

WABASH TOWNSHIP
BOARD MEETING
December 15, 2020

Agenda

Attendees: Chair Michelle Wietbrock, Secretary Brendan Betz, Board Member Angel Valentin, Trustee Teising, Bob Goldsmith, Amie Mullikin, Sana Booker, Sadie Harper-Scott, Kevin Bump, Jacque Chosnek, Tricia Fultz, Victoria Woeste, Tom Moore, Patricia Mason, Mike Rohler, Mike Francis, Melissa Rosch, Maureen Berry, Margaret Hass, Mallery Williams, Lowell Williams, Lisa Dullum, Laura Kuhn, Kirsten Gibson, Katie Cook, Kathy Parker, JJ Sadler, Jim Lewis, Jean O'Reilly, Jamie Roth, Jacob McDonald, Ed Ward, Holly Tittle-Hudson, Erica Beumel, Heather Maddox, Eric Dreiman, Chris Hagerty, Cinnamon Gallatin, Chris Beaver, Brandon Stevens, Christina Thomas, Bradley Thomas, Adrienne Westpfal, Alex Mahan, Ron Wilkins, Sheila Rosenthal

1. Board Chair Wietbrock notes that the emergency meeting will only cover topics mentioned in our notice of the emergency meeting.
 - a. Tonight I am responding to the Wabash township board's recent request for my resignation. Since we have two members of the board who only joined earlier this year, I'd like to start by reviewing where the township was two years ago when I became trustee and the progress we have made since then.
 - b. At the beginning of my term on January 1st, 2019, the fire department was an all volunteer department except for two full-time firefighters who did not receive health insurance and retirement benefits. Fire department spending outpaced revenue, and under the previous trustee and board, the rainy-day fund had been depleted. Therefore, without additional funding, the township was in crisis and we were going to have to cut the services to our rapidly growing population.
 - c. In addition, township assistance had decreased annually since 2008 and local social service agencies had lost faith in our

ability to help our residents and no longer recommended people in need to contact our township for assistance.

- d. Since then, I am happy to say we have forged a path to improve our services to the township residents. We secured funding to hire additional firefighters and to provide them full benefits for the first time in township history. We hired 2 more firefighters this fall. We are now working to further expand services to our residents as our township moves from a volunteer to a combination department by potentially transitioning to a state defined fire district. Additionally, in 2019 we almost doubled township assistance from 2018 levels and local social service agencies began sending people in need to our township, confident that we would do our best to provide them with assistance.
- e. Therefore, I was both surprised and disappointed to read the boards' memo requesting my resignation, especially when the board had not talked to me before going public with their concerns.
- f. As I have discussed previously with the board, this year we have been able to use money from the state and federal government to cover the increased township needs of the community due to the COVID pandemic. We have not declined any township requests. COVID relief money is being distributed by Area 4 and the state with a rental assistance program. The township, as well as local social service agencies, are sending people in need there. The township did not receive any of this money directly. It is also my understanding from other local social service organizations, the ending of the eviction moratorium is their primary concern and I have tried to prepare for that to the best of our ability with the assistance funds that we have. We expect dramatic increases in assistance requests when the moratorium ends and will use that money accordingly.
- g. As far as my personal residence, I would like to unequivocally state that I am a permanent resident of Wabash township. I have always traveled but my home is West Lafayette and that

has not changed. Going from a property owner to a renter, does not change my status.

- h. As you might have read in the Journal & Courier, an employee of Wabash township has been electronically tracking my location without my consent, nor my knowledge. My personal safety has been violated and I now feel at risk and therefore, I am not willing to further discuss this topic in public. If you still have concerns about my residency, there is a legal process that can be followed.
 - i. I'd also like to remind the board that Indiana law gives the trustee, and the trustee alone, the responsibility for appointing the chief of the fire department. Because this a personnel matter, at the advice of legal counsel I won't be answering any further questions about this topic at this time.
 - j. In summary, I strongly disagree with the assertions in your memo. I was elected by the voters of Wabash township and I plan to continue my term serving them. I am proud of the efforts we have made to expand the fire department, provide benefits including health insurance to hard-working first responders, increase aid to our residents in need, and identify options for a sustainable and long-term funding plan that will meet the increasing demands of our growing township.
 - k. I am left to ask you if there wasn't a better way you could have raised your concerns? I think the township would have been better served if we had spent our time and energy working together to find solutions rather than contacting the media and asserting ill-informed accusations.
 - l. I hope we can find a way to heal this wound and move forward. I suggest that in the interest of the people we serve, we put aside our disagreements and work together to continue improving the services to Wabash Township
2. Chair Wietbrock moves on a vote of no confidence.
- a. Board member Angel Valentin seconds.
 - b. The Chair moves to explain the foundation of the motion.
 - i. The untimely firing of our fire chief

- ii. No aid going out in the unprecedented bad times.
 - iii. The public information shared that the trustee had not been in the township
- c. The chair moves to explain her vote in favor.
- d. Secretary Betz explains his vote in favor of the motion.
- e. Newest Board member Angel Valentin explains his vote in favor.
- f. The motion passed unanimously.
- g. The Chair moves to close the meeting at 6:30PM
 - i. Secretary Betz Seconds the motion.