

**RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP
LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO
BOARD OF RICHFIELD TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

July 21, 2025

The regular meeting of the Richfield Township Trustees was called to order by Steve Bettinger at 7:00 p.m. at the Richfield Township Fire Department, 11450 Sylvania Avenue, Berkey, Ohio. All present were asked to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Chairman: Steve Bettinger – present
Co-Chairman: Andrew Bick – present
Andrew Lumbrezer - present

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

The clerk provided copies of the minutes from the July 7, 2025, meeting current Cash Summary Report, Revenue Report, and Pending Warrants Report.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Andrew Bick made a motion to approve the July 7, 2025, minutes as presented. Andrew Lumbrezer seconded the motion. Roll call: all voted yes. Motion approved.

PRESENTATION OF THE BILLS:

The attached listings of warrants (14167 - 14193) were presented for approval:

Andrew Lumbrezer made a motion to approve payment of the attached listing of invoices and the corresponding pending warrants. Andrew Bick seconded the motion. Roll call: All voted yes. Motion approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Upcoming speakers: Guest speakers: Lucas County Engineer and Metroparks representative will attend the next scheduled meeting on August 4, 2025.

Lyons water bill: Received invoice for Lyons's water bill, township did not pay; Trustees intention is to have employee involved pay the invoice. The fire department normally

gets water in the township which is Lucas County water, this incident involved water outside the township.

Trustees will be going into executive session to discuss a personnel issue, personnel issues are not public records, unless person request a public hearing in which this employee has not done.

Christ the Word Church: Christ the Word church event, concerns raised about the fire department attending, providing a splash pad for the children. Concerns raised about tax dollars and liability issues. Chief Scarborough explained the event involved an opportunity for their required weekly drill training (practicing drafting using their dry hydrant), water used for the event came from the church's dry hydrant. Ultimately the department attends events for exposure in the community, to promote interest in becoming a fire fighter.

The fire department participates in numerous events throughout the year including the following: Fire Safety week at local pre-schools, boy scout events, open-houses, Evergreen schools on stand-by for football games as well as recruitment events on senior night, Halloween event at the station, etc.

Question on potential subdivision on Kilburn Rd., no current development planned at this time, zoning board is discussing for future planning.

FIRE:

Chief Scarborough presnted a power point.

Information was provided regarding the shelf life of various equipment items, emphasizing that once an item exceeds its designated shelf life, it no longer meets National Standards and must be replaced to remain in compliance.

The following items were identified as having defined shelf lives that impact operational readiness and safety compliance:

- Fire Hoses
Shelf life is 10 years
All hoses expired in 2020
At today's prices this would cost \$40,000.00
- Firefighter turn out gear, PPE (personal protective equipment)
Shelf life is 10 years
20 sets expired in 2020 (received 25 new sets in 2025 with a grant)
At today's prices this would cost \$100,000
- Radio Batteries (currently own 40 portable batteries)

Shelf life 4 years

Newest batteries we own are from 2019, all expired in 2023

Replace today approximately \$900.00

- Fire Extinguishers

Shelf life 10 years

Replacement cost today: \$2400.00

- EMS Medications and tools

Life span: 3 months to 3 years (nearly all equipment on ambulance has a life span)

Current budget has \$20,000 marked for EMS

- Ladders

Shelf life 30 years

Expire in 2028 (all in-service ladders were purchased in 1998)

At today's prices cost \$10,000

- Mobile Radio's (radio's mounted in vehicles)

All are out dated, ceased working on July 8, 2025

Price to replace: \$28,000.00

- Apparatus

Shelf life 15 years as primary, 10 as back up, 25 retire

Current model year and replacement year

Vehicle	Model Year	Replacement Year
Medic 58	2021	2046
Medic 59	2018	2043
Engine 58	1998	2023
Engine 59	1998	2023
Tender 58	2011	2036
Utility 58	2008	2023

It was estimated that to fully replace outdated equipment and bring the department into full compliance with current standards, the total cost would be approximately \$1.3 million.

To maintain equipment over the next 10 years, these are costs to replace some equipment. To bring list up to minimal standards approximate cost \$1.5 million.

2025	1.5 million
2028	\$4,600

2030	\$75,000
2035	\$125,000
2036	\$400,000
2043	\$250,000
2046	\$330,000

Break down of incidents in 2025

Time of day:

2400-0800	17.4%
0800-1600	49%
1600-2400	33.5%

Day of week:

Monday	11%
Tuesday	10.3%
Wednesday	5.2%
Thursday	12.9%
Friday	19.4%
Saturday	20.6%
Sunday	20.6%

Current fire levies	\$300,000.00
Harding Township contract	\$50,000.00

Based on current funding levels, we project those available funds will be exhausted during 2026. Without additional support:

- July 1, 2026 – On-call night shift operations would need to cease, due to budget constraints and the continued lack of available volunteers.
- November 1, 2026 – Staff layoffs would begin to take place to preserve remaining resources.

