

GUILFORD TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
WORK SESSION and REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 19, 2025

The Board of Guilford Township Trustees, Medina County, Ohio, met for a work session at 7:00 P.M. and then moved into the regular Trustees meeting on August 19, 2025 at 7:30 P.M. at the Guilford Township Hall. The following Trustees were present: Bob Rohrer, Gene Morris, Scott Phillips, and Fiscal Officer, Ray Ruprecht.

Also present were Mark Phillips, James Carter, Ron Scuderi, Brittany Banks, Patrick Rhonemus, Denise Testa, Mayor Carter, Andy Liston, Dan May, Larry Kaufman, Christine Fields, and Shannon Colonna

WORK SESSION

The purpose of the work session was to discuss the requirements, procedures, and process for hiring a fire chief.

Scott Phillips introduced Mark Phillips, who retired four years ago from LST in Medina and has also worked with Cleveland Clinic. He recently assisted Hinckley Township with the hiring of a new Fire Chief.

Scott provided background on recent changes within the Fire Department, noting that Brian Cyphert recently left and Jim Carter has stepped in as Interim Fire Chief. He explained that the department has had multiple chiefs in recent years, and the Trustees were seeking advice on hiring and retaining a new Chief.

Mark Phillips responded that this is a common challenge for fire departments and that the profession has seen major changes in the last ten years. He reviewed the Township's qualifications and noted that he did not see anything missing. He recommended hiring from within when possible but acknowledged some departments choose outside candidates for different advantages.

Ray Ruprecht noted that internal candidates may sometimes face a pay cut when moving into the Chief position.

Gene Morris shared a suggestion to include external subject matter experts, such as retired Fire Chiefs, in the interview process.

Mark Phillips emphasized the importance of refining the interview process, as the most experienced candidates are often already in positions and not seeking new roles.

Bob Rohrer stated that leadership ability is critical, but it is not always evident until someone is in a leadership role.

Jim Carter was asked how many current members meet all qualifications; he identified two.

Brittany Banks noted the importance of people management skills and stated that the absence of a full-time Fire Chief has prevented the Township from applying for certain scholarships.

Brittany Banks asked about the budget, and noted that they are already paying someone a chief salary, the Captain.

Scott Phillips asked Mark Phillips if he would be willing to assist further. Jim Carter proposed working with Mark to develop an interview process, and Scott supported them meeting to discuss.

REGULAR MEETING

Approval of Minutes

Gene Morris **moved** to approve the regular meeting minutes of August 5, 2025. Bob Rohrer seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris – yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

Planning Services – Denise Testa

Denise shared information about the Department of Planning Services, including Fair Housing and Grant Management.

Fair Housing

- **Fair Housing Act** protects against discrimination in renting, buying, mortgages, housing assistance, or related activities.
 - Protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, disability.
- **Medina County Fair Housing Office** (114 North Broadway, Suite 113, Medina; Mon–Fri 8:00–4:30).
 - Provides free services for residents and landlords, including tenant support, landlord/tenant education, customized client plans, and workshops.
 - Rental repair issues must be submitted in writing; landlords have 30 days unless health/safety is at risk. Options if ignored include rent escrow, lease termination, or contacting Fair Housing.
- **Tips for Renters:** keep all agreements in writing, understand lease terms, request repairs in writing, purchase renters insurance, protect deposit rights, and follow proper eviction procedures.
- **Tenant Responsibilities (Ohio Bar Association):** pay rent in full/on time, maintain property, dispose of trash properly, allow access for inspections/repairs, comply with safety codes.
- **Landlord Responsibilities (Ohio Bar Association):** comply with housing codes, make repairs, maintain common areas, keep utilities and systems functional, and provide trash receptacles for larger units.
- **Community Resources:** Community Legal Aid, Medina Bar Association, Jobs & Family Services, Housing Authority, courts, Office of Older Adults, Ohio Civil Rights Commission, HUD, United Way, and others.

Grant Management

- Denise provided an overview of available grant opportunities administered by the Medina County Department of Planning Services. These programs can help townships access funding for community projects and services. She encouraged the Township to contact Planning Services directly for assistance with eligibility, applications, and administration of grants.

Department Reports

Fire-EMS Department (James Carter)

- Cody Behunin has completed the Firefighter Transition Course and passed the Ohio Firefighter II requirements. His Level II Firefighter status began on August 7, 2025. Pay rate approval requested: change from \$16.99/hour to \$18.10/hour.

Approval of Firefighter II Pay Rate Adjustment

Bob Rohrer moved to approve the pay rate adjustment for Cody Behunin from \$16.99/hour to \$18.10/hour. Scott Phillips seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris – yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

Funding Requests - (For future consideration)

- Garage Door Maintenance Program (Doors 1–5 at \$145 each; Doors 6–7 at \$125 each; Total \$975 annually)
- RED/GREEN Light Safety Control Device – Quote \$928.58. Gene Morris requested clarification, as the quoted price appeared unusually low compared to expected cost.

Approval of Garage Door Maintenance Program

Bob Rohrer moved to approve the Garage Door Maintenance Program for Doors 1–7 at a total annual cost of \$975.00. Gene Morris seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris – yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

Road Supervisor (Andy Liston)

- Replaced a drive pipe on Blake Road
- Pressure washed the concrete and buildings
- Picked up tree limbs off roadsides
- Dug one grave
- Will need a new computer due to the upcoming Windows update. Ray will contact Jon Strong for assistance.
- Gene Morris reported receiving an email from Julie regarding the speed limit on Harpster Road. A sign can be posted, but enforcement cannot be managed by the Township. Andy may track traffic speeds for a few days.

