LIBERTY TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION – MARCH 11, 2026 @ 5:00 P.M.
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:
Chairman Ken Clark called the meeting to order.

OFFICIALS ATTENDING:
Ken Clark, Evan Stump, Gene Stump, Shawn McFarland and Gene Cole.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Evan Stump moved to accept the minutes of the February 11, 2026 Regular Meeting. Gene Stump seconded the motion. Vote: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

Gene Stump moved to accept the minutes of the March 2, 2026 Special Meeting. Evan Stump seconded the motion. Vote: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

GUEST ATTENDING:
Justin Kahle with the county Prosecutor's Office was present.
Matt Gilroy from Findlay-Hancock Economic Development were present.
April Taylor was present and addressed the board with a prepared statement regarding some damage to her landscape border and additional area surrounding her mailbox. Discussion was had between Ms. Taylor, her husband, and the Trustees and Mr. Cole. After discussion. Trustees advised that legal counsel will see what can be done and someone would get back to them.

Matt Gilroy presented next to the board regarding the Enterprise Zone Program with Findlay AAL, LLC. Mr. Evan Stump stated that he went over the numbers with the Hancock County Auditor. Mr. Clark stated that he feels that we need this project in our township. Mr. Gene Stump asked if township employees be given the first opportunity to be employed by the new facility and if contractors can be sourced locally. Mr. Gilroy stated that it can be written as a request, but not a requirement. Mr. Gene Stump asked some annexation questions. Mr. McFarland asked if there was an estimated tax revenue number. Mr. Gilroy passed out an estimate. Mr. Evan Stump said that he would reach out to Mr. Bruce Otley with Liberty Benton Schools next week to discuss the abatement.

ZONING INSPECTOR'S REPORT:
Gene Cole presented the Trustees with his monthly report (see attached).

Gene Stump stated that there is a zoning amendment that the Zoning Commission approved and Regional Planning denied. Trustees are deciding factor. Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to meet in Special Session on April 6, 2026 at 6pm regarding Zoning Amendment 26-12-1. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

FIRE CHIEFS REPORT:
Chief Morton emailed his report to the Trustees prior to the meeting for discussion at this meeting.

Chief Morton requested to enter Executive Session with himself and the Trustees. Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to enter Executive Session for personnel matters to consider appointment, employment dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official with the Trustees and Chief Morton. Mr. Evan Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark –

yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees entered Executive Session at 6:00pm.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees came out of Executive Session at 6:07pm.

Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to enter Executive Session for personnel matters to consider appointment, employment dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official with the Trustees, Chief Morton, and Justin Kahle. Mr. Evan Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees entered Executive Session at 6:07pm.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees came out of Executive Session at 6:30pm.

Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to cancel application interviews tonight and in the future for what the township took applications for with the exception of Fire Chief applicants. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Gene Stump then invited the three individuals who applied for Fire Chief to stay for interviews and told all other individuals present who applied for other Fire Department Officer positions that they were free to go.

Chief Morton then finished his report.

Mr. Evan Stump gave an update on the purchase of an ambulance for the Fire Department. He stated that with the township residents approving a levy, we owe it to them to provide outstanding emergency services. The committee has been moving things along at a very quick pace, and the ambulance is currently at Atlantic being inspected.

Mr. Evan Stump also stated that Burgess Ambulance Sales quoted a new 550 diesel ambulance at $312,000 and a new 450 diesel ambulance at $290,000. Additionally, a new Stryker power stretcher is $75,000. He feels good about the direction that Liberty Township has gone by purchasing a 2015 Dodge ambulance with a Braun box in good shape that came with a Ferno power stretcher for $45,000. He states that he doesn't see the need to purchase a new ambulance currently.

Mr. Evan Stump also brought up a new social media SOP and passed it out to the other Trustees. He stated that he understands personal opinions and first amendment rights, but that a member of the fire department represents the township and must be held to a higher standard.

Mr. Evan Stump also brought up that he attended the fire department business meeting and brought up a pay scale change for firefighters, incentivizing firefighters to obtain their EMS certification. The pay scale is a work-in-progress but having ten firefighters respond to a medical call and only two of those having an EMS certification to be able to provide care just doesn't make sense. There was some discussion between the Trustees and the Fire Chief.

Mr. McFarland provided an update from the EMS Committee and what else needs done in order to have EMS up and running. Mr. McFarland stated that inspections, DEA license, Ohio Pharmacy Board license, and other items that need done should be a few more months. Mr. Clark said that someone should be appointed tonight to run EMS, since it is just the committee currently. Mr. Evan Stump agreed.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to take a brief recess to allow a bathroom break for the Trustees. Mr. Gene Stump seconded. VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and recess began at 7:12pm.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to come back from recess. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees entered back into regular session at 7:17pm.

