

## **LEROY TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE MEETING MINUTES**

The Leroy Township Trustees met in regular session on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 7 p.m. at the town hall.

Present were: Chairman Chuck Klco, Heather Shelton and Julie Himmelman, Fiscal Officer.

Absent: Rich VanPelt

Special Guest: Lake County Sheriff Frank Leonbruno

Guests: Attorney Ron Graham, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Toman, Zoning Inspector Noell Sivertsen, BZA chair Rudy Veselko, Dan Himmelman, Zoning Commission chair and BZA member Susan Hanna

Audience: Kristin Hess, Leslie and Jeff Bassett, Gina Parker, Eric Stutzman, Jason Rodgers, Cindy Binnig, and Kevin Kotnik

The reading of the August 2, 2021 meeting minutes was waived. Chuck had one correction. Chuck made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Heather seconded and both were in favor.

The chair stated that we had received a letter from the County Commissioners regarding an opportunity to have regular patrols in the township, if we chose to contribute to the costs. This would be supplemented for the first 4 years by the commissioners but the township would have to fund the contract for future years. The sheriff was invited to present the proposal that was outlined in the letter.

Sherriff Frank Leonbruno presented the following information:

The Sheriff stated that in 2010, when the Sheriff's department went from 27 officers down to 10 officers paid for by the commissioners, the Painesville and Concord Townships' contracts came about. Painesville and Concord Townships are now at 20,000 residents and the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> largest local governments in Lake County. Willoughby Hills has about 9,500 people and 17 police officers at a price of \$2.1 million per year. Madison Township has about 21 police officers and a \$3.1 million dollar budget.

Painesville Township has a contract with the Sheriff's department for 6 deputies on patrol and their contract was up. The sheriff felt they needed to plan for an increase in patrols due to the increase in size. The sheriff's office felt that Painesville Township should plan to increase the number of patrol officers in increments over time to twelve. This township is the biggest user of the sheriff's services. Painesville Township's trustees stated that they felt the Commissioners should pay for the policing.

The Commissioners offered a mini-COPS matching-funds grant for Painesville Township. For four years, each police officer the township pays for, the commissioners would pay for another one. The sheriff felt this offer should be made to all of the townships.

The sheriff felt Concord and Painesville should be at 12 officers, Perry at 6 and if possible, Leroy at 2. All being supplemented with the 12 officers the commissioners currently pay for the patrolling of the 88 square miles in Lake County. Additionally, the commissioners pay for the detective bureau which does all the major investigations in the townships. The deputies are basically for patrolling the community.

Perry Township is using the American Recovery Act funds to pay for the cost of their additional officers with the matching funds from the commissioners.

Crime rates have increased. In 2019, there were around 840 criminal cases filed in the Common Pleas courts in Lake County. In 2020, there were around 845, this year they expect to hear at least 1,500. The Lake County jail, in 1990 had approximately 100 inmates. Now there are approximately 360.

The sheriff's concern is the crime moving out from the city. Crimes with fire arms are more common in the bigger suburbs. The county's ability to prosecute criminal and punish crime is diminished with the increase of cases to be prosecuted and the number of inmates already incarcerated. These issues lead to emboldened criminals.

The sheriff's obligation, by law, have been handled by litigation. The job of the sheriff's office is to respond to emergencies and keep the peace, not to do patrols or check for speeding or ancillary duties. In 2010, the commissioners cut the sheriff's budget.

Chuck asked what was seen on an average day in Leroy. Answer: Leroy averages 250 – 300 calls a month, while Painesville is at 1,400, Concord 1,000 and Perry 700. Heather stated that the reports posted 80 calls in April.

How often do we see a car out here? Answer: Whenever there is a call for service, there will be a car unless there are more pressing calls.

Chuck asked what would we get for the \$125,000 a year? Answer: An average of 40 hours per deputy on patrol. This includes the cost of wages, benefits, car, gas, repairs, uniforms, training, overtime and dispatch services.

Kristin Hess stated that she found reports online that Leroy averaged 80-100 calls a month and most were not serious crime. She asked if the patrol would focus around the BP - I-90 corridor and would the funds also go to the correction facilities affected by those arrests. And, is there a plan to get the cases caught up? Answer: The \$125,000 is just for the patrol. The sheriff has been talking with the prosecutors and commissioners to determine how to get the cases caught up.

