



**Agenda for the Meeting of the
Township Board of Portage Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana
March 19, 2024
Office of Portage Township Trustee
340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601**

- I. **Call Meeting to Order**
Meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm.
- II. **Roll Call**
Present: Board Member Ryan Hill, Trustee Jason Critchlow, Board Chair Muhammad Shabazz, and Deputy Trustee Lana Cleary. Board member Cheryl Ashe joined the meeting during New Business.
- III. **Approval of Agenda**
Mr. Shabazz motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Hill and passed unanimously.
- IV. **Approval of Minutes from February 12, 2024 Meeting**
Mr. Shabazz motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Hill and passed unanimously.
- V. **Public Comment**
None.
- VI. **New Business**
 - a. **05-2024 Resolution to Withdraw from the Southwest Central Fire Territory**
There has been much discussion on this topic already and the board consensus is that this is the right move for the future of the Township and fire protection in St. Joseph County. Mr. Shabazz motioned to approve, seconded by Mr. Hill and passed unanimously.
 - b. **06-2024 Resolution for Special Purchase of Fire Truck**
Discussion surrounding the use of Sourcewell as a government regulated agency that allows for expedited vetting of resources used by government agencies. The company producing the vehicle is a Sourcewell organization.
Trustee explained that there will be a need to purchase this and additional fire vehicles for the new fire territory. There is a long lead time, sometimes up to three years, on production of fire vehicles.



Later this year, the Township will need to establish a Fire Fund for the territory and loan money to the fund as tax levies will not be received until July 2025. The Township will be repaid for loans over time.

Mr. Hill motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Shabazz, and passed unanimously.

c. 07-2024 Resolution for Special Purchase of Certain Equipment

Trustee discussed the need for policy regarding the use of vehicles which will be available for Trustee or designee use. Staff will have an increasing need to travel within the County and outside of the area on occasion. Mr. Hill believes that a policy like this is good practice and is happy to see it being put in place as it is a reasonable expectation due to the growth of services being provided.

Mr. Hill motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Shabazz, and passed unanimously.

d. 08-2024 Resolution of Interest In Purchasing Property

Due to the growth of services being provided by the Township, along with the establishment of the St. Joseph County Fire Territory, it is believed that the Township offices may be outgrowing the capacity of the 133 N. William office location.

The Trustee explained that acquisition of property is a Board decision and the Board typically empowers the executive to negotiate on their behalf. This resolution is a first step towards acquiring property which is to receive to appraisals for the property. The average of both sets a maximum allowable expenditure for the property.

Board discussion on possible city plans for the 340 Columbia St area. Trustee has made numerous attempts to contact the city to discuss their plans, but was not successful in receiving additional details.

Mr. Hill motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Shabazz, and passed unanimously.

e. 09-2024 Township Travel Policy

Trustee explained that a more comprehensive travel policy was needed for the Township. The old policy lacked details that are important to set as a standard. There are some expenses that are within policy and do not need additional approvals aside from Trustee, but above policy limits would require Board approval. Trustee believes this creates an additional layer of transparency and accountability which is important as the staff and services provided by the Township grow. Trustee noted that this policy is very similar to other local governments.



Mr. Hill motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Shabazz, and passed unanimously.

Board Member Cheryl Ashe joined the meeting and a brief summary of the recent topics was provided.

VII. Old Business

None.

VIII. Trustee's Report

a. Budget/Assistance

Trustee reviewed current numbers and noted that the moratorium has ended which will result in an increase in applications.

b. Facilities

Staff are working through asbestos removal planning for 133 N. William. Bidding on construction will begin after removal.

c. Proposed St. Joseph County Fire Territory

i. Timeline

Trustee reviewed the timeline of the newly formed Fire Territory which will take affect in July 2024 and go into services on January 1, 2025

ii. Staffing

Trustee reviewed the staffing plan for the new Fire Territory which will include additional administrative hires that will be managed by Portage Township.

d. Cedar Glen

No new updates.

e. Health First Grant

A search is being conducted for a Project Coordinator to oversee this project but no further updates at this time.

f. Employee Manual

Staff are revising the employee manual and will provide a copy to the Board at a future meeting for their acknowledgement.

IX. Other Discussion Items



A BRIDGE TO STRONGER FUTURES

Trustee Jason Critchlow

None

X. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Muhammad Shabazz II, Board Chair

Cheryl Ashe, Member

Ryan Hill, Member

Attested to:

Jason Critchlow

Portage Township Trustee