



Meeting Minutes

Township Board of Portage Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana

September 16, 2025

Office of Portage Township Trustee

340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601

[Online Link](#)

- I. Call Meeting to Order- Meeting called to order at 5:05 pm.
- II. Roll Call- Ryan Hill, Lana Cleary, Muhammad Shabazz, Cheryl Ashe.
- III. Approval of Agenda- Muhammad Shabazz motioned to approve, Ryan Hill seconded, approved unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes- Regular Board Meeting August 19, 2025-Muhammad Shabazz motioned to approve, Cheryl Ashe seconded, approved unanimously.
- V. Public Comment- None.
- VI. New Business
 - a. 2026 Budget Public Hearing- Lana Cleary asked Ryan Hill to open the public hearing up to discussion. Lana Cleary introduced the 2026 Annual Budget and introduced the 2026 excess levy appeal. Cheryl Ashe inquired about what items on the levy appeal could be struck down. Lana Cleary confirmed the items listed in the excess levy could be struck down. Ryan Hill inquired if another public hearing needed to take place. Lana Cleary stated that another public hearing would not need to take place. Ryan Hill inquired if the \$200,000 noted in the General Fund under Current Tax Levy, if those funds are to be expected as coming through. Lana Cleary stated that they are expected to come through and went on to state that the monthly LIT funds are contributing to funding staff salaries. Ryan Hill inquired if there were any further questions or comments. Cheryl Ashe inquired about when they will know if the excess levy appeal would be approved. Lana Cleary stated that they would know if it was approved by November or December at the latest. Cheryl Ashe inquired about what the rainy-day fund could be used for. Ryan Hill stated that it could be used for emergency operations. Cheryl Ashe stated that it's hard for her to justify allocating funds to the rainy-day fund and went on to state that she understood the rainy-day fund should be used for operational expenses. Ryan Hill stated that there may be a few items on the assistance side that the rainy-day fund could be used for and added that best practice would be to have six (6) months' worth of expenses in the rainy-day fund. Lana Cleary stated the items on the assistance side that are being cut from funding are due to the funding cuts they were informed of in June of 2025. Lana Cleary inquired if anyone else had any other comments for the public hearing. Ryan Hill closed the public hearing on the 2026 Annual Budget. Cheryl Ashe



stated that regarding the Coats For Kids Program, someone should reach out to the Christ Child Association, Lana Cleary stated that she would follow up on that.

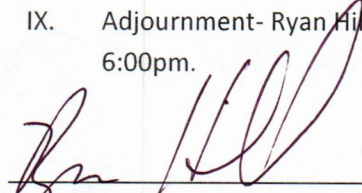
- b. 2026 Capital Improvement Plan Public Hearing- Lana Cleary stated that this lines up with SB-1 and added that 30% of any unallocated Township Funds would need to be used to fund road maintenance. She went on to state this was in regard to the Fire Territory and explained that the items listed have already been allocated for, such as the ambulance purchased earlier in 2025.
 - c. 18-2026 Resolution 2026 Capital Improvement Plan Adoption- Muhammad Shabazz motioned to vote on Resolution 18-2026. Cheryl Ashe voted aye, Muhammad Shabazz voted aye, Ryan Hill voted aye.
 - d. 2026 Township Assistance Guidelines- Ryan Hill inquired about any staff concerns regarding the Township Assistance Guidelines. Lana Cleary stated that there has not been any major concerns from staff. Cheryl Ashe inquired about if there was a way in which those who receive assistance could have loans from friends or family notarized so that it is more formalized and went on to state that she feels there should be a policy for formalizing loans so it doesn't count against those who are seeking assistance. Ryan Hill inquired if any of the staff at the Portage Township office are notaries. Ryan Hill stated that he thinks rather than having this be a policy, that it should be heavily considered and encouraged Cheryl Ashe to discuss further with Jason Critchlow at the next board meeting in order to formalize the idea.
- VII. Old Business-Ryan Hill stated that he wanted to see if Alex Bowman could double check the area of the parking lot that is being blocked off. He went on to state that by preemptively blocking that area of the parking lot off, the Portage Township Office could somehow loose their easement rights and added that Alex Bowman should confirm the transfer of title has commenced.
- VIII. Trustee's Report
- a. Budget/Assistance Review- Lana Cleary stated that in regard to assistance, things are under budget for the most part. Cheryl Ashe inquired about having the Real Services energy assistance packets on hand at the Portage Township office. Lana Cleary stated that there is a plan in-place to make those available. Ryan Hill noted that there are a few items listed within the report that state they are not appropriated but listed as already spent. Lana Cleary stated that that is a clerical error regarding the item listed for 'Office Admin' and clarified that this needs to be moved and will be corrected. Lana Cleary stated that budgetary wise she is analyzing the subscriptions that have been utilized in 2025 for marketing purposes. Cheryl Ashe inquired about if the line items within the same series could be moved around. Lana Cleary stated that 'in line' items could be moved but noted that items in a different series can be moved but that it would require publication notice. She went on to state that any discussion revolving around moving



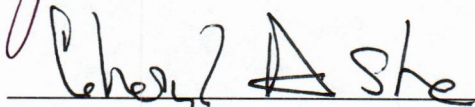
items can be explored further in October. Cheryl Ashe stated that she would like more information regarding this during October's meeting.

- b. Facilities- Lana Cleary stated that there were no new updates to report in regard to the Township Trustee building, in addition she stated the Senior Center is operating close to five (5) days a week now. Cheryl Ashe stated that the aerobics class and the photography classes were very busy. Ryan Hill inquired if a programming flyer might be able to share with the community. Lana Cleary stated that she would check with Sandy at the Senior Center to see if a program might be available to share with the community.
- c. St. Joseph County Fire Territory- Samantha Stackowicz stated the new roof at Station 18 is almost finished.
- d. Community-Ryan Hill stated that the event with the Cubs could steer more businesses to that side of the City of South Bend and went on to add that it would be good to know what businesses were involved. He went on to add that it would be good to see how many people were coming through. Cheryl Ashe stated that it would be good to know what they provide for the community. Lana Cleary stated that the Cubs will bring more funds to the west side of South Bend. Muhammad Shabazz inquired if Portage Township would have a table at the Arts Café. Lana Cleary stated that she would look into this further.
- e. Staff- None.
- f. Other- Lana Cleary stated that she believes there was another eviction clinic taking place in October. Cheryl Ashe stated that in the future it would be helpful to meet those who are facilitating the eviction clinic ahead of time as there was a long line two (2) hours before the clinic began. She went on to state that the Notre Dame run eviction clinic filled out and filed the paperwork for those who attended but that the eviction clinic held at the library did not fill out the paperwork for those who attended. Ryan Hill stated that he is in a paralegal program at IUSB and added that they may be able to assist with an event like the eviction clinic.

IX. Adjournment- Ryan Hill motioned to adjourn, Cheryl Ashe seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.



Ryan Hill, Board Chair



Cheryl Ashe, Member



A BRIDGE TO STRONGER FUTURES

Trustee Jason Critchlow

Muhammad Shabazz II, Member

Attested to:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Critchlow', written over a horizontal line.

Jason Critchlow
Portage Township Trustee

[Faint handwritten notes or scribbles]