Orion Jones and Rachel Rader, candidates for County Commissioner, were recognized and they introduced themselves to the board and spoke a little bit about what their goals for the county are. The Trustees mentioned that the two big concerns of theirs are annexations by the city and the fact that we do not want a jail/prison in our township. The Trustees then thanked them for attending.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

COMMUNICATIONS:

Oral Communications:

None

Written Communications:

Mr. McFarland stated that he completed the quarterly certification for LODD.

Mr. McFarland stated that he received a quote for a new printer/copier for the fire department from Perry Pro Tech. Discussion was had amongst the Trustees regarding this matter and the pricing. Monies will be moved within the fire department budget. Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to purchase the Lexmark XM3350 Multi-Function Printer as quoted by Perry Pro Tech for $1,985 and the maintenance agreement for $14.95 per month. Mr. Evan Stump seconded the motion. VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

Mr. Cole stated that Metronet will be completing the installation and internet provider will now be Metronet.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. McFarland provided an update to the Fraud Training that is required by the state. It is to be done every 4 years and any new hire is supposed to complete it. He recommended that since Chief Morton had already started the fire department taking the training again, it should just be completed by all members of the fire department. Mr. Evan Stump also reminded the Trustees that for each term that elected officials serve, they must complete Ohio Ethics and Sunshine Laws.

Mr. Cole passed around prices to get started for construction to add on to the existing fire station from Peterman Associates. Some discussion was had.

Mr. Clark contacted Albers and Albers regarding annexation of Kohl's Distribution Center and was wondering if the city did not originally provide all of the information regarding the annexation of Kohl's Distribution Center and also that the County Commissioners at the time may not have fully acted on the annexation. Trustees asked Justin Kahle for information and Justin stated that Cindy Land is working on it from the Commissioners' side, whether it is a Resolution to Adopt or something else and Justin said that for whatever reason the annexation had not been formalized on the Commissioners' side. Mr. Evan

Stump asked Justin Kahle if there was ever a formal motion to annex in the parcels that Kohls Distribution Center sits on. Mr. Kahle stated that from the Commissioners' side, there was never a formal motion that he was aware of, but it is something that Cindy was looking at. Mr. Evan Stump told Justing that this was a big issue. Mr. Kahle said that Cindy is working on a Resolution to reconcile the issue, to which Mr. Evan Stump replied that he doesn't think the township will go along with. Mr. Gene Stump told Me. Kahle that the township has sought the advice of outside legal counsel on how to proceed, and if there was a problem with the annexation, there is going to be a problem. Furthermore, Mr. Evan Stump advised Mr. Kahle that if Liberty Township is owed tax money for the time it was supposed to be annexed up until present, the township wants a part of it, adding that it is not the fault of the township that the past commissioners' board was negligent and did not perform their duties to their fullest ability. Mr. Evan Stump also said that the Trustees owe it to the residents of the township to fight for any tax monies owed to the township. Mr. Kahle said that he is not aware of any tax implications and reiterated that Cindy Land is looking into it. Mr. Evan Stump said that based on the letter received from the Findlay Law Director, the ask was for Liberty Township to waive the notice. Mr. Evan Stump made it clear that the township will not simply waive the notice and let it be known that the Trustees wanted to cut to the chase and move to an end point. If the township is owed money or if agreements need to be made with the city (examples of removing the 50% increase in the water for the township residents, removing the annexation clause in the water bill, etc.), the Trustees swore an oath to protect their constituents. Mr. Evan Stump concluded by saying that this is a very large matter. Mr. Gene Stump wondered how many other instances like this are out there that have gone unchecked. Mr. Evan Stump then asked Mr. Kahle if it is possible for the township to seek restitution and payment back to the township for income tax monies owed to the township that would have been collected by the township instead of the city of Findlay for the past 20 or so years. Mr. Kahle said that he did not know and would have to check. Mr. Gene Stump then commented that there were a lot of employees who worked at the Distribution Center that would have erroneously had City of Findlay taxes withheld and that the letter sent makes no sense.

Mr. Clark attended the DAC meeting on behalf of the township and cast their vote as a no, but ultimately all but Liberty and Vanlue voted yes, and it passed with a 4% increase. Mr. Gene Stump made it known that he doesn't think that it is right that they gave a 4% increase to the health board when they are operating in a deficit. Mr. Clark did say that they froze raises for the next 3 or 4 years going forward.

