

The Chester Township Board of Trustees met in special session **Wednesday, November 22, 2023** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at 7:00 A.M. Chairman Craig Richter presided.

Roll Call: All Trustees and the Fiscal Officer were present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The Board led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Leading Motion #: 2023-458

Executive Session

2023-458. Mr. Richter moved to enter into executive session at 7:01 A.M. pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(3) Conferences with an attorney for the public body concerning disputes involving the public body that are the subject of pending or imminent court action.

Mr. Mazzurco seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Richter, yes; Mr. Mazzurco, yes; Mr. Radtke, yes. Motion passed.

Invited into the executive session is Township Administrator Mark Purchase, Fiscal Officer Patricia Jarrett, Legal Counsel Lorrie Sass-Benza and Township Zoning Administrative Assistant Kathleen McCarthy. The board reentered session at 7:40 A.M.

Mr. Richter said it is determined this is not eminent legal action. The first motion will be amended as follows:

2023-459. Mr. Richter moved to amend motion 2023-458 to read: Move to enter into executive session at 7:01 A.M. pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22(G)(1) for the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, or promotion of a public employee.

Mr. Mazzurco seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Richter, yes; Mr. Mazzurco, yes; Mr. Radtke, yes. Motion passed.

Resolution on .5 PD mill: Mr. Richter started off by noting the plan was to reduce the collection on this to zero mills for the year 2024. Mr. Purchase added that not everyone is doing a total zero collect on the levy with the Resolution, if passed. As a suggestion the County offered that a 2-mill levy, only collect 1 mill which means the numbers need to be adjusted down. The Resolution originated from the Prosecutor's office as a template and it can be amended if need be at a special meeting.

RESOLUTION 2023-460. Mr. Richter moved to read and approve A RESOLUTION TO REDUCE COLLECTION OF CHESTER TOWNSHIP'S .5 MILL POLICE & EMS LEVY TO 0.00 MILL FOR 2024 ONLY

Be it resolved by the Board of Trustees of Chester Township ("the Township"), in a special meeting on this day of Wednesday / November 22nd, 2023, at the Chester Township Town Hall, 12701 Chillicothe Road, Chester Township, Geauga County Ohio with the following members present:

Craig Richter

Joseph Mazzurco

Ken Radtke Jr.

Mr. Craig Richter moved the adoption of the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Ohio Constitution provides for real property to be taxed without a vote of the people up to 10 mills which is commonly referred to as inside millage and effects every property owner in Geauga County, and within the Township; and

WHEREAS, the mandated 2023 reappraisal, as approved by the Ohio Tax Commissioner, has specifically resulted in an unprecedented average increase in Residential real estate valuation in Chester Township of 34.5% and 31.6% for Agricultural property which will cause inside millage tax to increase proportionately; and

WHEREAS, this will create an unvoted windfall of tax revenue to the political subdivisions that collect inside millage tax; and

WHEREAS, when it comes to inside millage taxes collected within Geauga County, schools receive 45% of inside millage, townships and municipalities receive 30% of inside millage, and the county receives 25% of inside millage; and

WHEREAS, the Township desires to mitigate this significant unvoted tax increase and provide property tax relief to property owners within the Township; and

WHEREAS, the Geauga County Budget Commission has recommended that townships can consider offsetting the unexpected inside millage tax increase and provide tax relief to taxpayers by reducing collection of existing, voter approved township levies;

WHEREAS, townships may choose to use the inside millage increase to supplement funding for any affected township department(s) out of the general fund where necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Township currently collects a .5 mill Police & EMS tax levy most recently approved by voters during the general election held on November 2nd, 2021;

WHEREAS, said levy provides funding for the operation of the Township's Police & EMS Services; and

WHEREAS, the Township desires to reduce collection by .5 mill of this .5 mill levy for collection of 2023 taxes which are payable in 2024 for said levy, which would therefore reduce the stated rate to 0.0 mill; and

WHEREAS, one year of reduced collection of the .5 mill tax levy for Police & EMS, last approved at November 2nd, 2021 general election, will provide Township property owners with levy \$207,599.48 in property tax relief and serve to approximately offset the Township's increased inside millage; and

WHEREAS, the Township only seeks to reduce the collection of this levy during collection year 2024; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Chester Township, Geauga County, Ohio hereby authorizes the reduction of the collection of the .5 mill Police & EMS levy by .5 mill, therefore reducing the stated rate to 0.0 mill; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Township only seeks to reduce the collection of this levy during collection year 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Township Fiscal Officer is authorized and instructed to deliver a certified copy of this resolution to the Geauga County Auditor's Office to ensure the accuracy of relevant tax rates and values for the 2024 tax collection period.

