

# Benton Township Board Meeting

July 13th, 2022  
7616 E State Road 45, Bloomington, IN, 47468

## **Attendance**

- Joe Husk, Chair
- Hans Kelson, Secretary
- Michelle Bright, Township Trustee
- Sean McInerney
- Mary McInerney

**Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM**

## **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion to Approve June 15th Minutes: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

## **Reports**

### **Financial Report**

- The board reviewed Trustee Bright's Financial Report. A summary of that report is attached to this document.
  - We received \$320 from a resident whose yard we had to mow twice last year. This was added to the resident's tax bill.
  - We received \$10 from the Fire District. This was the official purchase price of the Fire Department vehicles.

### **Approval**

- Motion to Approve Financial Reports: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

## **Trustee's Report**

- Trustee Bright presented her Trustee's Report.

## **Township**

- Trustee Bright received a phone call from Lynn Stevens on July 4th stating that he intended to resign his position on the Township Board.
- Trustee Bright has a budget workshop on July 18th.
- The new Annual Growth Quotient was announced recently, and our revenues for this coming year may increase up to five percent. Trustee Bright says that this is the highest rate she can remember in the last ten years.
- Through the Township's insurance company, we are able to offer employees term life insurance, if at least two people sign up. This would most likely be paid personally and not through township funds or payroll unless we sign a resolution. Trustee Bright presented this to the Board, and no members expressed interest in participating.
- The Monroe County Humane Association's low-cost vaccination clinic was held at the Fire Station on July 10. We had approximately 23 animals come for services.
  - The public health department was giving away free COVID tests at this event. 40 tests were distributed.
- A citizen requested to rent the Township's reconfigurable sign to commemorate her husband retiring. Trustee Bright brought this up to Mike Tarter (president of the Unionville Senior Center), and he agreed that this was to be used for Township and Senior Center business only. We do not want to promise the staffing or supplies to change out the sign, and we do not want to monitor content.
- Trustee Bright discovered that the City of Bloomington specifies 8 inches as the maximum height of grass, etc. in their vegetation policy. Our policy so far has specified 6 inches. Trustee Bright will be presenting an updated Vegetation Policy which increases our limit to 8 inches as well.

## **Senior Center**

- There are no Senior Center updates at this time.

## **Danny Smith Park**

- We have sent our signed contract to Danny Smith Park regarding financial support, but have not received a signed copy back.

## **Cemeteries**

- There are no Cemetery updates at this time.

## **Fire Department**

- All the paperwork to finish out the legal description updates with the Youngs and Stevens, and transfer of Fire Department property to the Monroe Fire Protection District only requires Trustee signature, not the board. This is in process.
- The Fire District is trying to locate old fire department photos for their collection. They have gone through all the files that were in the offices (upstairs and downstairs) and Trustee Bright is meeting with them to go through files that were found in the attic. If anyone has anything they would like to share, please contact Public Information Officer Jason Allen.
- Trustee Bright made a public records request for the run information about a run conducted on January 4th, 2020, involving a house which burned down on Earl Young Road.
  - At the time, our fire station still relied on volunteers.
  - The homeowner reported that her son had lit fireworks around the hour of 21:50. One of those fireworks landed on the house. After this, the residents all went to bed.
  - Around 23:22, the homeowner reports that her son woke her up. At this point, she remembers seeing the clock and also seeing fire outside.
  - There was approximately a 1.5 hour delay between the start of the fire and a call being placed to 911.
  - The first and second primary sources of ignition were listed as:
    - \* Heat source too close to combustibles
    - \* Munitions

## **Approval**

- Motion to Approve Trustee Report: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

## **Township Assistance Report**

- Mary McInerney submitted Township Assistance Reports for April, May, and June of 2022. The board reviewed those, and copies have been attached to this document.

