mold these individuals into good officers who provide the citizens of Ross Twp. the police services that they expect and deserve. With the huge improvement in professionalism, those officers who work for the Ross Twp. Police Department are now highly sought by full time police agencies.

During the past few years the department has lost 19 officers, most of which have moved on to full time positions in law enforcement. These have included the loss of our officers to Cincinnati, Trenton, Fairfield Twp., West Palm Beach County Florida, Richmond Indiana, Trotwood, Cleveland, Harrison, Xavier University, and Miami University. Officers have also been lost to full time employment in the private sector as well. All of these officers have left with the same parting words, "I don't want to leave Ross Twp., I love it here, but I have a family and have to work somewhere where my family will have health care and the benefits associated with full-time employment".

It should be added that in the past several years the increase on the demands placed on the department through increased calls for service, criminal arrests, reports, citations, OVI arrests, vacation checks, extra patrols, and public relation events have all seen a dramatic increase.

As we move forward in 2018 the difficulty that the department is currently experiencing in continually finding new qualified police candidates to train and provide the Twp. with good professional officers will become increasingly difficult. Typically in less than 1 year these officers move on to full-time employment with another agency.

The Police Department looks forward to moving forward and continuing to provide the citizens of Ross Twp. with a safe place to live and work.

Administrator Bob Bass then advised the Board that the Police Departments current levy runs through 2018 but that no additional income for the department would be collected or distributed beginning 2019. This makes a levy necessary for the Township to be able to provide police services of any type starting in 2019. He noted that the department was asking for 4 full time officers consisting of 3 patrol officers and a detective in order to solve the part time hiring crisis. He gave a statistical breakdown of the additional cost for those employees and provided the Board with the following three options for a levy:

Renewal of the Existing 2.75 mill levy - this option continues business as usual and does not solve the current problems resulting from an all part time staff.

Renewal of the Existing 2.75 mill levy plus 1 additional mill - this option would

allow for the hiring of the officers the department feels it needs but falls short of fully funding the department without General Fund assistance beginning in year 3 of the 5 year levy.

Replacement of the Existing 2.75 mill levy plus 1 additional mill – this option would allow for the hiring of the officers the department feels it needs while also making the department fully self sufficient.

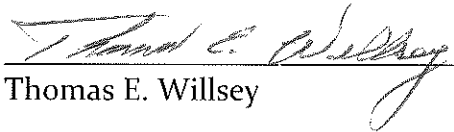
The Administrator's report was followed by a question and answer period which was used by all participants covering topics including: what has changed to reduce the pool of available part time officers; grants for full time personnel, benefit packages for part time officers; Sheriff versus Township policing logistics and costs; work restrictions through the Fair Labor Standards Act; Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy requirements; patrol methods; levy timing and durations.

Motion 18-018


The Board agreed to take the matter of the 2018 Police levy under advisement with instructions to the Administrator to gather further information for future consideration. There being no further business to come before the Board at the time; upon motion by Trustee Willsey and seconded by Trustee Ballauer, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting. The vote of the Board shows as follows: All present voted yes, which motion carried.

The next regular meeting of the Ross Township Board of Trustees will be held on April 12, 2017 at 6:00 pm at the Ross Township Government Center.

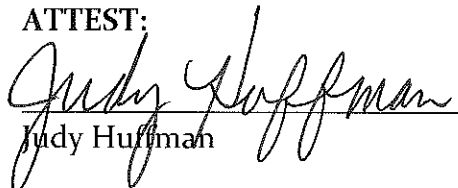
ROSS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES


Thomas E. Willsey President


Ellen Yordy Vice President


Keith Ballauer Trustee

ATTEST:


Judy Huffman Fiscal Officer