These steps, though difficult, are necessary to maintain some level of staffing and operations through the remainder of the year. Unless additional funding is secured, significant operational cuts will be required to keep essential services functioning.

The Township remains committed to exploring all available options to ensure public safety and operational sustainability. Contracting with neighboring jurisdictions, such as Sylvania Township (which operates under a 16-mill levy) or Springfield Township (12 mills), would come at a significant cost.

Currently, much of our life safety equipment falls well below national standards. This poses a serious risk: in the event of an emergency resulting in injury to a civilian or firefighter, the Township could face legal liability if any equipment is found to have failed due to being outdated or non-compliant with national safety guidelines.

Importantly, the Township may not be able to invoke sovereign immunity in such a case, as we are already aware of the deficiencies and continue to use outdated equipment due to financial constraints.

The department actively seeks grant funding; however, obtaining duplicate grants for similar expenses is challenging. For example, having previously received a grant for a tanker, it would be difficult to secure funding for another tanker under the same program.

When a vehicle is replaced, the department typically sells or trades in the old unit to help offset costs

In 2022, the previous Fire Chief implemented a Capital Improvement Fund, allocating \$50,000 annually within the budget—designated as \$20,000 for ambulance replacement, \$20,000 for a fire truck, and \$10,000 for other equipment needs. This fund was established as a savings strategy to plan for future capital needs.

However, the significant rise in costs following the COVID-19 pandemic—particularly for parts and equipment—has completely depleted this fund over the last four years, primarily due to costly repairs on aging vehicles.

The department has historically operated on a very limited budget, previously around \$150,000, which covered wages, equipment, and operations. The majority of our equipment was acquired through grants. While 70% of fire departments nationwide rely

on volunteers, access to supplemental funding has become more difficult. Similar problems nationwide.

Lucas County officially disbanded its EMS operations in January 2025, returning responsibility to the individual townships. As a result, fire departments across the county resumed EMS services, each receiving a portion of the former county EMS funding.

However, the Township's allocation (\$20,000) was insufficient to support the 24-hour staffing requirement previously maintained under Lucas County EMS. To address this, the Township entered into a contract with Sylvania Township, allocating the \$20,000 annual share we would have received. In return, Sylvania Township now provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) services to our residents year-round.

The mobile radios currently installed in the trucks are no longer compatible and are non-functional. All firefighters are equipped with mobile phones to maintain communication.

The Fire Fighter Association recently purchased and donated a Gator to the Fire Department for use in brush fires. The traditional brush truck often gets stuck when going off-road; the Gator provides a more reliable option for navigating wooded and rough terrain.

Fundraisers require significant volunteer support. Events such as the Feather Party which includes gun raffles are organized by the Fire Association—not the Township—as government entities are not permitted to conduct fundraising activities.

Anyone interested in helping or bringing new ideas forward is encouraged to contact Joe Santiago or Kevin Kross of the Fire Association. While firefighters already volunteer considerable time, community involvement is essential to support these efforts.

ZONING:

Zoning Board tabled discussion on the RFP Request for Proposal at their last meeting.

Dan Walters presented the Zoning Board's recommendations regarding increased zoning fees for consideration by the Township Trustees.

- Pools: Above ground or in-ground \$50.00
- Pond: \$100.00
- New Dwelling \$75.00 Base & 10 cents per square ft with cap of \$500.00

Andrew Lumbrezer made a motion to accept the zoning fee increases as follows:

Pools (above ground, in-ground pool) to \$50.00, Ponds to \$100.00, New Dwellings to \$75.00 base and 10 cents per square ft. with cap of \$500.00. Steve Bettinger seconded the motion. Roll call: All voted yes. Motion approved.

FISCAL OFFICER:

Time sheets and sheriff's reports were submitted to the Trustees for review.

Metamora State Bank provided a "Memorandum of Agreement for Deposit of Public Funds" requiring updated signatures from the Chairman and Fiscal Officer.

Four cemetery deeds were presented to the Trustees for signature, along with a burial rights document submitted by a resident.

Lucas County Sherriff bi-weekly activity report:

- Gibbs Bridge Check
- Patrol Richfield Township
- Ozzie's property check
- Richfield Ctr. Rd/Washburn Rd traffic checks
- Stationary Radars: Sylvania/Washburn, Central/Raab,
- Moving radar in the township
- Christ the Word Church property check
- On-site Board of Trustee meetings
- Accident, injury on-site

ADMINISTRATOR:

The Township is currently seeking alternate members for the Zoning Board. To date, no inquiries have been received. The notice will be re-posted to encourage community interest.