Mr. Evan Stump provided an update on the Enterprise Zone Agreement. Mr. Kahle said he reviewed the documents with Cindy, and it is still a work in progress. Mr. Evan Stump said that he will keep the Prosecutor's office updated.

Mr. Evan Stump also brought up the data center moratorium. Understood that the Prosecutor's Office is working on it, but he asked Mr. Kahle to please keep the Trustees updated. Mr. Evan Stump then asked if there was anything that could be done through zoning. Mr. Kahle said he would look into it and let the Trustees know. Mr. Gene Stump said that it would be wise for zoning to act sooner rather than later.

Mr. Evan Stump stated that he attended the Water and Sewer District meeting and learned a lot. He advised that the township would benefit from joining. He also said that the Commissioners want townships to make the decision so township representation could be on the board. Mr. Gene Stump agrees and will continue to follow up.

Mr. Clark advised that he sent the audit results to Albers and Albers and is waiting for a response. Mr. McFarland said that any conversation about the audit should be conducted in Executive Session since the audit was not finalized, according to Jacob Leu from the state Auditor's Office.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to enter Executive Session under matters required to be confidential to discuss state audit findings to include the Trustees, Fiscal Officer McFarland, Fiscal Officer Assistant Hannah Brown, and Justin Kahle. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees entered Executive Session at 8:02pm.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the Trustees came out of Executive Session at 8:29pm.

Mr. Gene Stump made a motion to have revised fire department SOP's reviewed by legal counsel for possible adoption, to include SOP's 1-30, 1-31, 1-20, 1-20(A), 1-21(A), 1-21(C), 1-40, 1-41, 1-41(A), 4-12(A), 4-12(B), 4-12(C), 4-12(D) and including the draft of the social media policy for Liberty Township Fire Department. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. Vote: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried, and the proposed SOP's were given to Mr. Kahle from the County Prosecutor's office for review.

Mr. Cole received a call from a resident on Ferndale who was worried about a tree in the right-of-way. Mr. Cole advised her to contact the water department.

Mr. Cole spoke to a resident on Cottonwood about sidewalk replacement. Mr. Cole asked the Trustees about replacing that portion of the sidewalk. Mr. Cole was advised to look into the cost.

Chief Morton stated that he is being assessed Findlay City Schools tax and that he is being charged a 1% tax increase. He will be speaking to the state of Ohio and was wondering if the Trustees could suggest anything. Mr. Evan Stump said there was really nothing that could be done at the township level.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS:

Mr. McFarland passed around the financial reports to the Trustees.

Mr. McFarland gave updates on STAR Ohio Account and Fifth Third account interest earned.

Ken Clark made a motion to authorize the Fiscal Officer to prepare warrants and pay bills. Mr. Gene Stump seconded the motion. Vote: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried.

Mr. McFarland, on behalf of the EMS Committee, is asking for the remainder of the $100,000 set aside to purchase the ambulance to be used to outfit the ambulance (cardiac monitor, stair chair, equipment, supplies, licensing, graphics, repairs, etc.). Funds will be moved to three different line items.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF INTERVIEWS:

Mr. Evan Stump announced the applicants for Fire Chief included Joseph Morton, Brandon Andrews, and Jeff Janes.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to enter Executive Session for personnel matters to consider appointment, employment dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official with the Trustees and Joseph Morton, Brandon Andrews, and Jeff Janes to be called in one-by-one. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. ROLL CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – ABSTAIN FROM VOTE AND RECUSED SELF FROM INTERVIEWS. Motion carried, and Trustees Mr. Clark and Mr. Evan Stump entered Executive Session at 9:00pm.

Mr. Evan Stump made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. ROLL

CALL VOTE: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – ABSTAIN. Motion carried, and Trustees Mr. Clark and Mr. Evan Stump came out of Executive Session at 9:57pm.

Mr. Evan Stump addressed all in attendance, stating that in the interest of transparency and because Mr. Evan Stump has a family member on the fire department, the appointment of a Fire Chief will be tabled until legal counsel has the opportunity to fully review the SOP's to make sure that legal and ethical guidelines are followed. He then stated that all three interviews were phenomenal and thanked the interviewees for their time.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business before the Trustees, Evan Stump moved to adjourn. Gene Stump seconded the motion. Vote: Ken Clark – yes, Evan Stump - yes, Gene Stump – yes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10pm.

ATTEST:

Shawn McFarland, Fiscal Officer

Evan Stump, Chairman

Kenneth Clark, Trustee

Gene Stump, Vice Chairman