

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**MINUTES OF THE
XENIA TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES:**

**REGULAR MEETING
October 17, 2024 6:00 P.M.**

NOTE: These minutes are a summary of the discussion and are not a word for word account of the discussions. The proceedings were electronically recorded. The meeting was held at the Xenia Township Office, 8 Brush Row Road, Xenia, Ohio. This was a Regular Trustee Meeting advertised annually and on the Xenia Township website within 24 hours of scheduling this meeting.

Chair Steve Combs called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

Welcome to our guests from the City of Xenia in the first combined Xenia Township and Xenia City elected official's discussion meeting.

All participated in the Pledge of Allegiance and Prayer.

ROLL CALL: Steve Combs, Trustee; Chair, Jeremy VanDyne, Trustee, Scott Miller, Trustee, Jacqueline Robinson, Fiscal Officer.

In attendance: Xenia Township Staff: Alan Stock; Township Administrator.

Xenia City Council: Vice President Wesley Smith, Councilman James Crawford, Councilwoman Faith Sorice, Councilman Levi Dean, Mayor Sarah Mays (arrived at 6:39 p.m.), and President Will Urschel.

Xenia City Staff: City Manager Brent Merriman, Assistant City Manager Eric Henry, Finance Director Ryan Duke, Law Director Donnette Fisher, City Clerk Michelle Johnson, Fire and EMS Chief Kenny Riggsby, Deputy Fire and EMS Chief Mike Bogan, Public Service Director Chris Berger, and Water Treatment Supervisor Joe Bates.

FISCAL OFFICER:

Ms. Robinson Ms. Robinson asked the Trustees to move to approve bills as presented.

Mr. Combs moved to approve bills as presented. Mr. VanDyne seconded the motion. Roll Call: Mr. Combs – aye, Mr. Miller – aye, Mr. VanDyne - aye. Motion PASSED by roll call of 3-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-158

Ms. Robinson asked the Trustees to move to approve payroll as presented.

Mr. Miller moved to approve payroll as presented. Mr. Combs seconded the motion. Roll Call: Mr. Combs – aye, Mr. Miller – aye, Mr. VanDyne - aye. Motion PASSED by roll call of 3-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-159

Before getting started, President Urschel asked everyone, including Xenia Township and Xenia City representatives and audience members, to take a moment to introduce themselves.

President Urschel said the goal of this evening's meeting was not necessarily to resolve issues; rather, Council wished to put items on the table and present ideas for discussion.

Fiber Access:

It was stated that fiber was installed in various parts of the city, with intentions to connect the Water Treatment Plant, which would go right by the Township Facility. The City also has fiber in close proximity to the Fairgrounds and the Township Facility at that location. The City is providing fiber to the Greene County Career Center, which is close to the Township's other fire station. The City stated that they have discussed providing fiber to the Township as they have done the same for other institutional facilities within the City. It was also stated that the work of Altafiber in this area had slowed due to labor and material shortages; it is assumed the full connected buildout would take about 3 to 5 years. It was then stated that if service was needed, the City would be open to partnerships and that the City's Information Technology personnel would need to speak to the specifics of what specific equipment would be needed.

Road/Water Department Communication

It was stated that in case of emergency situations, it would be helpful have good communication between Township and City staff and the City's Public Works Supervisor and the Xenia Township Road Supervisor are in constant communications regarding water/sewer work within each other's areas. It was also stated that things were working now, but there was no active access agreement in terms of utility work to set expectations with regard to communications so a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) might be a good idea just to capture expectations. It was stated that if there is an issue it would go through Dispatch, who in turn would call Public Service Maintenance (during regular office hours or the on-call person after hours). If the issue affected the Township, staff would notify Township personnel. It was also stated that if there was a major water main break, Public Service workers would work to get things back online as soon as possible, and they would make the Township aware of things as soon as it was practical. It was discussed having Xenia Township to sign up for the City's Hyper Reach program for notifications boil advisories, road closures, etc.

