

**CENTER TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE
CENTER TOWNSHIP BOARD
August 3, 2022**

LOCATION: Porter County Commissioner's Chambers

TIME: 5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jesse Harper, Trustee
Deb Fray, Board Member
Stephen Buck, Board Member - Absent
Todd Etzler, Board Member
Adam Mindel – Attorney

Stephen Buck called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Minutes

Motion: Todd Etzler moved to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2022 meeting. Deb Fray seconded the motion and so approved with a 3-0 voice vote.

Trustee's Report

Trustee Harper discussed reasons for having a social worker in the office. It will save the Township money by having the social worker direct people who need help to organizations they might not be aware of. Trustee Harper introduced Kelly Richards. Kelly is the new Township Social Worker. She has already done an outstanding job. Kelly addressed the Board and gave them a brief overview of how she plans on proceeding with the office.

Trustee Harper reported the Township has been appropriated approximately \$134,000 from the County out of the ARPA funds. He has been working with staff and Attorney Mindel on a plan. Part of the challenge is that there are a lot of parameters. One is that the Township is a subrecipient of a recipient. If the Board approves the Resolution tonight, it then has to be approved by the Commissioners and Auditor.

The Resolution includes a \$2,000 bonus to the three office staff who worked through Covid. Included is the appropriation for the social worker. There are certain non-profits that help the Trustee's clients. That list includes Housing Opportunities with a request of \$20,000, Hilltop with a request for \$13,500 for demolition of a building where a soup kitchen will be built, Moraine House with a request of \$14,00 to remodel a bathroom, V-Line \$100 for passes to give clients, gas cards \$2,000, groceries \$3,000, offset assistance already given to help with rent \$25,704.

Deb Fray stated Covid has increased the number of kids with difficulties. When they got back into school the need was extraordinary. Having a social worker is critical. She tutors kids in Housing Opportunities and knows they need help. The same applies with Hilltop.

Todd Etzler asked for clarification that \$25,704 is for reimbursement of money paid to help clients with rent. Trustee Harper replied that is correct. Todd added he is glad the County made the Trustee's office a subrecipient. This office works with the groups closer than the County does and is more knowledgeable of what the needs are. He is also glad to see that the recipients are using the money for capital improvements. They are projects that will be a lasting improvement for these organizations.

Motion: Deb Fray moved to approve Resolution 22-04. Todd Etzler seconded the motion and so approved with a 3-0 voice vote.

**RESOLUTION- 22-04
CONCERNING ARPA SLFRF SUBRECIPIENT FUND PLAN**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Center Township Trustee has been allocated and appropriated \$134,304.44 as a sub recipient of Porter County's American Rescue Plan State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Legislative Body, at a properly noticed public meeting approved the foregoing plan for the use of the \$134,304.44 for review and approval by the County Auditor's Office;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to provide premium pay in the total amount of Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00) to those employees who worked during the heart of the pandemic to show appreciation for their efforts in the most uncertain of times;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee has hired a Social Worker in order to help those clients of the Trustee's Office to increase awareness and uptake of assistance programs as well as to provide assistance to the unemployed or underemployed. As such, in furtherance of those goals and in accordance with the Department of Treasury Final Rule, the Trustee's Office wishes to utilize Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) to fund the Center Township Trustee's salary for years 2023 and 2024;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee partners with local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in the area as authorized by I.C. § 36-6-4-8(b) to perform services not specifically performed by the Trustee's Office or any other governmental entity and that the services are of a nature contemplated by I.C. § 36-6-4-3. The Trustee's Office finds that these partnerships are the best way to address the needs of those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as the organizations are best suited to identify and assist those citizens of Center Township who are most in-need;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in line with those partnerships with local nonprofit organizations:

a.) The Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to provide Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to Housing Opportunities Inc. a local organization committed to providing shelter or low income housing so that they may repair the stairs and the walkway at their homeless shelter located at 2001 Calumet Avenue, Valparaiso, IN 46383. This project is assistance to an impacted non-profit intended to mitigate financial hardship as well as an enumerated use under Treasury's Final Rule to address long-term housing security and affordable housing as well as emergency housing assistance;

