

1 BEFORE THE ALLEN TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

2 VAN BUREN, OHIO

3 - - -

4 In Re: Allen Township Trustee Meeting

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6
7 Sunday, January 28, 2024
8 6:00 p.m.
9 Allen Township Center
10 12829 State Route 613
11 Van Buren, Ohio 45889

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13 - - -

14 SUSAN L. COOTS, RPR
15 REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL REPORTER

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21 - - -

22 ANDERSON REPORTING SERVICES, INC.
23 3040 Riverside Drive, Suite 125
24 Columbus, Ohio 43221
 (614) 326-0177

1 APPEARANCES:

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3 Hancock County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
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9 On behalf of the Allen Township Trustees.

10 BOARD MEMBERS:

11 Nikki Goodwin, Chairperson
12 Dallas Sterling
13 Mark Maas
14 Heather Schlaepfi
15 Matt Cordonnier, Regional Planning

16 - - -

1 SUNDAY EVENING SESSION
2 January 28, 2024
3 6:00 p.m.

4 - - -

5 P R O C E E D I N G S

6 - - -

7 BE IT REMEMBERED THAT, on the 28th day of
8 January, 2024, this cause came on for hearing before
9 the Allen Township Trustees. And the parties
10 appearing in person and/or by counsel, as hereinafter
11 set forth, the following proceedings were had:

12 - - -

13 MR. STERLING: Well, I think we can at least
14 get started with the Pledge of Allegiance -- I don't
15 know where she went with Joe, so -- to stay on
16 schedule.

17 All right. Let's all stand and say the
18 Pledge of Allegiance.

19 - - -

20 And, thereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was
21 recited.

22 - - -

23 MR. STERLING: Cindy will be in in just a
24 moment. She has some news to share with us before we
can kind of get started.

1 So we're just going to bid her the time
2 that she needs and then we'll get started from there.

3 For curiosity's sake, I did call the Board
4 of Elections and saw the election results from 2001.
5 It was a non-gubernatorial or presidential year, so it
6 was an off election year. They had a total of
7 635 votes, and it had 299 "Yes" and 336 "Noes"; so a
8 difference of 37 votes. And that was in 2001.

9 Biding some time. Allen Township does have
10 a -- let's see. What census was this? -- population
11 of 2,822.

12 CHAIRPERSON GOODWIN: Do you happen to know
13 if -- I don't know if you asked this, how many people
14 generally vote in a presidential election?

15 MR. STERLING: I did not. Huh-uh.

16 CHAIRPERSON GOODWIN: Okay. All right.

17 MR. STERLING: No, I did not.

18 So I thought that was an interesting number.
19 I don't know if that's slightly higher or less than
20 what you were expecting. It was a little higher than
21 what I was expecting for Allen Township.

22 Some of the comparable townships around
23 us -- let's see. Cass Township has 1,425 residents;
24 Marion Township has 3,132; Portage Township has 585;

1 Liberty Township has 7,100. So just to kind of give
2 you a comparison to what the other townships in our
3 area are.

4 CHAIRPERSON GOODWIN: How many did you say
5 ours has?

6 MR. STERLING: Ours has 2,822.

7 (Pause.)

8 MS. LAND: Have you guys started the meeting
9 yet?

10 MR. STERLING: We did. We said the Pledge
11 of Allegiance, and we're biding time for you to
12 start -- or for us to say, okay, should we officially
13 start the meeting, or --

14 MS. LAND: Okay. I think you should not
15 have a meeting.

16 MR. STERLING: Okay.

17 MS. LAND: I think we need to cancel this
18 meeting.

19 MR. STERLING: Okay.

20 MS. LAND: I received a letter late on
21 Friday, which I'm not sure -- I -- I guess I'm glad
22 I checked my email. And, basically, Allen Township is
23 going to be sued by One Energy, indicating that what
24 you guys are doing is illegal because they don't like

1 the notice that was given and that we appointed you as
2 part of the notice that was going to be for initiating
3 resolution.

4 Now, I don't believe anything was done
5 wrong. They are saying it is; we're saying it is not.
6 However, they're asking for an injunction which would
7 stop anything you guys do and just hold everything up.

8 So I think at the next trustees' meeting, in
9 a week, we will deal with getting all of that
10 rectified so that then you guys can commence, if you
11 guys are the ones that are appointed again --

12 MR. STERLING: Sure.

13 MS. LAND: -- to be starting on the --
14 creating the Comprehensive Plan. So -- because -- and
15 I've had a couple questions, you know, about whether
16 we have a Comprehensive Plan. We do not, because
17 that's what you guys are writing.

18 MR. STERLING: Right.

19 MS. LAND: So that when there is zoning,
20 it's subject to a Comprehensive Plan.

21 MR. STERLING: Correct.

22 MS. LAND: So, at that point, you've not
23 done anything.

24 MR. STERLING: That's correct.

1 MS. LAND: You've adopted a notice rule and
2 you've appointed officers. But you've not done
3 anything that is, in effect, having to do with the
4 Comprehensive Plan.

5 So nothing that gets done later, if we
6 decide to do this and re-notice everything and try
7 again, will have been tainted. But anything you
8 discuss tonight, they could claim is tainted and be
9 part of that whole --

10 MR. STERLING: Sure.

11 MS. LAND: -- and hold everything up. So
12 there's nothing that would be going before the voters
13 that you guys have done yet.

