

HUNTINGTON TOWNSHIP REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 14, 2022

President Gary Hopkins called the June 14, 2022, meeting to order at 5:35 P.M. at the Fire House.

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

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve the May 2022 regular meeting minutes.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by Larry Kellough to approve the May 27, 2022, special meeting minutes.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to approve payment of the May 2022 bills.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

**GUEST:** Larry Cuckler, Fire Chief, asked the Board to approve the application of Brian McCay to the paid part-time crew. McCay is an EMT-B/FFI. His pay rate is \$11.79/hr.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, seconded by John Cottrill, to hire McCay to the paid, part-time crew at \$11.79/hr.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

- Cuckler said that it appeared the Board needed to revise Article XII Uniforms and Personal Appearance of the Department's SOP since he was not permitted to buy uniforms anymore. He stated that FO Snyder said that he spent \$10,000 with Chillicothe Signs and Screen Printing and she thought that spend should be cut. When in reality he had spent less than \$3000 with them in 2021. He said that the tee shirt inventory was running low. When Snyder attempted to speak, she started with no, that is not the way it was. To which Cuckler called her a liar. Hopkins said we will buy you what you need, Larry.

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- Cuckler presented the Board an analysis on lost EMS revenue for the three week period of May 24 – June 14; stating that we lost \$1400 in EMS revenue that we could have billed Twin Township, and that we also lost \$2400 for 12 calls we did not take at \$200 a call. A total potential loss of \$3800.
- Cuckler asked the Board to hire Brad Oates to the paid part-time crew at \$12.33/hr. (Brad most recently was a full-time EMT for the Township, but resigned.)

**When FO Snyder called for the motion no one responded.** Without a motion and second, nothing more could be done.

At this point in the meeting, Larry Cuckler remitted his resignation as fire chief to the Board, effective immediately, stating that he knew the Board would not re-hire Oates, and didn't understand what their game was. It was noted that the resignation was dated June 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by Larry Kellough to accept Cuckler's resignation as fire chief.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

FO Snyder expressed concern about coverage at the station with being down two full-time positions due to Oates' resignation and Nathan Cuckler's pending maternity leave.

**A discussion then ensued between the Board and people in attendance as follows.**

**Bill Malone:** He said the trustees "slithered around and tore it all down. In one night." He started yelling at the Board. Hopkins told him to settle down if he wanted to continue to speak. He said that Tristen Carter had not been reporting volunteer runs by paid part-time crew members, and that he had taken a few fire & squad runs to help out. He asked the Board why they don't run emergency services for the Township. Hopkins said years ago he was an assistant EMT.

**Christina Rapp:** She is a resident. Stated that the EMTs need to figure out a budget. She then told an emotional experience with her father passing away, but stated she feels it is Adena's fault that her dad passed away. She said that they had to wait at Gibson's for a driver. That it took two people to work on him, so no one could drive. He had a stress test the day before, then a heart attack that night. Up at 2:30AM for work, a hard working man. Worked at a fabrication shop in Circleville. They had just bought a house, he was planning to retire, and wanted a home for her mom, her kids, and herself. Now he cannot enjoy it, and they had to bury him. If she could volunteer she would, but she cannot. She is the only one in their household that can drive. She has 3 kids, one in college, and an elderly mom. She has had to call the squad for her 300 pound mom. She shared her opinion about the live shooter reenactment at the school, stating that half of the people would be dead before Sheriff can get there. We must fix the budget. She shared that her dad was 300 pounds. They live on Harris Station Road. We didn't have the extra people that was needed. Hopkins agreed that its s very hard to get an EMT. He said that a committee is in place to work on our problems. Rapp said that many people on her road are very overweight and that we would need 3 or 4 people.

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**John Cottrill:** Shared about a 400 lb guy on Mt Tabor that needed help. A small female responded - someone out of Portsmouth. Residents came to the scene and helped load him.

**Rapp:** Stated that she doesn't know people around her. She said that our guys are great – just got to figure it out.

**Cottrill** stated that all this happened because we asked the Fire Department to stay within a budget.

As the meeting became more heated, Hopkins stated that we would have an orderly meeting.

**Snyder** asked why Oates was permitted to take time off after submitting his resignation. She made the point that it left the Fire House with holes in the schedule. That we needed him there. Nate Cuckler said it was because according to their hiring contract, they would not be paid out sick time. That sick time is paid out, only at 50% upon retirement or death. He said perhaps we need a new policy. Snyder said she would have to review the policy to know for sure, but that the Township would pay out everything to which Oates was entitled. (Subsequent note: Cuckler was correct. Sick time is not paid at all upon resignation)

**Pam Butler** – Stated that she was “here for lots of reasons”. She asked the trustees who runs the meetings. Hopkins answered that as the President of this Board, I run the meeting. Butler than asked then “why Robin runs the meeting, not Gary”. Hopkins says that “she has to speak, she is our money person”. Butler said that she lives here, doesn't work for Huntington Township but lives here. She works for Portsmouth ambulance. When she had received comments and calls, she has “told people to call the trustees”. She stated that she is concerned that the township is losing money, concerned that the Board voted to leave the county wide EMS mutual aid contract. Hopkins asked her “What if we are on mutual aid, but a resident here needs us”. She said we should not sit on station not answering calls.

