**UNION TOWNSHIP – WARREN COUNTY**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES – Special Meeting – March 24, 2020**

**CALLING THE MEETING TO ORDER:** This special meeting of the Union Township Board of Trustees was called to order by President, Fred Vonderhaar, for the sole purpose to discuss employee work schedules during the COVID-19 pandemic response, on Tuesday 3/24/20 at 4:00 p.m. at the Union Township Municipal Building. The meeting was opened with the Fiscal Officer, Shelley Lamb, taking roll call of the Trustees: Fred Vonderhaar, Tony Ledford, and Jamie Allen. All were in attendance.

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Fire Chief Robert Napier; Road Superintendent Josh Sandlin

**NEW BUSINESS:** Trustee Ledford said he requested the meeting in regard to the road employees during the pandemic. He said other entities have spoken to their employees about this current situation and he felt the need to address it. He stated the goal of the meeting was to establish guidelines between the Road Department and the Trustees during the shelter-in-place as put into order by Governor Mike DeWine; another goal is to provide safety to the Township’s employees and their families during this time. He stated he has spoken to Road Superintendent Josh Sandlin who had expressed concern about this issue. He feels the guidelines should be left up to Josh, as example having only 1 employee in a truck at a time. Trustee Ledford stated he had a list of other townships that were doing this as well. He feels the employees should be kept separated from each other as he is trying to protect their well-being. He thinks maybe they could work in shifts and/or be “on call as needed”, continuing to make sure everything will be taken care of and all work is still getting done, as they will continue to be paid, but not entitled to overtime. This will continue through April 6th. Mr. Sandlin was in agreement. Mr. Allen also stated he had spoken to Josh and agreed they should not all be in the trucks together. A funeral at the cemetery would be different as they could all spread out. Chief Napier asked if the Trustees would be doing a written policy. Trustee Ledford stated they would. Mr. Ledford stated he reached out to Trustee Vonderhaar earlier about calling the special meeting but did not hear back from him. Mr. Vonderhaar said he responded to every text and sent all his texts to all Trustees, Chief Napier, and Fiscal Officer Lamb. Mr. Ledford said he was just trying to follow suit of all the other townships that were looking out for their employees in this way, such as Deerfield Township, City of Mason, and Warren County Water/Sewer Department. Mr. Vonderhaar stated those were not all *townships* that were brought up by Mr. Ledford. Mr. Allen stated he did receive the text from Mr. Vonderhaar and proceeded to read it: “I (Mr. Vonderhaar) have been in contact with various other townships concerning their road departments and they had no other plans than “business as usual” at this time. I believe that our Road Superintendent Josh Sandlin can handle the situation. This should be discussed between all 3 Trustees at the Township Meetings so we do not violate the Sunshine Law”. Mr. Ledford stated he did not get that text from Mr. Vonderhaar, but Chief Napier did forward it to him. Mr. Allen stated his employer was paying him for this week as he was not working because of the current situation. He feels that other companies are dealing with setting up other shifts and pay arrangements for their employees. Mr. Ledford stated that Governor DeWine said cities and townships needed to do what they felt was right for their situation. Mr. Ledford said we only have 3 employees and if 1 were to get sick, the others probably would too, resulting in not being able to do any work. Mr. Ledford then asked if the Township would even have a meeting as scheduled on April 6th, to which Mr. Vonderhaar stated yes, at this time it is on schedule.

Mr. Allen then asked Mr. Sandlin for any ideas he may have. Mr. Sandlin stated he would definitely like to keep himself separated from his employee, Aaron Wright, that way if one were to get sick, the other hopefully would be able to do any needed work. Mr. Wright had already taken off 2 days to keep himself away from others, using his own accrued time. Mr. Sandlin then stated he heard he may be able to donate his sick time to the other employees to use, so they would not have to deplete their own earned time during this pandemic. Mr. Ledford & Mr. Allen stated they did not think Mr. Sandlin should have to use his own personal time to take care of his two employees. Mr. Ledford stated most employees at others places that are not working are getting paid, but are not receiving any overtime pay if called in. Mr. Sandlin stated he would continue to work, but wanted to keep his other employees at home and only call them in if needed. He feels separation at this time is best.

Mr. Ledford thinks they need to work with the Road Department employees and have something in writing as this is new to us all.

Chief Napier agreed with this as he has already put out an action plan that follows the rest of Warren County concerning fire departments. He stated it needs to be put in writing for all employees to see what is to be expected, especially concerning their compensation. Mr. Ledford stated he heard that most government employees, if they were to get sick, do not have to use their personal sick time to take off from work. Chief Napier said new policies from other area fire departments have affected some of his employees, but he is prepared for any issues that could arise and his department will do what they can. He also stated he thought his department could get reimbursed through FEMA for 75% of any overtime, possibly all of it during this crisis. Chief Napier said they would also continue to do mutual aid calls as much as they can. He felt they may have to prioritize runs in the future. He feels they have ample supplies at this time and are working with the grocery stores on keeping some in stock for the department. Chief Napier stated he just got word from Warren County there are 6 total people in the county infected with COVID 19 at this time. Mr. Napier wanted to state for the record that Mr. Sandlin would set up the work schedule for the road employees and the trustees would follow up with a written policy. Mr. Ledford asked the other 2 trustees if they agreed to pay the road employees for 40 hours while they were off this week. Mr. Allen said he agreed. Mr. Ledford asked Mr. Sandlin if they were paid for the 40 hours and were to get called in, there would be no overtime. Mr. Sandlin said he agreed. Mr. Ledford made a motion, seconded by Mr. Allen, to pay the road employees for 40 hours while being “on call as needed”. The motion passed with the following roll call vote:

Mr. Vonderhaar: NO

Mr. Ledford: YES

Mr. Allen: YES

Mr. Ledford said something would be written up and presented at the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Vonderhaar made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ledford to adjourn the meeting at 4:28 p.m. The motion was carried by all “yeas”.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, April 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.