



Meeting Minutes
Township Board of Portage Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana
February 18, 2025
Office of Portage Township Trustee
340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601

- I. Call Meeting to Order – Meeting called to order at 5:05pm
- II. Roll Call – Mr. Hill, Mr. Shabazz, Mr. Critchlow, Ms. Cleary, Ms. Asche, Mr. Piper
- III. Approval of Agenda- Mr. Shabazz motions to approve, Mr. Hill seconds. Approved unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Board Meeting January 21, 2025- Mr. Hill motioned to approve, Mr. Shabazz seconded. Approved unanimously.
- V. Public Comment-None
- VI. New Business
 - a. New Senior Center Needs Assessment – Abonmarche-Mr. Critchlow introduced the team from Abonmarche, Mr. Patel, their Business and Strategy Director, Crystal Welch, Senior Urban Planner and Arvin Delacruz, Architect and explained that Abonmarche is currently conducting a Senior Services & Facilities Needs Assessment for the available space on the property that the New Senior Center is located on. Appraisal of the parcels of property adjacent to the New Senior Center being are being considered for further development. Ms. Welch explained that it is very important to understand the role of local service providers and to address any duplicative services and programming needed. Ms. Welch stated that considerations include proximity to bussing, and trails for those who are unable to drive, in addition to other specific needs of the senior age group being served by the center. Ms. Welch states that it will take several months for them to gather the necessary information from community stakeholders. Ms. Ashe stated that she would like for them to consider the needs of developmentally disabled seniors. Mr. Hill stated that it could be important to consider what needs might arise if funding is cut from Real Services.
 - b. 2024 Annual Report- Special meeting scheduled for next Tuesday the 25th at 5:00pm to allow for more time to complete the report for submission to the DLGF by the end of February. Mr. Hill motions to table the annual report, Mr. Shabazz seconded, approved unanimously.
 - c. 02-2025 2025 GO Bond Reimbursement Resolution- Mr. Critchlow introduced the reimbursement resolution. Mr. Critchlow introduced Sarah Correll with Ice Miller, LLP. Mr. Critchlow stated that this would include a number of items for the township, fire territory, the NOURISH program, and cemetery renovations. Ms. Correll stated that all the Bond Resolution is, is a document that allows you to reimburse township funds. Mr. Shabazz motions to pass resolution 02-2025, Mr. Hill seconds. Approved unanimously.



A BRIDGE TO STRONGER FUTURES

Trustee Jason Critchlow

- d. NOURISH Grant Coordinator Agreement- Mr. Critchlow stated that this is a reup of the current contract with the subject matter expert that provides the framework the NOURISH program was built upon. Mr. Shabazz motions to approve, Mr. Hill seconds, approved unanimously.

VII. Old Business

- a. Voucher Due Date Policy- No updates available and will stay on the agenda as old business.
- b. 2025 Township Guidelines Signature Page- Mr. Critchlow would like to table this till the next board meeting in order to gather Ms. Ashe's signature.

VIII. Trustee's Report

- a. Budget/Assistance Review-Mr. Critchlow stated that this month the ADP system did not connect with LOW yet but that those totals will all be available in the month of March. He further explained that our assistance numbers are slightly down for January in the year of 2024.
- b. Facilities-Mr. Critchlow states that 133 Williams Street is targeting a date for opening closer to St. Patrick's Day. He further explains that the hearing for the eminent domain case filed by the City of South Bend is scheduled for tomorrow.
- c. St. Joseph County Fire Territory-Chief Downey states that the fire fighters are overall very happy. Mr. Critchlow stated that they would be interested in doing some type of activity with The Rosie Place around Easter. Chief Downey also suggested that an event be considered for further development with Camp Raybird. Mr. Critchlow stated that there will be several parades coming up including the St. Patrick's Day parade.
- d. Community
- e. Other
 - i. 2024 Township Assistance Review-Mr. Piper introduced total aid distributed by the Trustee's Office, in addition to the total number of individuals assisted, with the total being 2,042. The zip code of 46626 is the area that received the most aid and that of those who received aid, their income in the 30 days preceding was \$0. Only 28% of all applicants returned continually. Non-complete applications contributed to the vast majority of those who were denied. Ms. Ashe stated that she thinks it would be best to pull some of the applications every year of those applicants who didn't come back to figure out what the root cause of. Mr. Shabazz asked how long applications are kept after they are denied. Ms. Cleary stated that applications are kept indefinitely. Mr. Critchlow stated that often those who were denied or didn't come back did so because they didn't want to apply for child support. Mr. Hill ^{asked if} ~~stated that~~ those who didn't apply for child support or who didn't want to, made that choice because they left a domestic abuse situation. Mr. Critchlow stated that all applicants need do to is show proof that they have filed for child support, and that they don't