Heather asked what determines where the 12 officers the commissioners pay for patrol? On a regular shift there is usually two that are paid for by the county, one patrol in Concord and one in Painesville who stay in their township unless there is a large emergency. In the case of an emergency there is mutual aid. The two deputies from the county are in one of the four townships. They are basically running from call to call. If there is time, they will work on traffic enforcements.

Chuck asked if there would be a response if a noise complaint is reported at 11:30 pm? Answer: If a patrol was available, it would be responded, but the patrols are going call to call. There is a hierarchy of emergency calls. If there is a domestic disturbance and a noise complaint, the patrol will go to the domestic disturbance. Those type of higher-level crimes are occurring with increased frequency. Deputies are never just sitting around waiting on a call.

Chuck stated that the biggest complaint that he hears is that residents are told the sheriff does not come out to Leroy because we do not pay for the service. The sheriff said that if he ever was told who said that, that person would be reprimanded or disciplined. If a township isn't contracted, the patrol would respond to burglaries, intruders, and other emergencies. If someone's mailbox is damaged, they would just have to come in to file a report.

The sheriff would like to go back to the time when the county paid for 30 officers to cover all the townships.

Heather stated that our township of 3,100 residents may wonder how they can carry a similar burden as bigger townships such as Perry and Painesville. She feels that she would need to know what the township residents would want from a patrol because the funds would be coming from their pockets. It sounds to her like, at this time the sheriff's office is coming out for the times when it's needed and our finances could not support the patrol long term.

The sheriff did not expect us to afford two officers. He was just providing an estimate of how many officers would be optimal. He felt it would not be fair to not offer the matching grant to all the townships.

Chuck stated that 2 patrol officers would be \$250,000 a year, which would require a 3.5 mil levy.

Noell asked if the county would be paying for 1 of the two officers? Answer: Yes, but only for 4 years and the township would have to commit to long-term contracting.

Noell asked how the commissioners justify not adding to the number of patrols they pay for, with the increased population,? Answer: He was told Lake County receives the smallest amount of revenue back from county taxes, of any county in Ohio. Lake County has the smallest inside millage in Ohio. Most counties receive between 30 and 40 cents for every tax dollar going to the county. Lake County gets 11 cents. Discussion was made regarding why the county received less.

Cindy Binnig asked if there were a suggested ratio of officers to residence? Answer: The national statistics states there should be 1 officer for 1,000 residents, which the sheriff felt was overinflated. She also asked about using the ARPA money for this. Answer: that money must be spent by 2024.

Chuck stated that we will receive a total of approximately \$340,000.00, which would pay for a little over 2.5 years, after which we would have to find the funds to continue the last 1.5 years and then double that amount, without inflation.

Chuck thanked the sheriff for coming and for his presentation.

Chuck stated that if there is any interest in getting patrols for the township and a committee wants to work to pass a levy to fund that, the next election would be in May. The trustees would have to

know by February to get the levy on the ballot. That money would first be collected in 2023, if passed.

**Zoning:** Noell gave her report:

Permits issued: 3 New Dwelling (Carter, Jennings and Monte), 1 Accessory Building on Brakeman, 1 Deck/Porch on Lester and 1 Agricultural on Chadwick.

There is a hearing for Mahr Farm tomorrow.

There were a few complaints regarding RVs and campers.

A home with multiple issues and a noise complaint on Brakeman was discussed.

Active HOAs were discussed. It was stated the back-half of Mildon does have an HOA and it should be on the deed. It would not be a zoning regulation.

**Fire:** There were 66 calls since the last report, bringing the total to 381 year-to-date.

4 Fires	7 Hazardous Conditions	5 Service Calls	
40 EMS	8 good intent	1 False Alarm.	1 Special Incident

The Fire Department is now under University Hospitals and are switching to Health EMS on January 1, 2021. This will be covered by University Hospitals and will save the department some money. The hospital will also be giving us two iPad to use with the reporting system.

October 12 is the swearing-in for the new fire chief and assistant fire chief.

The process has begun for purchasing our new rescue engine which will replace our 20-year-old fire engine. The committee has met for the first time and hope to have a truck ordered by the beginning of the year. Build times are usually around 365 days.

