



Meeting Minutes

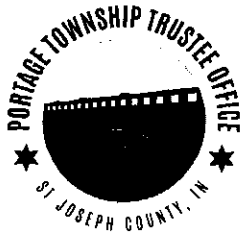
Township Board of Portage Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana

October 21, 2025

Office of Portage Township Trustee
340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601

[Online Link](#)

- I. Call Meeting to Order – Meeting called or order at 5:00PM
- II. Roll Call – Cheryl Ashe, Ryan Hill, Lana Cleary
- III. Approval of Agenda - Cheryl Ashe motioned to approve, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Board Meeting - September 16, 2025 - Cheryl Ashe motioned to approve, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - b. Special Board Meeting – October 2, 2025 - Cheryl Ashe motioned to approve, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously.
- V. Public Comment – None
- VI. New Business
 - a. 2026 Budget – Lana Cleary reintroduced the budget estimate for 2026 for final approval and uploading into Gateway. Ryan Hill asked for clarification regarding the different columns (check this). Cheryl Ashe inquired about column four (4) and stated that if the township doesn't receive column four (4) what column would they be receiving. Lana Cleary stated that column three (3) is the column that would be received. Lana Cleary stated that in 2025, the township received 60% less than was initially expected. Ryan Hill went on to inquire if this estimated budget reflects the actual budget cuts. Lana Cleary stated that this budget estimate does not reflect 2025 cuts. Ryan Hill stated that a document that is clearer for the public regarding the budget cuts needs to be made available. Lana Cleary stated that she would make note of this and work to have something prepared that can be shared with the public. Lana Cleary stated that she is communicating with local entities regarding the situation in order to negotiate rates for various services. Cheryl Ashe stated that she is will be on public access TV and plans to discuss the budget cuts in more detail. Cheryl Ashe moves to accept the 2025 notice to tax payers, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - b. 21-2025 Resolution Authorizing TAW Fire Territory – Lana Cleary stated that this is for the loan totaling at 2.5 million to fund the fire territory. Ryan Hill inquired if it is four (4) million plus the two (2) million. Lana Cleary stated that the 4 million will be due in December. Ryan Hill went on to inquire if the fire territory funds were included in the cuts. Lana Cleary went on to state that they were not. Ryan Hill stated that he believes is



was in regard to the fire territory being funded by property taxes. Ryan Hill inquired if when the loans were complete before they went through the DLGF and not solicited through regular banks. Lana Cleary stated that the loans were run through a bank. Ryan Hill asked if the loan rates could be made available in the future. Lana Cleary stated that she would make note of that. Ryan Hill inquired if it were a one (1) year loan. Lana Cleary stated that it was. Cheryl Ashe motioned to approve 21-2025 Resolution Authorizing TAW Fire Territory, Ryan Hill seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

VII. Old Business

- a. 2026 Township Assistance Guidelines – Lana Cleary asked if it would be possible to table this item until the next meeting so that Jason Critchlow and Muhammad Shabazz could be present for input. Cheryl Ashe stated that her work fairs do not affect the ability to work for those that are younger and went on to clarify that it doesn't affect those who are still in high school and that she would like that added. Cheryl went on to add that she would like to clarify further, money loaned for those trying to pay their tax bills and would like for the township to clarify with a procedure or notary. Lana Cleary stated that the items needing addressed can be compiled and reviewed at the next meeting.