They next discussed the lead abatement mandate. The USEPA was in the process of implementing an effort to eliminate any possibility of lead exposure in United States water systems. As part of that, it was anticipated that all public and private water treatment providers would be obligated to replace any existing lead lines and that City staff was in the process of doing a system-wide assessment as required. It was then stated that notices were required to be sent to property owners in November, and notices would need to go to Township residents as well. Any residents predating the 1950s likely had lead lines. It was lastly stated that there were a lot of unknowns and if they called EPA and talked to 10 people, they would likely get 10 different answers.

Healthcare and the Future of GMH

It was stated that the City had been engaged in conversations with Kettering Health Network (KHN), which had recently become more public and that the conversations affected both City and Township residents and were in regard to what KHN wanted versus what the City wanted for the residents and their access to health care and what happened after they received emergency medical services at GMH. KHN announced plans to move forward with the ultimate closure of Greene Memorial Hospital (GMH), replacing it with a standalone emergency care center to include various different types of primary care services co-located at the new facility. KHN had systematically reduced its scope of services over time, and GMH had been operating in the red for an extended period of time. It was further stated that the City was concerned from a number of perspectives including the reduced scope of care being provided locally, the reduced tax base (loss of personnel), the impact moving forward with regard to attracting new residents and new businesses, and the impact to the care delivery model. In the most recent conversation with KHN officials, their intention was to have a standalone

emergency department with no observation bed space, no advanced treatment, and no bed space. There was still a range of services provided at GMH today that would not be provided in the future when the new facility was in place. They went on to say that the closure would cause longer transport times and higher transport fees for EMS because they would need to go to other cities for patient care.

GMH has been receiving about \$3 million a year in taxpayer dollars from two levies for the last 20 years, which were public funds while the services had diminished over the last 20 years. It was stated that Xenia does not need another Urgent Care, they need a hospital that can at least get someone stabilized. The conversation continued to say that there used to be doctors with large practices who retired and have left a huge void. KHN had been struggling trying to backfill that void. Unfortunately, KHN's plan for the standalone ER was just further diminishing the quality of care and extending the time for a patient to receive that higher level, higher acuity of care.

The discussion turned to the actual building of GMH. It was stated that the viability of the building use for anything other than a hospital was very limited. It would likely need to be decommissioned. The last thing they wanted to see was behavioral health. It was considered a brownfield site due to the medical equipment and nuclear materials. It would be a sizable expense to demolish it. It was further stated that KHN took the site via a merger about 20 years ago under the guise of it being a hospital.

The City next shared that they are establishing a moratorium on standalone ERs and amendments to the City's Land Development Code were scheduled for introduction at the Council's October 24th meeting, and the emergency ordinance to establish the moratorium was also scheduled for action on October 24th. It was stated that standalone ERs served a purpose and did a good job, but they were just glorified urgent cares and that true ERs have bed space, X-ray machines, other types of imaging, and other, more broad services.

Collaboration Within Area Fire Service Providers

It was stated that Clayton, Englewood, and Union Township were visited, where they have collaborated and worked out how each jurisdiction funded its own department but shared resources. It was stated that they share trucks and medic units and reduced the number of fire trucks and medic units used by all three departments, they also share personnel. It was further stated that Xenia City and Xenia Township already provided frontline mutual aid to each other, and they were jointly responding to some areas and collaborating they would have four frontline medic units and they could divide up the jurisdictions to come up with better response times. It was further stated that call volume continues to rise and staffing is still struggling.

It was stated that the computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system had evolved to the point where it would auto respond and that cross manning has been a game changer. This allows for mutual aid to be called automatically if needed. It was further stated that this will take baby steps, but collaboration needs to be looked into as it's crazy that the City and Township run through each jurisdiction to get to a call especially since GMH might not be here next year.

It was discussed that collaborating would help keep costs down in each department. It was suggested that if a part-time firefighter was hired for Xenia Township, they could be Xenia City's first choice for full-time employment, which could increase the Township's candidate pool. It was further stated that this is not about Xenia City or Xenia Township, it was about doing the job and doing it together. It was agreed to have the Chief further this discussion together.