b.) The Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to provide Thirteen Thousand Dollars Five Hundred Dollars (\$13,500.00) to Hilltop Neighborhood House to support their Food Assistance Program provided by their Soup Kitchen Project. This is for food assistance, including capital expenditures related to Hilltop's soup kitchen to address food insecurity. Attached hereto as Exhibit "A" is an estimate supporting that dollar amount;

c.) The Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to aid the Moraine House, Inc. with Fourteen Thousand Dollars (\$14,000.00). The Moraine House is an organization that aids citizens of Center Township from disproportionately impacted socio-economic backgrounds recover from chemical dependency to address unemployment and underemployment. It further addresses a public health measure under the negative economic impact prong of the approved uses under the Final Rule. Moraine House experienced decreased revenue via donations as well as increased costs because of the pandemic. In support of the project, attached hereto as Exhibit "B" is a proposed work order;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to provide direct assistance to those clients of the Trustee's Office who are at or below the poverty level and are current clients by providing:

- a.) One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) in V-line bus tokens;
- b.) Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) in pre-paid gas cards; and
- c.) Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) in grocery vouchers.

In each instance, (a-c), the Office of the Trustee will provide a written notation of which clients received assistance and provide that to the Porter County Auditor's Office together with any supporting receipts;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee wishes to reserve Twenty-five Thousand Seven Hundred Four Dollars and Forty-four Cents (\$25,704.44) to be distributed to the clientele of the Trustee's Office pursuant to I.C. 12-20-1-1 to I.C.12-20-28-3 for relief of poor persons through Township Assistance. The funds will first be paid from the Township assistance fund and the receipt of the same will be submitted to the Auditor's Office

quarterly for reimbursement after confirmation of qualifying use. All funds will be distributed on or before July 1, 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Center Township Legislative body wishes to cause this Resolution to be submitted to the Porter County Auditor's Office so that it may enter into a written agreement with the Porter County Commissioners to implement the aforementioned expenditures with all funds to be obligated on or before July 1, 2024.

So Resolved this 3rd day of August, 2022.

/s/ Debra E. Fray, Center Township Board Member

/s/ Stephen R. Buck, Center Township Board Member

**/s/Todd A. Etzler, Center Township
Board Member**

ATTEST:

/s/ Jesse Harper

Center Township, Trustee

Fire Education Funds Request from VFD

Trustee Harper stated the Township has a contract with the Valparaiso Fire Department to provide fire protection services for the Township. Somethings come up that are not within the budget. The Fire Department does not often ask for extra help. The only time he knows of is for the baby box. VFD has an educational program for the schools. They had a third party that was contributing to this program. That is no longer in place so the Fire Department is contributing \$10,000 for materials and they are asking the Township for \$10,000. Because of the ARPA funds he feels they will come in under budget for the next few years.

Chief Dutz addressed the Board. The pandemic put a halt to some of the programs they had been doing. He would like to put more education programs out for the public. Community Risk Reduction is a program they have started. Trustee Harper asked how they get information out about the baby box. Chief Dutz replied the Department knows they need to do more education of what is available.

Todd Etzler asked how many are using the baby box. Chief Dutz replied to date no one.

Deb Fray thanked Chief Dutz for going to the schools. The more education is good. She was a participant in the active shooter training at Heavlin School.

Stephen Buck stated this request is appropriate. The Trustee's office is a friend of the VFD.

Motion: Tod Etzler moved to approve Resolution 22-05. Deb Fray seconded the motion and so approved with a 3-0 voice vote.

**RESOLUTION- 22-05
CONCERNING FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Township of Center, Porter County, Indiana ("Township") and the City of Valparaiso ("City") have established the Valparaiso Fire Protection Territory ("Territory") as authorized by I.C. 36-8-19 and have each adopted an identical Ordinance/Resolution enacting the same;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Territory is established in accordance with I.C. 36-8-19-5 for any of the following purposes:

