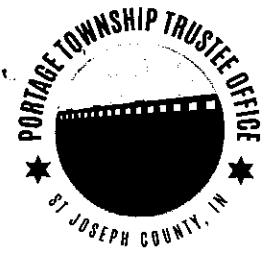




Meeting Minutes
Township Board of Portage Township, St. Joseph County, Indiana
February 17, 2026
Office of Portage Township Trustee
340 Columbia Ave., South Bend, IN 46601
[Online Link](#)

- I. Call Meeting to Order-Meeting called to order at 5:01p.m.
- II. Roll Call-Ryan Hill, Lana Cleary, Jason Critchlow, Connor Piper, Cheryl Ashe, Muhammad Shabazz.
- III. Approval of Agenda- Ryan Hill motioned to approve, Cheryl Ashe seconded. Approved unanimously.
- IV. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Board Meeting January 20, 2026- Ryan Hill motioned to approve, Cheryl Ashe seconded. Approved unanimously.
- V. Public Comment-None
- VI. New Business
 - a. 2025 Annual Report- The board discussed the required Annual Report filing with the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). It was explained that the report summarizes financial activity already reviewed earlier in the year during the Board of Finance meeting. The resolution is required so the report can be formally submitted to the DLGF in the required format before the end of the month. The board was informed that the report largely reflects the financial review previously presented and that approval is a procedural step necessary for submission. After brief discussion, to formalize approval, the board considered: **Resolution 2026-03 – Annual Report Filing**
A motion was made to approve Resolution 2026-03. Ryan Hill motioned to approve. Cheryl Ashe seconded. All voted in favor and the motion carried.
 - b. 2025 Year in Review- The Trustee introduced a presentation summarizing Township assistance and operations during 2025. Staff compiled the data using caseworker records and internal reporting. The Township provided approximately \$295,381 in financial relief during 2025. Staff explained that the total represents a significant decline from the previous year, which reflects budget reductions implemented mid-year. Board members noted that the reductions followed discussion earlier in the year after revenue receipts were lower than expected. The decline in assistance after mid-year reflects the budget adjustments adopted by the board. Staff explained that assistance typically follows a seasonal “bell curve” pattern, with higher activity in early summer. July showed the highest monthly assistance level. The reduction in assistance began in August, following the budget adjustments made after the July board meeting.



Overall, the township provided approximately \$144,000 less financial relief than in the previous year.

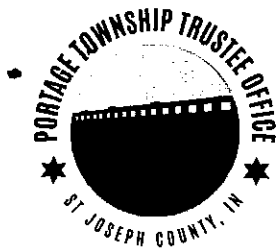
During 2025 the Township assisted approximately 1,981 individuals. For comparison, the previous year saw slightly over 3,000 individuals assisted. Using the Township's SwipedOn sign-in system, staff tracked total visitors to the Township office.

Approximately 4,800 individuals visited the office during the year. Staff explained that many visitors seek assistance that the Township cannot directly provide or visit the office multiple times. The data helps illustrate overall demand for services beyond just those who receive financial assistance. The board asked for clarification about the SwipedOn system. Staff explained that the system uses an iPad at the front desk where visitors sign in, allowing staff to track visitor information such as name, purpose of visit, and contact details. Staff noted that this information is helpful when demonstrating township activity levels to state officials reviewing township services. Board members asked whether the Township tracks individuals who are referred to other agencies when the Township cannot assist them. Staff confirmed that referral numbers are reported annually on the TA-7 report submitted to the state. Staff noted that these referral numbers are included as part of the annual reporting process. Board members discussed additional services that could potentially be tracked more closely in future reports.

- Examples included:
- Eviction assistance clinics
- Holiday assistance programs such as the Christmas giveaway
- Pantry-related services

Staff noted that these activities are tracked informally but could be incorporated more formally into reporting metrics in future annual reviews. The data shows that the 46628 ZIP code continues to account for the largest portion of township assistance requests. Staff noted that this pattern has remained consistent for the past several years.

The presentation also reviewed demographic trends among applicants. Female residents remain the most likely to seek assistance, accounting for approximately 78% of applicants. The majority of individuals seeking assistance were African-American residents, consistent with previous years. The difference between demographic groups changed only slightly from the prior year. Most assistance recipients reported monthly income between \$0 and \$1,000 in the prior 30 days. Staff also noted that many applicants reported little or no funds in bank accounts at the time assistance was requested. The



most common referral source for township assistance was word of mouth, including referrals from friends, family members, and community leaders. The second largest referral source was 211 and 311 services, accounting for roughly 25% of referrals. Additional referrals came from local social service agencies such as:

- La Casa
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Other community service organizations

Staff noted that approximately 9% of records did not include a documented referral source, largely because the information was not captured during intake. Board members discussed whether landlords may be directing tenants to 211, which then refers them to the township. Staff suggested that future conversations with 211 operators could help determine the original referral sources more accurately.

- c. 02-2026 Resolution Accepting Portage Manor Cemetery- The board discussed the proposed resolution concerning the acceptance and oversight of Portage Manor Cemetery. Discussion included administrative and operational considerations related to the cemetery transition.

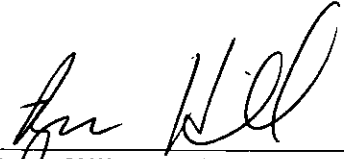
VII. Old Business-None

VIII. Trustee's Report-The Trustee provided an update regarding township operations, including administrative matters and ongoing projects.

- a. Budget/Assistance Review-Discussion occurred regarding township assistance and budget activity.
- b. Facilities-Updates were provided regarding township facilities and related maintenance or operational matters.
- c. St. Joseph County Fire Territory-Discussion occurred regarding issues and updates related to the St. Joseph County Fire Territory.
 - i. Warren Township Breach of Agreement- The board discussed matters related to the Warren Township breach of agreement and ongoing considerations.
- d. Community
 - i. Karl King Update- An update was provided regarding matters involving Karl King. Cheryl Ashe motioned to approve the provision of rent credit. Muhammad Shabazz seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.
 - ii. Goodwill Little Black Dress-The board discussed participation and updates regarding the Goodwill Little Black Dress event.



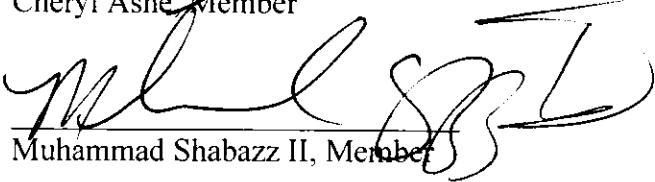
- e. Staff Severance Agreements
 - i. Staff Severance Agreements-Discussion occurred regarding staff severance agreements and related administrative matters.
 - f. Other-Additional miscellaneous township matters were discussed.
- IX. Adjournment-Muhammad Shabazz motioned to adjourn. Cheryl Ashe seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm.



Ryan Hill, Board Chair




Cheryl Ashe, Member



Muhammad Shabazz II, Member

Attested to:



Jason Critchlow