



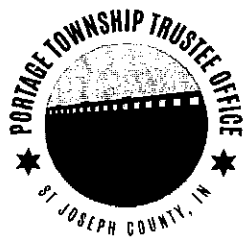
Meeting Minutes

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

November 18, 2025

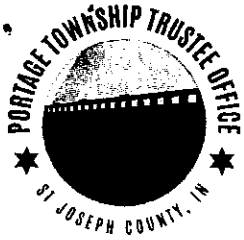
Office of Portage Township Trustee
340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601

- I. Call Meeting to Order – Meeting called to order at 5:01 p.m.
- II. Roll Call – Lana Cleary, Jason Critchlow, Ryan Hill, Cheryl Ashe, Muhammad Shabazz.
- III. Approval of Agenda - Muhammad Shabazz motioned to approve, Cheryl Ashe seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes – Muhammad Shabazz motioned to approve, Cheryl Ashe seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - a. Regular Board Meeting – October 21, 2025
- V. Public Comment – None
- VI. New Business
 - a. 2026 Township Assistance Guidelines – Jason Critchlow stated that Cheryl Ashe had several changes that she would like to make and added that those changes were reviewed with the Portage Township staff. In addition, Mr. Critchlow added that state statutes were noted in the changes and went on to explain that it's being added to the guidelines that the township office is beholden to state statute. Cheryl Ashe stated that she added, that for those who are 18 or over and in school, that they do not have to be employed in order to receive aid. Ryan Hill inquired about those who were seeking assistance and leaving a domestic violence situation adding that they weren't going to have child support orders or lack of residency held against them. Lana Cleary added that it is part of the process of the office to provide extra discretion in cases of domestic violence for child support payments or any requirements that would put them back into contact with their abusers. Cheryl Ashe stated that for 2027 she would like to have added to the assistance guidelines a provision for loans given (being notarized) and repaid with tax returns. Jason Critchlow inquired if the board would like to pass the guidelines or table until the next meeting. Muhammad Shabazz motioned to approve, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously.
 - b. 22-2025 Surplus Property Disposition – Jason Critchlow stated that the St. Joseph County Fire Territory is selling an older truck through a sealed bid process that was owned by Portage Township. Cheryl Ashe stated that she would motion for the sale of the surplus property to be voted on. All voted 'aye' approved unanimously.
- VII. Old Business – None
- VIII. Trustee's Report
 - a. Budget/Assistance Review – Jason Critchlow stated that additional appropriations will need to be passed in December. He went on to note that it is less of a cash problem and



more in regard to moving funds around. He added that they have not yet heard back in regard to their excess levy appeal from the state.

- b. Facilities
 - i. Food Pantry Expanded Hours – Jason Critchlow stated that the numbers for the food pantry have doubled since the SNAP crisis began. He went on to state that the Williams Street building is having renovation to the kitchen as they are using it as a congregate meal site. He noted that once a month the senior center will be hosting a meal for anyone who would like to attend. Mr. Critchlow stated that the details regarding the event have not yet been worked out. Muhammad Shabazz inquired about if this event would be managed in more of a team manner between the two entities. Jason Critchlow stated that would be the case. Cheryl Ashe stated that she liked the idea of inviting different groups or organizations. Mr. Critchlow stated that different community leaders could come to these events or other groups could attend to respond to different needs happening at those points in the year such as tax professionals during tax season.
- c. St. Joseph County Fire Territory - None
- d. Community
 - i. Holiday Give-a-way Event – Jason Critchlow stated that the township office is planning a holiday giveaway event. He stated that the township office will be doing a Sunday holiday meal giveaway event. He went on to add that in the meantime, the township office will be packing boxes and that the event will take place on the second Sunday in December. He went on to add that the details are still being worked out. He went on to add that the amount of food provided is expected to last a few days for the families who attend. He added that the plan is still being worked out. Some discussion occurred regarding the Mishawaka FSSA office moving and how the bussing schedule in South Bend is not conducive to easy access to the new location. Ryan Hill stated that the issue should be raised with the City of South Bend. Jason Critchlow stated that he knows Transpo already made accommodations to provide that bus route. Ryan Hill noted that regarding transportation, it may make sense to see if there are any other community partners who may be willing to assist with rides. Jason Critchlow stated that he would be willing to reach out to community resources and facilitate those discussions. Ryan Hill asked if Cheryl Ashe would send him some information that he would also be willing to facilitate discussions with community members. Ryan Hill inquired about what type of aid issues would require that someone go to the FSSA office. Jason Critchlow stated that if anyone has issues with their Medicaid healthcare provider, if they must submit paperwork, for the initial enrollment meeting, etc, those all require that



individuals go to the office in person. All parties agree that the solution would be to have an office in downtown South Bend. Ryan Hill stated that for those who have a day job, it will be next to impossible to get out to the office.

- e. Staff
 - i. Township Board Holiday Dinner
- f. Other - Cheryl Ashe inquired if the township is still doing inspections. Jason Critchlow stated that the township does inspections all the time. Cheryl Ashe went on to state that if Portage Manor does sell, that the township should allocate some of those funds for the cemetery. Jason Critchlow stated that there is \$15,000 allocated for a fence next to the cemetery. Muhammad Shabazz inquired if a survey has been completed out there. Jason Critchlow stated that there have been a number of surveys completed out there. Cheryl Ashe inquired about food received from Cultivate. Jason Critchlow stated that the township office receives food from Cultivate regularly. He went on to state that the Yellow Cat Café has also provided a lot of food to the township pantry. Cheryl Ashe inquired about if it would be possible to put out a large sign saying thank you to those who have made large donations. Ryan Hill stated that 'The Well' has a large donation drive coming up and went on to add that it is packed when they run that drive and noted that it might be good idea to reach out and see if there are any opportunities partner with them. He added that it is a weeklong event. He stated that if we have any flyers or information that could be shared over there, that it would be beneficial. Ryan Hill stated that regarding the creation of a separate non-profit, it may be a good idea to have an entire meeting to discuss that endeavor. Jason Critchlow inquired about whether the Community Foundation holds the funds on behalf of the non-profits. Ryan Hill stated that was correct. Ryan Hill stated that the money is governed by a particular organization's board but that they hold on the funds on behalf of those boards. Cheryl Ashe stated that for the African American community the Community Foundation did a good job. Ryan Hill stated that an independent board would need to be in place and that there are a few different rules that need to be investigated since it is a mix of government and non-profit interests. Cheryl Ashe stated that they concentrate on fundraising. Cheryl Ashe stated that she is in favor of going in that direction as the Community Foundation would provide an added level of guidance and infrastructure.

- IX. Adjournment – Muhammad Shabazz motioned to adjourn, Ryan Hill seconded. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.



Ryan Hill, Board Chair



A BRIDGE TO STRONGER FUTURES

Trustee Jason Critchlow

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cheryl Ashe".

Cheryl Ashe, Member

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Muhammad Shahazzil".

Muhammad Shahazzil, Member

Attested to:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jason Critchlow".

Jason Critchlow

Portage Township Trustee