## **Approval**

- Motion to Table Township Assistance Report: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

## **Old Business**

### **2023 Budget Discussion**

Trustee Bright presented her historical budget overview, and gave some thoughts on budget possibilities for next year. Anything which is noteworthy or has changed is listed below:

- Township General Fund:
  - Trustee and Board salaries stay the same, which is as low as possible.
  - 3% increase in pay for clerical help, from \$15.91/hr to \$16.39.
  - Salary of Deputy Trustee remains around \$750. This is paid as \$50 per day when Trustee Bright is away for extended periods of time.
  - Other Supplies remains at \$1500. One of the main reasons for this being so large is paying for our township accounting software.
  - Township property mowing and snow removal is removed, as this is now handled by the Fire District.
  - Stormwater fees have gone up. Trustee Bright has allowed \$200 for this.
  - This year's Township budget was \$63,000. Next year, Trustee Bright is proposing a budget of \$60,000.
- Recreation Fund:
  - We normally budget \$5,000 for this fund. Currently, we are around \$1,400 for the year. Trustee Bright proposes leaving the budget at \$5,000. We have many potential projects around the property which this money could be put towards.
- Township Assistance Fund:
  - 3% increase in pay for clerical help, from \$15.91/hr to \$16.39.
- Direct Assistance Fund:
  - Total budget for the Direct Assistance Fund is proposed to be \$20,000.00. This year, we have only spent \$2,152, but this is very unpredictable.
  - 2016's total expenditure of \$10,547.18 was the most that Trustee Bright has ever needed to spend from this fund.

- Comments:
  - Board Member Kelson states that this looks good, and notes that, especially given the small and unpredictable nature of township government, additional appropriations will just have to be accepted occasionally.

## **New Business**

### **Additional Appropriation to the Recreation Fund**

- At the last meeting, the Board approved an Additional Appropriation to the Recreation Fund. Due to a clerical error on the part of the Herald-Times, the public notice for that resolution was not printed far enough in advance of the meeting. Proper advance notice has now been given, and we are voting on the same resolution again.
- A copy of the Additional Appropriation resolution is attached to this document.
- Motion to Approve Additional Appropriation to the Recreation Fund in the full amount of \$2,200: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

### **Vegetation Policy**

- Trustee Bright proposed updates to our Vegetation Policy. A copy of the updated policy, with changes highlighted, is attached to this document.

### **Approval**

- Motion to Approve Updated Vegetation Policy: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Approved Unanimously

## **Public Comment**

- There was no public comment at this meeting.

## **Adjournment**

- Motion to Adjourn: Kelson  
Second: Husk  
Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

<b>MAY 2022</b>	<b>2022 Budget</b>	<b>Month to date Expense</b>	<b>Year to date Expense</b>	<b>Remaining Approved Budget</b>	<b>Cash Balance</b>	<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Local Income Tax</b>	<b>Trust Indiana</b>
Rainy Day Fund	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 560.00	\$ 19,215.00	\$ 785.00	\$ 56,656.83	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.22
Township Fund	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 3,836.28	\$ 19,994.02	\$ 43,005.98	\$ 196,572.19	\$ 14.70	\$ 25,993.33	\$ 12.01
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 443.82	\$ 3,856.65	\$ 16,143.35	\$ 92,635.46	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37.13
Firefighting Fund	\$ 80,794.00	\$ -	\$ 80,547.73	\$ 246.27	\$ 296.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cumulative Fire Fund	\$ 2,800.00	\$ -	\$ 2,800.00	\$ -	\$ 18.01	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.05
Recreation Fund	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 89.44	\$ 1,410.61	\$ 3,589.39	\$ 15,362.40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4.92
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 510.68	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
COVID Reimbursement Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Donation Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 194.33	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
FEMA Grant Fund	N/A	\$ -	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
				<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 362,246.40</b>	<b>\$ 14.70</b>	<b>\$ 25,993.33</b>	<b>\$ 60.33</b>

<b>JUNE 2022</b>	<b>2022 Budget</b>	<b>Month to date Expense</b>	<b>Year to date Expense</b>	<b>Remaining Approved Budget</b>	<b>Cash Balance</b>	<b>Deposits</b>	<b>Local Income Tax</b>	<b>Trust Indiana</b>	<b>General Property Tax</b>	<b>License Excise Tax</b>	<b>Commercial Vehicle Tax</b>
Rainy Day Fund	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 19,215.00	\$ 785.00	\$ 56,672.60	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9.55	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Township Fund	\$ 63,000.00	\$ 3,960.75	\$ 23,954.77	\$ 39,045.23	\$ 225,767.97	\$ 320.00	\$ 11,642.33	\$ 18.43	\$ 19,287.76	\$ 938.06	\$ 937.94
Welfare Admin/Direct Asst	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 393.88	\$ 4,250.53	\$ 15,749.47	\$ 92,335.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 56.99	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Firefighting Fund	\$ 80,794.00	\$ -	\$ 80,527.73	\$ 266.27	\$ 316.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cumulative Fire Fund	\$ 2,800.00	\$ -	\$ 2,800.00	\$ -	\$ 28.27	\$ 10.00	\$ -	\$ 0.21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Recreation Fund	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 11.97	\$ 1,422.58	\$ 3,577.42	\$ 17,417.66	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7.58	\$ 1,872.60	\$ 91.07	\$ 91.06
COVID Donation Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	N/A	\$ 510.68	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
COVID Reimbursement Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
Township Donation Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 194.33	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
FEMA Grant Fund	N/A	\$ -	\$ 7,261.64		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
				<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 393,243.71</b>	<b>\$ 330.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,642.33</b>	<b>\$ 92.76</b>	<b>\$ 21,160.36</b>	<b>\$ 1,029.13</b>	<b>\$ 1,029.00</b>