Doors have been ordered using mostly NOPEC funds from Lake County Door.

Still working on concrete bids and flooring and roofing quotes.

Pancake breakfast will be October 17, 2021 9-1.

The bathroom is complete. We will be moving on to our air room to get the new-to-us compressor that was donated to us by Perry Fire District up and running. Once completed we will start on the second bathroom upstairs.

Vickie has applied for an OTARMA Grant for educational classes and an EMS grant check came in today.

**Roads:** The men are sealing. Seeley, northeast part of Chadwick, Abbey and Baker. They will be moving to Callow Road hill to work on the slide using OPWC grant matching funds and then working on patching. The 18-year-old skid steer needs to be replaced.

**Cemetery:** There are dead trees that need to be taken down before they fall and break headstones.

**Parks & Recreation:** There is a Halloween party replacing Trick or Trunk this year to be held at Hidden Lake on October 30, 2021 from 5-7pm. There will be a .25-mile walkway for the kids. There will be costume contests, campfire, games and music. This event will go on rain or shine.

There will be a Spaghetti with Santa event on Dec 4, from 4-6p. If there is more interest there will be two sessions. The benefits will go toward the playground equipment.

The fall garage sale is this weekend. Riverside School District will be participating in the garage sale to sell off furniture and equipment left behind at Leroy Elementary.

June 25, 2022 will be a community event similar to the bicentennial without the parade and fireworks. Movie Night maybe incorporated into the event as well.

#### **Old Business:**

Leroy Elementary: The trustees met with the commissioners, the Land Bank, the county treasurer's office, and Lake County Planning and Community Development to discuss options for the property. Everyone there seemed to want Leroy to end up with the property. There will be a Land Bank meeting in two weeks. If they, the commissioners and Land Bank can come up with the money to

tear down the school and give us the land, we can proceed, but without their funding we cannot afford the \$125,000.

Road Dept Skid Steer: The Road department will need to replace their 18-year-old Skid Steer. Parts are not made any more and impossible to find on the secondary market. This piece of equipment is used almost daily. They are looking at an Ohio Cat model 289D3 compact track loader with the following accessories an 86" multi-purpose bucket, 86" general purpose bucket, 48" pallet fork set, 78" brush cutter and 73" utility pick-up broom. Under state bidding, the price is \$81,761.00. It will be available to view in November. Heather asked about the warranty. Chuck made a motion to purchase the equipment. Heather seconded. Both were in favor.

Cemetery tree removal: Several dead trees need to be removed, stumps ground and branches trimmed in the cemeteries on Trask and Brakeman Cemetery on 86. Cost would be \$6,700. Chuck made a motion to pay American Pride LLC for the removal and trimming for the agreed upon price. Heather seconded and both were in favor.

2022 Budget: Chuck made a motion to adopt the tax budget for 2022 as set by the Lake County Budget Commission. Heather seconded. Heather, aye. Chuck, aye.

#### **New Business:**

Ohio Department of Transportation Stimulus Program: Chuck received notification of a grant the township is eligible for. The Road Department Supervisor and Chuck have started working on 4 different locations with a maximum of \$250,000 per grant. They have asked the Lake and Geauga County Engineer to work with them on the following projects that will be submitted: Sumner Road from RT 86 to Radcliffe, Radcliffe Road from Proctor to Sumner, Callow Road from the bridge on the far end in both directions as separate projects. The deadline is November 19, 2021.

American Rescue Plan (ARP): Heather attended a meeting in Canton to learn about how we can use the ARP monies. We are limited. Expanding high-speed broadband is one use she is researching. She is trying to find out where there is need. 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps for upload is the federal standard for high-speed. Heather is working with Spectrum to hopefully expand their services to those areas without reliable broadband.

Heather stated the FCC has a broadband benefit program available for individuals that meet financial need. Information is available at [www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit](http://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit).

Kevin Kotnik asked how the township picked its internet service providers. Answer: We did not get to pick. The provider gets to pick where they go and make their decisions based on finances.

Chuck made a motion to pay all bills. Heather seconded. Both were in favor.

Chuck thanked everyone for coming.

The next meeting is October 12, 2021 at 7 p.m. at the town hall.

Chuck made a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel and legals.

Chuck made a motion to close the executive session. Heather seconded and all were in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Himmelman