Zoning Secretary (Shannon Colonna)**Zoning Commission (ZC):**

- Met last Thursday for a regular meeting. Discussion focused on setback exceptions for smaller lots, a recommendation from Bill Thorne due to the number of smaller lots and variances.
- The Board requested information on how other townships handle setbacks; Shannon has been compiling this research.
- Early discussions also began on updates related to ponds and swimming pools; Shannon is working on draft language.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA):

- Hearing scheduled for Thursday, August 21 at 6:00 PM.
- Shannon has also had a number of calls and emails with Nathan Kott.

Zoning Inspector (Julie Carr)

- No report.

River Styx Cemetery/Mound Hill Cemetery (Jeff Kersey)

- No report.

Trustees Reports

Bob Rohrer

- Followed up on when the floor will be done.
- Received a call about a ditch enclosure and relayed that to Andy.
- Received a call about a renter having a home occupation from another township.

Gene Morris

- No report.

Scott Phillips

- Spoke with a resident on Rawiga about activity on the road.
- Spoke with Mark Phillips about the Fire Chief process.

Comments from the Public

- There are no comments from the public.

Old Business

- Employee Handbook - Deposit of Public Money Policy

Approval of Deposit of Public Money Policy

Gene Morris **moved** to approve including the Deposit of Public Money Policy in the Employee Handbook. Scott Phillips seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris – yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

(Effective 8/19/2025) **Deposit of Public Money Policy**
Pursuant to Ohio Rev. Code 9.38

Duty to Deposit

All public money received by any public official, employee, or agent of Guilford Township must be transferred to the Guilford Township Fiscal Officer, or those authorized by the Fiscal Officer to deposited funds received to the designated depository of the township.

Deadline to Deposit

Over \$1,000: Funds exceeding one thousand (\$1,000) dollars must be deposited with the designated depository on the next business day following the day of receipt.

\$1,000 and Under: If the total amount of public moneys does not exceed one thousand (\$1,000) dollars, the moneys must be delivered to the fiscal officer or deposited with the designated depository within a time period not to exceed three business days following the day of receipt.

Money Safeguards

Any public official, employee, or agent of Guilford Township that is in control of public money during the intervening period prior to a deposit must take all reasonable and necessary steps to ensure the security and availability of the public money.

- Township Garage - It sounds like they need a new drawing, and they will need to work with Nathan on this some more. It sounds like they can have anyone do the drawings because they will be under \$25,000. Gene will follow up on this.

New Business

- Supplemental Appropriation transfer in General Fund of \$32,867.00 to 1000-110-500-005 Other (property clean-up) from 1000-760-730 (Improvement of Sites) and Mound Hill Cemetery Fund of \$500.00 to 9001-781-420 (Operating Supplies) from 9001-781-710 (Land). This allocation relates to cleanup of a property following a barn fire. Funds were received from the insurance company and are being held by the Township until the property is cleaned.

Approval of Supplemental Appropriation Transfer

Gene Morris **moved** to approve the Supplemental Appropriation transfer in General Fund of \$32,867.00 to 1000-110-500-005 Other (property clean-up) from 1000-760-730 (Improvement of Sites) and Mound Hill Cemetery Fund of \$500.00 to 9001-781-420 (Operating Supplies) from 9001-781-710 (Land). Scott Phillips seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris – yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

Gene noted that the camper business on Seville is back in operation at his residence.

Signing of the Warrants

Bob Rohrer **moved** to pay the warrants, payroll/accounting EFTs of \$103,870.95. Gene Morris seconded the motion. Roll call: Morris –yes, Rohrer – yes, Phillips – yes.

Public Question

Christine Fields, who noted she had attended a few prior township meetings, raised questions regarding Shannon holding multiple positions within the Township. She asked whether serving as both Zoning Secretary and Trustees Secretary could create a conflict of interest, particularly related to participation in executive sessions or access to information. She also mentioned that the Township should consider the “optics” of such arrangements.

Gene clarified that Shannon is not typically invited into executive sessions unless they are zoning-related. Ray added that Shannon is not a voting member of the BZA or the Trustees.

Christine further asked about Shannon’s role on the Zoning Commission. Gene and Ray explained that the Zoning Commission is an advisory body and does not have the authority to change zoning regulations. All final decisions rest with the Trustees. Shannon is one of five voting members of the Zoning Commission.

Christine also asked whether an individual may hold multiple positions, or if relatives such as spouses or children could serve on different committees. It was explained that multiple roles are permitted so long as no direct conflict of interest exists.

After extended discussion, Trustee Scott Phillips stated that Christine had been given adequate time to speak and noted that she may bring additional questions during the public comment portion of a future meeting.

Executive Session

Bob Rohrer **moved** to go into executive session at 8:44 P.M. to discuss compensation of a public employee and invited Jim Carter and Ray Ruprecht. Gene Morris seconded the motion. Roll call: Rohrer - yes, Morris - yes, Phillips - yes.

Bob Rohrer **moved** to come out of the executive session at 9:01 P.M. Gene Morris seconded the motion. Roll call: Rohrer - yes, Morris - yes, Phillips - yes.

There was no other meeting business discussed.

Adjournment

Bob Rohrer **moved** to adjourn the meeting. Scott Phillips seconded the motion. Roll call: Rohrer - yes, Morris - yes, Phillips - yes. The meeting adjourned at 9:01 P.M.

Bob Rohrer

Gene Morris

Scott Phillips

Ray Ruprecht