# Township Assistance Report

April 2022

**Benton Township, Monroe County, IN**

1. One senior, a veteran, on a fixed income, rents a house. The home owner lives on the same lot in a camper. A verbal agreement regarding payment of the water utility bill was not honored and the water was shut off. The client received permission to obtain water from an outdoor spicket at the Unionville Baptist Church. The client was able to pay the \$100.00 reconnection fee and the back bills in order to have the water turned back on, however he was not able to pay the monthly service fee after that. B&B Water Company has a minimum monthly fee of 25.62, regardless of whether you use any water or not. At the time we met with the client, the client owed 2 months on their bill; a total of \$51.24.

The Township paid \$51.24, the amount due. This client made a special trip into the office to thank us in person after receiving the news.

Submitted, in service, Mary McInerney

MM/mbm 7/8/2022

Households (1), Individuals (1), phone contacts (2), utility help (2) \$51.24 approved



# Township Assistance Report

May 2022

## **Benton Township, Monroe County, IN**

1. A client reached out to the Township for a variety of issues. She rented a trailer lot off of Northshore Drive. Her septic did not work. She was asked by the rental company to move to another lot. She did and that septic did not work. She then called the health department. The rental company decided that instead of fixing the septic, that they would no longer rent the lots were the septic system is in a state of failure. She was then given notice that she would be evicted, as no other lots for rent were available. She then sold her FEMA trailer and it was removed by the new owners. She requested basic living expenses for 30 days, housing, food, utilities.

At the time she reached out to us she was living at the homes of friends and family, outside of Benton Township. She had also recently lost an SSI disability case and lost her job after being on medical leave due to multiple back surgeries. She was/is in the process of applying for work in multiple states and Indianapolis.

The substantial income from the sale of her trailer, no longer being a township resident and little attempt to regain township residency limited our options for aid. We paid her past due REMC bill up to the point of when she sold her trailer, \$222.22. We helped guide her through having various utilities turned off voluntarily rather than be disconnected, and offered food from the food pantry. She only took a tube of toothpaste and a toothbrush, feeling that others were more in need than her.

Submitted, in service, Mary McInerney

MM/mbm 7/8/2022

Households (1), Individuals (1), phone contacts (25), utility help (1) \$222.22 approved. Township non-food pantry items value \$3.00.

# Township Assistance Report

June 2022

## **Benton Township, Monroe County, IN**

1. An application was submitted by a client seeking assistance with the electric bill due to a car accident. The accident caused multiple broken bones, leaving the client unable to work. We reached out and explained the application process and provided a list of documentation that would be needed. The client has not responded.
2. A phone call was received by a client seeking rental assistance. The client was directed to our application mail box outside the Township Office door. An application was picked up later that same day. We have not received any further information.
3. The township received a request for gasoline in order for a relative to attend a new job orientation. We provided a list of potential resources and agencies that offer that kind of help.

Submitted, in service, Mary McInerney

MM/mbm 7/8/2022

Households (0), Individuals (0), phone contacts (8).