- (1) Fire protection, including the capability for extinguishing all fires that might be reasonably expected because of the types of improvements, personal property, and real property within the boundaries of the territory;
- (2) *Fire prevention*, including identification and elimination of all potential and actual sources of fire hazard; and
- (3) *Other purposes* or functions related to fire protection and fire prevention;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City and the Township have entered into an Agreement to define and clarify the reciprocal enabling Ordinance/Resolution of each in creating the Territory which is entitled "INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALPARAISO, INDIANA, AND THE GOVERNING BOARD OF CENTER TOWNSHIP, PORTER COUNTY, INDIANA, FOR THE VALPARAISO FIRE PROTECTION TERRITORY" ("Agreement") which has been duly recorded in the Office of the Porter County Recorder;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that by the Agreement, the City and the Township authorize, direct, ratify and affirm the establishment of the Valparaiso Fire Department ("VFD") to provide for those services described in paragraph two (2) above and as set out in I.C. 36-8-19-5;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That pursuant to I.C. 36-8-19-8.6 as well as Section 1.4(d) of the Agreement, the Township may authorize transfers of money belonging to the Township to:

- (1) The fire protection territory fund established;
- (2) The fire protection territory equipment replacement fund, or;
- (3) Both funds;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Valparaiso Fire Department ("VFD") has a need to conduct and provide educational materials and trainings to students of the Valparaiso Community School system in order educate children in their formative years on the importance of fire safety;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Center Township Trustee, as authorized by the Center Township Legislative Board, believe that VFD's request for this vital need is well taken;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Office of the Center Township Trustee has encountered several devastating fires which displace residents of Center Township and impose significant costs upon the families affected as well as the Trustee's Office in providing temporary housing and financial assistance;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Trustee together with the Township Board believe the best course of action is to support fire prevention and fire prevention education in our youngest residents to help mitigate further devastating fires which may be prevented through proper fire safety education;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Township Board wishes to provide Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) in support of VFD's fire safety educational program to be paid from the Center Township General fund as authorized by I.C. 36-8-19-8.6 and Section 1.4 of the Agreement;

So Resolved this 3rd day of August, 2022.

/s/ Debra E. Fray, Center Township Board Member

**/s/ Stephen R. Buck, Center Township Board
Member**

/s/ Todd A. Etzler, Center Township Board Member

ATTEST:

**/s/ Jesse Harper
Center Township, Trustee**

Lease 202 Roosevelt

Trustee Harper stated he feels it is time for the Trustee to have its own building. But, given the current market conditions it is not a good time to do this. He has worked with Ed Spelding and has the same exact lease they have had except it is now a five year lease versus a two year. This is a good location. The five year lease is based upon the annual appropriation by the Board. The landlord is aware of this. This does not require a resolution.

Stephen Buck asked how many square feet the building is. Trustee Harper said about 1,700. That is below \$10.00 per square foot. The landlord has been great to work with and has given the Township a great rate.

Attorney's Report

Sale of Township Property

Attorney Mindel reported he prepared a Purchase Agreement and it has been signed by the Goodpasture family and the Trustee. The Deed has been prepared and will be signed and recorded. This is for the property on Highway 49 by the Township cemetery.

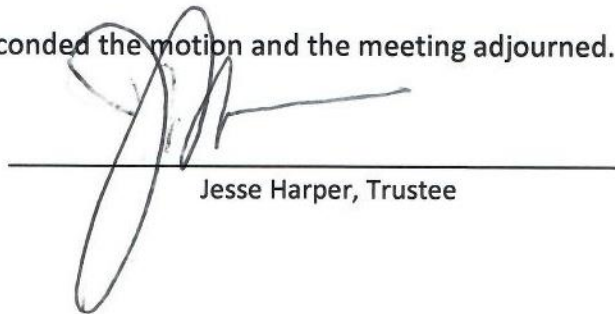
Public Comment

A citizen asked what the salary is for the social worker. Trustee Harper replied it is \$25,000 per year.

A citizen asked if any rent payments go towards purchase price should they decide to purchase this building. Trustee Harper replied no. The Trustee has first right of refusal if the landlord decides to sell.

Deb Fray asked the staff if they are ok with the building. Terri Larr replied they could use another office. They have talked about using the garage. Possibly the landlord could split the cost with the Board.

Todd Etzler moved to adjourn. Deb Fray seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Harper', is written over a horizontal line.

Jesse Harper, Trustee

Stephen R. Buck
Todd Etzler, Secretary

Steve Buck, President