Annexation vs. Inward Growth

It was stated that the infrastructure was already in place, in the City, for inward growth, so from an economic development perspective, that was the City's focus. Regarding the Market District Redevelopment Project, economic development tools were used for those five acres. The City worked with Greene County agencies to get blighted properties through the court process and hoped to get a dozen or more listed on a County Auditor's sale, but it looked like that would not happen this year. It was then stated that the housing problems and infill solutions were a big part of the conversation for neXtPlan (Xenia's update to its Comprehensive Plan). It was then stated that instead of the City sending out a water and sewer bill every month for a vacant lot, he would rather see a building on that lot, which would generate more property tax revenue. It was then noted that the schools received the majority of the property tax revenue. The City of Xenia has more than its fair share of people receiving some type of public subsidies, and they needed available housing options from the lowest means to the greatest and that their target goal was people who were contributing to the tax base and providing a product that they needed.

Regarding annexations, it was stated that it was not a secret that the Township was not a fan of the Central State University (CSU) annexation. It was stated that the CSU annexation was out of the City's hands, that the land was owned by the State of Ohio, and as far as CSU was concerned, there was not much interest at this point as far as they knew. They next stated that there are many open-ended issues with CSU regarding a long-standing water and sewer issue, but there was no long-term water and sewer maintenance agreement and no plan for sustainability, which left the City with a tremendous amount of risk and liability. It was stated that if the annexation did not occur, the City did not wish to subsidize CSU any longer. It was then stated that all parties would benefit from CSU's annexation into the City if CSU was a vibrant university from an income tax standpoint and believed that tension with Xenia Township prompted CSU to reach out to the City about the option for annexation because they wanted to grow the university in ways the Township did not allow from a zoning perspective. It was asked if zoning was easier in the City vs. the Township, and answered that the City's zoning code was different from the Township's zoning regulations with regard to what was or was not permitted. It was then stated that CSU applied for a rezoning request, which the Township denied, that it was one single act held by the Zoning Commission. It was stated that there are different types of annexations including detached vs. not detached. He also noted the City was principally income tax based, and the Township was property tax based, and that the City is inward focused and looking to expand the City's boundaries.

The next discussion was annexation vs. inward growth concerning conditions of the streets and homes in some of Xenia's neighborhoods, that people looking for a nice home would not buy a home in a neighborhood with terrible streets and terrible rentals. It was stated that City Council and City leadership inherited 40 years of neglect, resulting in a \$60 million problem. There were a lot of other major challenges, and it required a long-term conversation and that there were no simple or quick fixes. It was then stated that utility environment today was a highly regulated environment, and Council and staff had worked very hard to operate a very efficient system and sustain low-cost water and sewer rates while being strategic with capacity in terms of sustainability. It was stated that in 2019, Council voted to put a street levy on the ballot, and it failed by 300 votes. They never put another street levy back on the ballot because Xenia Community Schools asked the City not to compete with their levies over the years. It was then stated that Council voted to put a public safety levy on the ballot, and it failed. This year, Council voted to put the Operating Levy Renewal on the November 5, 2024, ballot, and the City was getting beat up on social media because people did not understand that the schools were getting almost 70% of property tax revenue. It was asked if Xenia Township residents who needed water and sewer, he asked if they had to be required to annex into the City or if they could be considered on a case-by-case basis. It was stated that Council would need to look at each circumstance.

Topics for the next collaborative meeting:
Zoning enforcement , CEDA, fiber, fire collaboration and Greene County Fairgrounds

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Combs moved to adjourn at 8:48 P.M. Mr. VanDyne seconded the motion. Roll Call: Mr. Combs – aye, Mr. Miller – aye, Mr. VanDyne – aye. Motion PASSED by roll call of 3-0.

Xenia Township Board of Trustees

Date Approved: _____

L. Stephen Combs, Chair

Resolution # 2024-_____

Attest:

Scott Miller

Jacqueline Robinson, Fiscal Officer

Jeremy VanDyne

Motion by Mayor Mays, seconded by Councilman Crawford, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 8:49 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:
Ayes: Smith, Crawford, Sorice, Dean, Mays, Urschel
Nays: None motion carried.