## BENTON TOWNSHIP VEGETATION POLICY

Whereas, Indiana Code 15-16-8 addresses the Township's role in regards to the Destruction of Detrimental Plants, regarding the definitions, township trustee's duties, methods, and processes thereof; and,

Whereas, "noxious weeds" is outlined in IC 15-16-7-2; and,

Whereas, there is not a clear definition of rank vegetation in a residential area; and,

Therefore, it shall be the policy of Benton Township in Monroe County, Indiana, that the following guidelines should be used to determine if a property contains rank vegetation and the definition of a residential area:

"Rank vegetation" shall include the following:

- (1) Any plant exceeding **eight inches (8")** in height on a parcel that IS associated with an established neighborhood recognized as such by Monroe County Planning.
- (2) Any plant exceeding twelve inches (12") in height on a parcel that IS NOT associated with an established neighborhood recognized as such as Monroe County Planning,
- (3) Includes all area of the parcel, including the front, back, and side yards.

This term does not include the following items:

- (1) Trees
- (2) Shrubbery
- (3) Flowers
- (4) Ornamental grasses
- (5) Agricultural crops, including vegetable and flower gardens.

"Rank vegetation" shall not apply to Certified Wildlife Habitats or parcels where owners are allowing vegetation to return to a natural landscape habitat. In these instances, Benton Township residents shall:

- (1) Ensure that invasive plants are not permitted to grow
- (2) Ensure a minimum border of four feet **of mowed area applied** to perimeters such as property lines as well as roadways and easements

"Residential area" shall apply to a parcel of real estate, used or intended to be used for residential purposes, that does not exceed three (3) acres in size. If a parcel is zoned agricultural or forest reserve, the "residential" portion shall only include the curtilage, **or the area around a residential structure**. Overall, township residents must respect the rights of neighbors to enjoy property without reasonable interference (including value and marketability of the neighbor's property) and protection from a threat to the health, safety, and welfare of neighborhood residents.

Vegetation that is not covered by the above definitions is to be decided by the Township Trustee on an individual basis. The following additional criteria will be considered in select cases:

- (1) Interferes with public safety, such as visualizing oncoming traffic or in a public sidewalk.
- (2) Extreme deviation from the aesthetic appearance of the adjacent houses.
- (3) If mowing or trimming the area presents a significant risk to safety for the homeowner.
- (4) If mowing or trimming the area is a threat to wildlife.

All of which is resolved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

AYE

NAY

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Husk, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Husk, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hans Kelson, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hans Kelson, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Currently Vacant, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Currently Vacant, Member

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Bright, Trustee

#### INDIANA CODE

##### IC 15-16-7-2 "Noxious weeds"

Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "noxious weed" refers to the following:

- (1) Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).
- (2) Johnson grass (*Sorghum halepense*).
- (3) Columbus grass (*Sorghum almum*).
- (4) Bur cucumber (*Sicyos angulatus*).
- (5) Shattercane (*Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench spp. *drummondii* (Steud.) deWet).
- (6) Common waterhemp (*Amaranthus rudis*) and tall waterhemp (*Amaranthus tuberculatus*).
- (7) Marestail or horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*).
- (8) Palmer amaranth or carelessweed (*Amaranthus palmeri*).
- (9) Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).
- (10) Powell amaranth (*Amaranthus powellii*).
- (11) Rough pigweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus*).
- (12) Smooth pigweed (*Amaranthus hybridus*).

IC 7.1-1-3-38 "Residential district"

Sec. 38. Residential District. The term "residential district" means an area composed of all territory within a radius of five hundred (500) feet of the premises described in the application for a permit being considered and in which area seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the territory in use is used for residential purposes as opposed to commercial, business or manufacturing purposes. Territory in use in the area does not include territory which consists in or is devoted to a street, alley, vacant lot, park, parkway, church, school, religious institution, other not-for-profit institution, lake, river, or other body of water.

**ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, it has been determined that it is now necessary to appropriate more money than was originally appropriated in the annual budget; now, therefore:

Sec. 1. Be it resolved by the Benton Township Board of Monroe County that for the expenses of the taxing unit, the following additional sums of money are hereby appropriated out of the funds named and for the purposes specified, subject to laws governing the same:

1312 Recreation	AMOUNT OF INCREASE REQUESTED:	AMOUNT OF APPROVED BY FISCAL BODY:
Major Budget Classification:		
10000 Personal Services		_____
20000 Supplies		_____
30000 Other Services & Charges		_____
40000 Capital Outlays	\$2,200.00	_____
TOTAL for Fund:	\$2,200.00	_____

Adopted the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022\_\_

AYE

NAY

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Husk, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe Husk, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hans Kelson, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hans Kelson, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn Stevens, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn Stevens, Member

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Bright, Trustee