Mr. Mazzurco seconded the motion. Upon call of the question, the vote was as follows:

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Richter, yes; Mr. Mazzurco, yes; Mr. Radtke, yes. Motion passed.

Issue 2 Recreational Marijuana- The Resolution from the County Prosecutor has not yet been received. This takes effect December 7, 2023 so it can be placed on the November 30, 2023 agenda.

Rotary – The Board approved up to \$2,000 for the Geauga West Rotary Club for the purchase and replacement of LED commercial holiday lighting at a previous meeting. A check will be produced today and Mr. Mazzurco can then submit all paperwork to NOPEC.

2023-461. Mr. Richter moved to approve warrant 87398 dated November 22, 2023 in the amount of \$2,000 to the Geauga West Rotary Club for the purchase and replacement of LED commercial grade holiday lighting which will be utilized and displayed in the township park.
Mr. Mazzurco seconded. Vote unanimous.; motion passed.

2023-462. Mr. Richter moved to approve the payment of \$1,790.00 to PRADCO for the cost of two police officers psychological background assessments. Payment should be from appropriated line item 2081-210-599-0000 (Other).
Mr. Mazzurco seconded. Vote unanimous.; motion passed.

State Capital Projects – Mr. Richter said the state has millions of dollars and they are offering access to the money to townships. Reimbursement max is 50% of the project and a commitment is required. Normally township buildings are not permitted for use of the money, although this year buildings are permitted. You can submit as many projects as you want since there is no limit. Our salt dome was suggested as a project to consider since we do handle state routes. Mrs. Jarrett also suggested reaching out to the EPA for money regarding the salt dome situation. Mr. Purchase shared the cost to replace the salt dome is astronomical. However, he met with someone last week that noted he could repair the cement areas in sections for a fraction of the cost others quoted. It was shared that you can submit with estimates only when requesting the money. Mr. Richter suggested coming up with a list of projects (by next Thursday) that the Township would like to have considered. Mrs. Jarrett thought it was implied at the meeting they wanted to give everyone a piece of the pie and smaller projects might be easier to obtain.

Response to the October 27, 2023 County Commissioner letter & the potential election interference complaint began with Mr. Radtke asking if everyone was on board with his thoughts. Mr. Richter agreed with Mr. Radtke and said he was surprised about the cost to taxpayers. Mr. Richter made a couple minor changes in the letter Mr. Radtke prepared. The timing of the letter is contrary to law Mr. Radtke

thinks. Mrs. Jarrett vocalized that this was known about early on and they chose not to say anything. We only found out in August because Mr. Purchase attended a meeting. Mr. Mazzurco added that this was very confusing to the general public and the voters. Mr. Radtke said how many early voters had already cast their votes before ever receiving the letter. Discussion continued over the county and the purchasing of buildings. Mr. Radtke will submit the letter to the Geauga County Commissioners, signed by the Trustees. He will also submit his letter to the guest column in the local paper signed by himself.

2023-463. Mr. Richter moved to approve and submit a letter to the Geauga County Commissioners regarding their October 27, 2023 guest column.

Mr. Mazzurco seconded. Vote unanimous.; motion passed.

Financial Items

2023-464. Mr. Richter moved to approve the financial transactions below.

Mr. Mazzurco seconded. Vote unanimous.; motion passed.

PURCHASE ORDERS					
Dept	PO #	Type	Amount	Payable To	Purpose
Police	292-2023	Regular	\$1,765.69	PRADCO	2 Police Officer Psych/Back Assessment
Park	293-2023	Regular	\$2,000.00	Chesterland Rotary Foundation Inc	Reimburse LED lighting for parks

ON – LINE PAYMENT VOUCHERS		
Date	Starting No.	Ending No.
11/10/2023	1988-2023	1988-2023

(last voucher used on 11/16/23 was 1987-2023)

CHECKS		
Date	Starting No.	Ending No.
11/22/23	87396	87398
Fiscal Officer's note: the last check number used on 11/16/23 was 87395		

The above check ending number was amended to reflect number 87398 since one additional check was produced this morning.

Mr. Radtke added he will write for the guest column that the Board of Trustees took action on November 22, 2023 and approved the letter and will submit it.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Board, Mr. Richter adjourned the meeting at 8:24 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jarrett, Fiscal Officer

December 14, 2023 Motion # 2023-480
Approval Date

Craig Richter, Chairman

Joseph C. Mazzurco, Vice-Chairman

Ken Radtke, Jr., Trustee