**Mary Cuckler:** Said that residents have told her that the trustees “aren't answering their calls”. She feels like she is answering the calls. She reminded the Board that “it is about the people in our township”. She is writing down everything the people are telling her. Stated that we must work together. She said that Larry Cuckler would help 100% at FD, that he worried about everyone, and still cannot stop worrying about everyone.

**Cottrill** – said that a cell tower was out today, therefore he was not getting the calls. He said that Hopkins broke his phone.

**M Cuckler** – shared her opinion that a mediator was needed to come in and work out the problems between the chief and the Board. She asked how the Board was paying for roads being paved – “where is the money coming from?”. She said “is American Rescue? Then why aren't they using money to keep the Fire Department going”. She mentioned the premium pay bonuses and asked where that money came from. Snyder said it was from ARPA. She shared that usually when they are on vacation, Larry can set his phone aside, but that lately “he is at the beck and call so he can talk to anyone 24/7”. She feels it is not safe to have someone at the fire house alone.

Hopkins said “We all know about the chief and his dedication”.

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**Hopkins** shared that when Jan Siders was the Chief, Jan asked Larry to be the assistant chief.

**M Cuckler** said that they moved here because Jan wanted Larry to be his assistant. She said that the Board was not happy with Jan's performance, so we asked him to leave. And then asked Larry to be chief.

**Hopkins** – recalled calling Larry – saying that volunteers were not getting out the door. L Cuckler said we cannot get them out door without motivation. He said we put on a 1<sup>st</sup> levy that failed. Then a 2<sup>nd</sup> smaller levy passed.

**Cottrill**: “Up until 6 months ago we had a great relationship. It is about money. The 2022 Budget - \$47k shortfall was identified in July 2021. We gave 4 options: but the Chief would not accept any of them. The 3 FT guys were working a lot of OT. We had 35 EMTS but why aren't they working? L Cuckler told him it was because we don't pay enough. **FO Snyder** said that is why she did a public records request for current pay for Scioto, Twin, Green, Union, and Twin. She provided that analysis to the Board, but it did not include Union who had yet to respond.

**M Cuckler**: “Everyone will participate in mutual aid. Governor said so. Ross County Prosecutor gave permission. Everyone needs help, everyone needs service. County-wide EMS – is it really the solution? Pike county failed.” She said that she has elderly ladies calling, asking questions. She said “They want to be anonymous. They have nothing to do all day but watch tv”. She said one lady is from Richmondale and went to her for advice. She said she is “relaying the messages as promised”. She is sharing all the calls she has received. Listed how long things last, how often the need tested/inspected. Mutual aid call for Chillicothe – we weren't able to help. (Several times she was interrupted by Hopkins, but then he would apologize and ask her to continue.) She brought up the pamphlets on mail boxes from the first levy and recalled that were told it was illegal. She asked “How can we do it without getting in trouble? Cannot be on flag, but on the door lever”. She called the Post office to find out what to do. They said to send it by mail to the residents. She will give the information to the committee. She said “Residents need help. I want to help but don't know what to do.”

**Tristen Carter**: Said that two guys are interested in being full-time to replace Brad – Kevin Fausnaugh and Ian Hardin. He said that we need to do tests and panels. He said that we were preparing a list of people to hire if we got SAFER grant – a list of say our top 5, now pick 3. Only person interested now is Alexis Rinehart. Carter said that we need to open the hiring process back up. Snyder asked “how can we reassure them with all this uncertainty?”. Carter said he would get back with the Board.

**M Cuckler** said it is too hot to meet there at the garage. She understands “it's too loud etc. at the station when they are talking business”. She said it was “not the light bulb”.

**N Cuckler** – stated he wanted to take 3 or 4 week of paternity leave. Depends upon how much his family needs him, and if it ends up being a “C section vs regular”. Korey is only one that would be there, and OT is not mandated, but optional. If he doesn't we need part time.

**Butler** expressed that she is interested in coming back to run for the Township.

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**Carter** asked about the committee. Snyder described the committee and the members, and the purpose.

The Board discussed the 2-mill levy and Snyder suggested that the Board proceed with the Resolution to Proceed with a replacement levy. Then if the committee came up with something else, the Board could table what they had and not turn it into the Board of Elections if that seemed best. She felt it was better to “have one in our pocket ready to go”.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill, to approve a Resolution to Proceed with the 2.0 mill replacement for a period of 5 years. The auditor’s certification was that it will collect \$158,837.12. Levy will be placed on the November 2022 ballot. (Prosecutor’s office will prepare the official resolution.)

