

UNION TOWNSHIP – WARREN COUNTY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – Special Meeting – February 12, 2024

CALLING THE MEETING TO ORDER: The special meeting of the Union Township Board of Trustees was called to order by Chairperson of the Board, Chris Koch on Monday, 2/12/2024 at 4:00 p.m. at the Union Township Building. Union Township Trustees Fred Vonderhaar, Rhonda Cockerham, & Chris Koch were in attendance, as well as Attorney Kathryn Horvath from the Warren County Prosecutor’s Office. The prayer was led by Mr. Vonderhaar. Mr. Koch led everyone in The Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Koch made a motion to go into executive session concerning the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee or official. The motion failed as it did not get a second. Attorney Horvath stated the previous motion failed and Mr. Koch could proceed with a discussion in the public meeting. He then read an email he received from part time Firefighter Ryan Hurley, who had resigned earlier that day (see attached). Mr. Hurley was a previous full time Union Township Firefighter but had resigned that position in July 2023 to go to another area department. Mr. Koch stated Union Township has two options, as per advice from the Warren County Prosecutor’s office, either to investigate or ignore this email.

The public in attendance of this meeting voiced their negative opinions of Chief Napier being put on “paid administrative leave” after the motion adoption at the Union Township Trustee Regular Meeting held on February 5, 2024.

Attorney Horvath confirmed to the Board this special meeting was called to either initiate an investigation, to appoint an investigator or to rescind the previous meeting motion to put Chief Napier on paid administrative leave.

Mrs. Cockerham stated she felt the Hurley email could indicate a safety concern for the department.

Mr. Koch made a second motion to go into executive session concerning the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee or official. Again, the motion failed. Mr. Koch said he felt going forward with no investigation could open Union Township to potential liability.

Mrs. Cockerham asked previous 20-year Union Township Trustee Skip Lawhorn what he would recommend in this situation. Mr. Lawhorn said he would bring back Chief Napier, but he thought the Board should meet and discuss the email with Mr. Hurley, then if there are legitimate concerns there should be an official investigation.

After guidance from Attorney Horvath, Mr. Koch stated to the group he has had more verbal complaints from other firefighters. Mr. Koch feels it is in best interest to go forward with an investigation and it is not appropriate for Chief Napier to return to work.

Mr. Koch made a motion to appoint an investigator and to begin an investigation. This motion failed, as it did not get a second.

Mr. Vonderhaar made a motion to rescind the previous motion from 2/5/24, thus allowing Chief Napier to return from paid administrative leaves, seconded by Mrs. Cockerham The motion was carried by “yeas” from Mr. Vonderhaar & Mrs. Cockerham. Mr. Koch voted no.

ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Koch made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vonderhaar to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 p.m. The motion was carried by all “yeas”. The next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Union Township Fire Resignation

1 message

Ryan Hurley <rhurley8219@gmail.com>
To: "chris.koch untwp.com" <chris.koch@untwp.com>

Sat, Feb 3, 2024 at 3:25 PM

Good Afternoon Mr. Koch,

I wanted to personally reach out to thank you for your service to the community as an elected representative for Union Township. I personally have worked for Union Township Fire Rescue for close to 16 years. I started with the department as a 16 year old cadet, and worked my way up the ranks to Captain with the fire department. I recently resigned from the department as a part time fill-in Firefighter/Paramedic as of today. I wanted to inform you as the President of the Board of Trustees that this decision was not taken lightly. I have never felt so much disrespect, unprofessionalism, and demeaning from a Fire Chief that I have worked for as with Chief Napier. As I have given my all to the residents, and co-workers of Union Township. Unfortunately the fire department is in shambles and only getting worst week to week with morale and performance. If the board of trustees would talk to the crews working 24/7 365 days a year a lot would come out on how Chief Napier treats his employees. I am not a disgruntled employee. I obviously resigned from my Full Time position as a Captain last July to take a Firefighter/Paramedic position with Deerfield Township and I can personally tell you money was not the reason I left Union Township. Morale and the character of Chief Napier played a crucial role in this. If you or the Board of Trustees have any additional questions I would be more than happy to answer any and all.

Respectfully,
Ryan Hurley
513-760-2138