

**RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS**

MADISON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING

Minutes of

Meeting

January 25, 2024, at 11:00 A.M.

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Held \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman Anderson opened the Trustees' Special Meeting at 11:00 A.M. in the Trustees Meeting Room at the Administration Building and welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Mr. Anderson called for a roll call: Mr. Gauntner, Mr. Wayman. Mr. Anderson, Chief Hager, Mr. Brown, Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek and Mr. Pasqualone were in attendance.

Mr. Anderson stated the purpose of the Special Meeting is to discuss manpower levels, retention, and recruitment of police employees. Mr. Anderson turned the Meeting over to Chief Hager.

Chief Hager stated when he started as Madison Township's Police Chief eight (8) months ago, two (2) senior officers were trying to leave and find employment elsewhere. That situation has been stabilized for now. After doing a comparison of police dispatcher salaries, Chief Hager said he was able to get his police dispatcher salaries where they need to be. Salaries of Madison Township police officers however are below what other communities are paying their officers. Chief Hager said, after talking to other police chiefs, maintaining and retaining police officers is getting very difficult. During the last ten (10) years, lateral transfers were a little difficult. Now it is much easier to transfer, and this has caused problems for police departments. Chief Hager said Madison Township has a good group of officers. He would like to add one (1) more officer per shift but cannot afford to do so. Chief Hager stated he cannot afford to lose any more officers, as it is hard to attract any new officers because of our salary rate. The most an officer can make in Madison Township is \$36.46 per hour. Painesville City is paying their officers about fifty cents (\$.50) more, and they have lost nine (9) officers and just lost another one who left to go to the Eastlake Police Department who pays more.

Chief Hager stated a Madison Township officer will make around seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00) per year. A Painesville officer will make close to seventy-seven thousand dollars (\$77,000.00) per year. The two (2) Madison Township officers who were thinking of leaving when Chief Hager started in Madison Township as Police Chief were thinking of going to Geauga County S.O who pays \$41.35 per hour. Chief Hager said the department just had a two percent (2%) increase in salary. A twelve percent (12%) increase in salary would raise the hourly rate to \$41.64 per hour. Chief Hager stated \$41.64 per hour would get the Madison Township Police Department wages back in the game and keep officers here. Madison Township currently has a five (5) step wage policy which Chief Hager would like to change to a three (3) step policy starting at \$31.24 per hour and ending at \$41.64 per hour. The language of this policy would have to be amended to reflect the changes.

Mr. Gauntner said residents will have to decide if they want a safe community or not. Most of the time, the Township only has two (2) cars patrolling over fifty (50) square miles of township. If one gets stuck waiting for a train, transporting a prisoner, or for any other situation, things can turn very difficult and dangerous. The Township will have to consider putting a levy on in the future for more manpower. Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek stated people find it hard to know what is happening in our community. Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek said she tries to inform residents online as much as possible. Mr. Gauntner said people can read our meeting minutes online. The Township meeting minutes are very detailed and informative. The information is there if people want to look for it.

Mr. Brown stated the appetite for increased police levies is just not there at this time. Perry and Concord Townships voted down recent police levies. Painesville Township passed a levy by one percent (1%). Chief Hager stated his neighbor told him he votes no on every levy. Mr. Wayman suggested increasing police salaries by twelve percent (12%) over two years, six percent (6%) one year and six percent (6%) the second year. Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek said something has to be done. Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek said the Township is hiring and training police officers who end up leaving us for better wages elsewhere. Chief Hager said this morning he had to send one officer to a domestic dispute which involved one person being transported to jail. The jail would not accept the person who needed to go to the hospital. The officer was gone for one hour and twenty minutes leaving only one car to patrol fifty square miles of township. Mr. Gauntner asked what if a school shooting should happen when the Township only has one officer on the road to respond. That would be a scary thought. Mr. Gauntner said this is difficult and requires a lot of thought.



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Chief Hager mentioned that a School Resource Officer (SRO) has informed him she does not want to be an SRO anymore. Mr. Brown said when the Township did not have SRO officers, police patrols were in the school every day. These officers are a valuable asset to the Police Department. Mr. Gauntner stated one difference between now and the 1980's is that if the Township lost an employee to Mentor or some other community back in the "80's, there were forty or fifty (40 or 50) people waiting for that job. Now the Township cannot find someone who wants that job. People do not want to be police officers or fire fighters anymore.

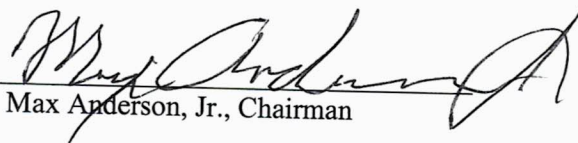
Chief Hager said his dispatchers are non-union and have to work a forty (40) hour week. The dispatchers, because of the rotation schedule, have to come in to work a four (4) hour shift. The dispatchers would like to go to a 36 to 44-hour week where they would be short four hours one week but over four (4) hours the next week. Mr. Gauntner and Mr. Anderson said they did not have a problem with this. Mr. Gauntner said to check with Jeremy Iosu, the township labor management consultant, regarding the dispatchers work schedule. Chief Hager stated he would like to know the direction the Trustees want to go regarding the police salary increase. Mr. Gauntner said at this time he was not ready to commit to a large increase in police salaries. He realizes the seriousness of this situation and will consider all factors but twelve percent (12%) is a big jump to make. Something has to be done for sure but the amount is still something the Township will need to consider. Mr. Gauntner suggested another work session to discuss this matter further.

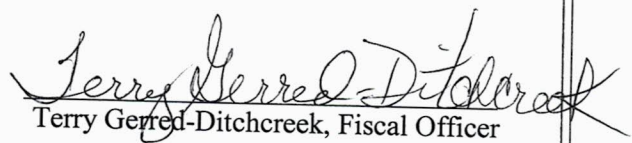
Mrs. Gerred-Ditchcreek suggested calculating the numbers for a four, six, and eight percent (4%, 6%, or 8%) increase in police salaries. The increases for 2024 are already in the budget, and she can figure how adding different percentages would affect the budget and what the Township can afford to do. The Trustees decided to discuss this matter at their Trustees' Workshop Meeting on February 13, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. instead of 6:30 P.M.

Mr. Anderson asked if anyone had anything further to bring up. With no further business to discuss, Mr. Anderson requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Gauntner presented a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Wayman. Roll Call: Mr. Gauntner: Yes Mr. Wayman: Yes Mr. Anderson: Yes

Chairman Anderson adjourned the Special Meeting at 11:55 A.M.

  
Max Anderson, Jr., Chairman

  
Terry Gerred-Ditchcreek, Fiscal Officer