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

**Baptist Hill Methodist Church:** The Board discussed a situation at the Baptist Hill Methodist church building. The Sheriff’s office had called Cottrill regarding squatters in the building. Dispatch asked the trustees to meet them there. Snyder researched the deed and the Prosecutor’s opinion. She told the Board that we have nothing to do with it. While we own the cemetery, we have no rights to the building. If church services are no longer being held, ownership reverts back to the previous owner, not the Township.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to sell the large equipment trailer to Kenneth Whitley for \$4,750.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

Snyder requested that the next two meetings be changed since she will be out of state. She suggested that the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting be moved to Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, and that the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting be moved to Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by Larry Kellough to change the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to Thursday July 7<sup>th</sup> at the same time and place.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

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**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill change the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM at the Garage.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

**Snyder** asked the Board to make a motion to set the 2023 Budget Hearing for July 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at the township garage with the regular meeting to follow.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by Larry Kellough to set the 2023 Budget Hearing for July 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at the garage.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

The Board asked Tristen Carter, the Assistant Fire Chief, if he would be willing to be the acting fire chief. Carter asked “are you going to communicate with me?” Hopkins said “Yes, every day if necessary. Just like the meetings we had before. Work sessions, not public meetings”. Carter, Hopkins, and Cottrill all agreed that this situation could have been avoided with more communication. Carter said that was a fair statement, and if “you agree, then I agree.

**Motion** by John Cottrill, second by Gary Hopkins to appoint Tristen Carter as Acting Fire Chief.

Vote:	John Cottrill	Yes
	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

**Other Business:**

Cottrill shared that the Black Run Community group meeting was productive. Sheriff Lavender was there.

**Brett Clark** suggested that a community event would be a good idea. That free back ground checks could be offered, grilled hamburgers and hot dogs. Sponsored by the Denver Community Crime Watch.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by Larry Kellough to approve the event discussed above sponsored by the Denver Community Crime Watch at the Fire Station at some point in the future.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes

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**Jan Sidors:** Stated that he wanted it to be known that he came because of all that he is reading/seeing/ in order to see what is going on. He stated that he has “a love for this department”. He wanted to acknowledge that “the Board did not know I was coming”. He has been seeing all the stuff on social media.

**Clark** stated that “community service is now employment”. That “pay made it a job. The Board is the owner of that business, you are responsible for it. You know what you can pay. If no one wants to work , the business goes under”. Members of the Board nodded their agreement.

**Cottrill:** Shared a situation where “Betsy – her back went out, couldn’t get her to the bathroom. Two of our guys there within 10 minutes. 3<sup>rd</sup> guy shows up that lived up the road. Nothing more important. We cannot go back, we must go forward”.

**N Cuckler:** “Yes Board is the owner, the CFOs, and John’s statement to apologize for rash decision was good. The management is figuring it out, coming with a solution”. He said that we must sit down and try to figure it out. He thought they fixed the problem and we said “cool keep on moving”. He said that “your Fire Department leadership did our part to figure out how to save money and meet our expectations”. He said that the trustees let the Department run itself. Stated that it is passion, and everyone makes mistakes.

**Hopkins** asked “how did it fall apart that fast? I felt good about the 5/27 meeting”.

**N Cuckler** said that “the bosses are still running the company, we still have a business to run”.

**Cottrill** said “we cannot let the tail wag the dog”.

**Clark** said “I am 59 years old, and coverage is a problem everywhere, not just here”.

**TC** – said that Larry Cuckler deserved a nice goodbye.

**Malone** – Complained that “Gary is shutting me off and not letting me talk”.

**Hopkins** – said to Malone “turn your stuff in if you want to quit”.

General items under discussion:

- May 2022 Run Statistics: 87 calls of which 82 were EMS for which we answered 80. 5 were fire related. We gave 23 mutual aid and received 8.
- FO Snyder shared that the 3 years of financial statements had been submitted for the Voyager Fleet Program application.
- Hopkins shared that Jeff See – our community action liaison – provided an update that Community Action bought two home for homeless people. Male/Female. Trying to get buy a 3<sup>rd</sup> one for families.

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- Snyder provided an update on the Voyager fleet program – application submitted and is under review. Cards for Wilt, Monroe, and 4 for the FD.
- Snyder informed the Board that Twin Township has been billed \$2,850 for mutual aid runs in May.

**Motion** by Gary Hopkins, second by John Cottrill to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Vote:	Gary Hopkins	Yes
	John Cottrill	Yes
	Larry Kellough	Yes

ATTESTED:

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President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fiscal Officer