- necessarily have to be receiving the support, they just need to be able to substantiate that they applied for it.
- ii. NOURISH 2024 Review & 2025 Goals-Mr. Piper introduced his NOURISH program. Mr. Piper stated that NOURISH started after receiving funding from Health First Indiana in 2023 and that it's mission is Education, Community, and Dignity. He further explained that the methods utilized by the program are engagement, interactivity and incentivization. NOURISH classes are offered every Thursday from 6:00pm-7:00pm, beginning in the summer and running through the end of fall. Class sizes started at 15 but quickly doubled. The curriculum includes nutritional value, cost/labor/ and time, in addition to considering taste. Attendees can apply to attend online, they receive updates and can sign up at the class upon arrival. Mr. Piper states that people found out about the class by word of mouth and family members and in addition there are many younger attendees. Mr. Hill inquired if a list could be put together of places that those who are interested in becoming a chef could utilize as a resource. Ms. Ashe asked what criteria the spaces who host NOURISH need to host the program. Mr. Critchlow stated that the Chef's bring almost everything, but that running water is needed. Mr. Piper states that class attendance beyond a headcount of 30 did become a bit cramped. Additionally, 78% of those who attended stated that they did make the dishes at home. Ms. Ashe stated that the library pays for programming and that it may be a good idea to look further into that as they may be willing to contribute and that she would be willing to speak to someone at LaSalle Public Library. Mr. Piper explained that this year he would like to do a mobile market for NOURISH. Mr. Hill inquired about how much it would cost to fill up the mobile market trailer each time. Mr. Piper responded that it would cost around \$500 to \$600 each time.
 - iii. Future Park Project- Mr. Critchlow stated that it is still being understood what this project will look like and that perhaps an additional community needs assessment will need to be completed.
 - iv. Community Needs Assessment- Mr. Critchlow stated that he would like to look into this further.
 - v. 2025 Legislative Impact- Mr. Critchlow stated that there are three main pieces of legislation that could impact the township office. Property Tax cuts would be about \$600,000 out of the township budget and that would significantly impact township assistance. Additionally, there is a road funding bill that is still going through the house that would direct that townships would be responsible for funding roads with leftover funds at the end of each year or alternatively, townships would have to allocate 30% of their budget each year for road funding. He stated that if either of those bills pass, conversations would need to

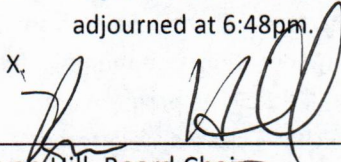


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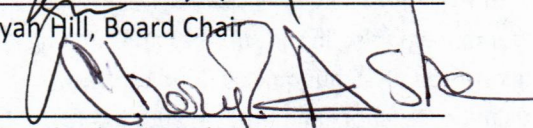
Trustee Jason Critchlow

be had in order to assess how funds are allocated. Mr. Critchlow stated further that it was difficult to assess where legislators stand on these issues.

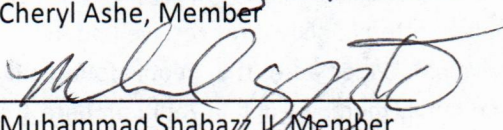
IX. Adjournment- Mr. Hill moved to adjourn, Mr. Shabazz seconds. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:48pm.

X. 

Ryan Hill, Board Chair

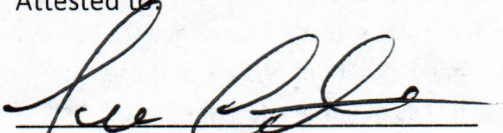


Cheryl Ashe, Member



Muhammad Shabazz II, Member

Attested to:



Jason Critchlow
Portage Township Trustee