VIII. Trustee's Report

- a. Budget/Assistance Review – Lana Cleary introduced township the assistance review since September. She went on to state that people are still coming in for rental assistance. Cheryl Ashe inquired about amnesty for heating as we move into the fall, and went on to state that the utility companies are working to cut people off before the moratorium goes into effect. She added that because of this she believes the township is going to see more people coming in because of this. In addition, she inquired if it would be possible to have the applications for township assistance available. Ryan Hill stated that it would be a good idea to have something posted reminding people to be prepared before the moratorium goes into effect. Lana Cleary stated that Connor is putting together a list of all the food pantries in the area. Cheryl Ashe stated that the Croc Center does already have a list available of all the food pantries in the area. Lana Cleary went on to add that the township would like to make that list available to public on social media. Lana Cleary stated that currently the township adds as much information as possible to the township newsletter regarding resources for the public. Ryan Hill stated that it would still also be important to have a sign-up list available for the newsletter for those who would like to sign up for the newsletter on pen and paper. Lana Cleary stated that she believes the township does a great job of getting the word out about as many resources as possible. Cheryl Ashe stated that she would also like to see a list of social workers at the local schools. Ryan Hill stated that it makes sense to compile a list of social workers. Lana Cleary stated that she would make note of this and add it to the list. Cheryl Ashe stated that it would be good to reach out to the Salvation Army to inquire if they have any resources available regarding soup kitchens or food



pantries. Cheryl Ashe stated that this will be even more important if no food stamps are made available next month. Cheryl Ashe stated that something she noticed was that the township didn't do as much this year for burials as last year. Lana Cleary stated that in 2024, the township did \$7,000 in burials. Lana Cleary stated that general admin as a line item is doing well. She went on to add that professional services relate to financial consultants being utilized. Ryan Hill inquired about legal services as a line item. Lana Cleary went on to state that item will be growing as the retainer paid to their legal counsel has been exhausted. Ryan Hill requested that professional services as a line item be broken out for further clarification in the future. Lana Cleary stated that the health first grant funds part of the NOURISH coordinators salary in addition to the large refrigerator in the township food pantry. She went on to state that in addition to those items, there were some additional items that were approved for marketing and storage. Cheryl Ashe stated that as she understands it that the NOURISH classes were fully booked. Lana Cleary stated that was correct and added that she believes the NOURISH classes were having a great impact on their attendees. Ryan Hill stated that he would like to have recipes added to the bags that those who utilize the food pantry could take home with them. He went on to ask about inquiries to work the food pantry. Lana Cleary stated that there are many people who have inquired about volunteering and noted that there are those who need volunteer hours and added that volunteering at the food pantry would be a great way to get hours. Ryan Hill went on to state that it may be good to prepare a volunteer program and add a 'sign up here' option on the township website. He went on to state that it would be very helpful to organize food drives for the food pantry. Cheryl Ashe stated that at her church every week people donate food for local food pantries. Cheryl Ashe inquired if there is a list on the website that states what is needed for the food pantry. Lana Cleary stated that she doesn't believe there is. Cheryl Ashe stated that it would be good to add a need list for the food pantry every time the newsletter goes out. Lana Cleary stated that for those who would like to donate and have it be a tax write off, that a 501-C3 would need to be created and went on to state that Meijer would be a great partner. Ryan Hill inquired if he should start working on creating a 501-C3 and added that he has done this before.

- b. Facilities – Lana Cleary stated that the new windows that were broken in July came in.
- c. St. Joseph County Fire Territory – Ryan Hill stated that funds were starting to come in for EMS billing. Cheryl Ashe stated that she would like to see how many runs the ambulance is going on.
- d. Community – Cheryl Ashe inquired if there were any community events coming up. Lana Cleary stated that the township planned to attend the Cops and Goblins event.
- e. Staff – Lana Cleary stated there was not much to report regarding staffing.



A BRIDGE TO STRONGER FUTURES

Trustee Jason Critchlow

f. Other – Cheryl Ashe inquired about how the township office knows which township a resident lives in. Lana Cleary stated that there is a software program that tracks the boundaries.

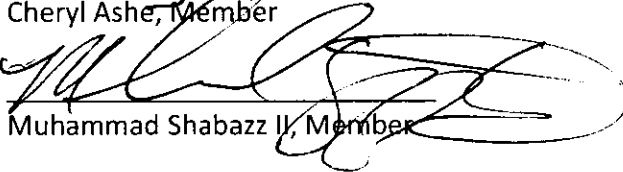
IX. Adjournment – Cheryl Ashe motioned to adjourn, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously at 5:54pm.



Ryan Hill, Board Chair



Cheryl Ashe, Member



Muhammad Shabazz II, Member

Attested to:



Jason Critchlow

Portage Township Trustee