14 MR. STERLING: Okay.

15 MS. LAND: So I'm sorry that we wasted your
16 Sunday evening.

17 MR. STERLING: That's all right.

18 MS. LAND: But that's where we sit.

19 MR. STERLING: We are a volunteer group.
20 So...

21 MR. MAAS: Should we be looking at another
22 section --

23 MS. LAND: No.

24 MR. MAAS: -- to read ahead? Okay.

1 MS. LAND: No, because you guys aren't doing
2 anything.

3 MR. MAAS: Okay.

4 MS. LAND: We still have those same rules:
5 No talking among yourselves. It's kind of a
6 chicken-and-egg thing because, if we don't really
7 exist, there's no rules about you talking among
8 yourselves. But I believe you do exist, and I don't
9 want anything to end up being tainted, or at least --
10 or even drawn in question to be able to slow
11 everything down.

12 MR. STERLING: So after your next Tuesday,
13 the regular township --

14 MS. LAND: I think it's a week from Tuesday.

15 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: A week from Tuesday, on
16 the 6th.

17 MR. STERLING: The 6th.

18 MS. LAND: A week from Tuesday.

19 MR. STERLING: On the 6th. So we're
20 postponing this meeting, the next meeting, and we
21 wouldn't have one --

22 MS. LAND: Anything -- all of that is just
23 completely wiped away at this point.

24 MR. STERLING: Okay. We'll just -- Okay.

1 MS. LAND: We'll have to wait and see.

2 We'll have -- I'll have some things ready to
3 discuss with the trustees to decide how they want to
4 handle it.

5 MR. STERLING: Sure. Okay.

6 MS. LAND: I just discussed it with one
7 trustee in order to get some direction on what
8 I should be doing.

9 MR. STERLING: Okay.

10 MS. LAND: Which doesn't violate anything.
11 Number one, I'm legal counsel.

12 And, two, there's only one of them. But...

13 MR. STERLING: Okay.

14 MS. LAND: That's what we are doing. And I
15 will have some -- we'll have things to discuss at that
16 meeting to get this sorted out. But until then --

17 MR. STERLING: All right then.

18 MS. LAND: I would rather postpone a little
19 bit --

20 MR. STERLING: Sure.

21 MS. LAND: -- than to have any kind of
22 anything that could be tainted, for lack of a better
23 word.

24 MS. SCHLAEPPPI: So we should not come to the

1 trustees' meeting next week?

2 MS. LAND: I would prefer you guys not come.

3 MR. STERLING: Yeah.

4 MS. LAND: I mean, you're welcome to --

5 MR. STERLING: Sure. I'll probably --

6 MS. LAND: -- because it's still public, and
7 you're not meeting -- it's not under the Sunshine Law.
8 It's a prearranged meeting to discuss specific
9 business is a meeting. So if you guys are all there
10 and don't discuss anything, you're just people coming
11 to a meeting. You're welcome to do that. But we
12 don't want to give anybody anything to pick at, so
13 I would prefer you didn't.

14 MR. STERLING: Okay.

15 MS. LAND: All right.

16 MR. STERLING: Sounds good.

17 MS. SCHLAEPPI: So minutes from last
18 meeting?

19 MS. LAND: No, we'll just hold on to them.

20 MS. SCHLAEPPI: There are no minutes from
21 this meeting?

22 MS. LAND: No, because not -- we're not
23 having a meeting.

24 MS. SCHLAEPPI: Okay.

1 MS. LAND: I mean, you opened a meeting, but
2 we're not discussing business.

3 MR. STERLING: Yeah.

4 MS. LAND: And it will still probably cost
5 the trustees \$500, if the other sides wins. So...

6 MS. SCHLAEPPI: So we don't actually have to
7 close the meeting because we didn't open it?

8 MR. STERLING: Correct.

9 MS. LAND: If you opened a meeting, close
10 the meeting.

11 MR. STERLING: Yeah. I mean, don't we have
12 to, when we go to open a meeting, say, Okay. Do we
13 choose now to open the meeting? Don't we have to say
14 that?

15 MS. LAND: Have you opened a meeting?

16 MR. STERLING: No. Huh-uh.

17 CHAIRPERSON GOODWIN: We said the Pledge and
18 that's it.

19 MR. STERLING: We said the Pledge, and then
20 we were waiting for you.

21 MS. LAND: Then you didn't have a meeting;
22 you don't have to adjourn it.

23 MR. STERLING: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON GOODWIN: Okay.

1 MS. LAND: All right.

2 MR. STERLING: All right. Well, sorry for
3 the inconvenience to the general public as well.
4 I appreciate your interest. We'll see what goes from
5 here.

6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I just have a question.
7 Who is everybody in -- pertaining to all this?
8 I mean, I'm just -- are you all Allen Township
9 members?

10 MR. STERLING: Oh, yeah.

11 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Okay. Yeah. Residents.

12 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Residents. Okay.

13 Along those same lines, I've been seeing
14 some rumors going around online, and I'd just like to
15 give an understanding of this. I've seen wild figures
16 out there that each of your salaries for doing this
17 are -- some in the millions. That -- that -- that's
18 what I've seen some people posting.

19 MS. LAND: Dang. My check got lost in the
20 mail.

21 MS. SCHLAEPPI: I was told I was a
22 volunteer.

23 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Right. And I just want to
24 clarify: This is a volunteer thing for each person?

1 MS. SCHLAEPPPI: I can clarify I'm not being
2 paid at all.

3 - - -

4 And, thereupon, the proceedings were
5 concluded at 6:09 p.m.

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