A resident inquired about submitting a rebuttal to an editorial about Richfield Township published in The Blade. The newspaper was contacted and responded that they are not obligated to publish rebuttals.

TRUSTEE REPORT:

Batanian Tree Service performed limb cleanup at Wolfinger Cemetery at no cost to the Township. Additional work was completed for a minimal charge.

Trustee Lumbrezer reported that the closure of Gibbs Road has been rescheduled to begin on July 21, 2025, with an expected duration of sixty days.

ROADS:

No report.

OLD BUSINESS:

A draft Request for Proposal (RFP) was presented for the hiring of a consultant to update the Township's Land Use Plan and review zoning regulations. The RFP enables the Township to solicit bids and proposals for this work.

The RFP has been reviewed and legally approved by Township Attorney John Borrell.

The Zoning Board reviewed the RFP at their recent meeting but tabled it for further discussion and review. Concerns were raised regarding zoning enforcement, and feedback is being sought. Any revisions to the RFP will be resubmitted to the prosecutor for legal review.

The cost of the consultant will be covered by a grant, which requires that all funds be spent by July 2026.

Community involvement will be encouraged through mail surveys and town hall meetings, which will be organized by the selected consultants. The RFP emphasizes the preservation of the farming community as a priority.

The Zoning Board will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, July 23rd to review the RFP in detail.

Town Hall Discussion:

The current Town Hall building is in poor condition, lacking a furnace and water, and in need of several updates, including electrical upgrades as well as making the facility handicapped accessible. Any work completed must be performed by licensed contractors.

The Township is considering alternative options, such as using the Fire Department meeting room for public rental use.

The possibility of selling the Town Hall was discussed. A sale would require holding a public auction, as per legal requirements. The building is currently zoned agricultural/residential.

Road Department Equipment Discussion:

Discussion on the purchase of equipment for digging graves, road work.

Equipment options reviewed include:

- Excavator: \$1,200/month for 60 months (note: a trailer would also be required)
- Backhoe: \$128,000 total, or \$2,100/month

The backhoe was identified as the preferred option, given its versatility and long-term value. A grant that had previously been available for road department equipment is no longer accessible. Discussion tabled at this time.

There was discussion about expanding the current salt bin to better support salt deliveries which have increased due to additional roads received from Lucas County. Unable to set up smaller deliveries throughout the year as the township would be charged significant storage fees.

NEW BUSINESS:

Tabled fire department levy discussions, will explore all opportunities.

The Board formally recognized Dan Walters (Road Maintenance Supervisor) for his ongoing contributions to the Township. He has not received a raise in over a year and a half. In addition to his primary duties, Dan has taken on multiple roles including Zoning Inspector and Cemetery Sexton. He has saved the Township significant costs by handling various repairs and responsibilities in-house.

Steve Bettinger made a motion to give Dan Walters a \$1.00 per hour raise effective immediately. Andrew Bick seconded the motion. Roll call: all voted yes. Motion approved.

EXECUTIVE DECISION:

Andrew Lumbrezer made a motion to go into executive session at 8:50 p.m. to consider 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, official, licensee, or regulated individual, unless the public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual requests a public hearing. Except as otherwise provided by law, no public body shall hold an executive session for the discipline of an elected official for conduct related to the performance of the elected

official's official duties or for the elected official's removal from office. If a public body holds an executive session pursuant to division (G)(1) of this section, the motion and vote to hold that executive session shall state which one or more of the approved purposes listed in division (G)(1) of this section are the purposes for which the executive session is to be held, but need not include the name of any person to be considered at the meeting. Meeting will be adjourned after the executive decision.

Andrew Bick made a motion to resume the regular meeting at 9:18 p.m. Andrew Lumbrezer seconded the motion. Roll call: all voted yes. Motion approved.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Residents may call Norma Drennan at 419-829-6029 or 419-283-3424 to rent the town hall.

The following information can be viewed on the Richfield Township website at: www.richfieldtwp.com.

1. Trustee minutes
2. Zoning minutes
3. Zoning including: fees, applications, complaint forms, and the zoning book.
4. Meeting dates and times
5. Contact information for Trustees, Zoning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals.
6. Wolfinger Cemetery information including cemetery fees, rules & regulations.
7. Fire and Rescue
8. Town hall rental rules and fees
9. Roads and Maintenance
10. Rubbish Contractor information for garbage pickup
11. Community Links.

There being no further business Andrew Bick made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 p.m., which was seconded by Andrew Lumbrezer: Roll call: all voted yes. Motion approved.

Richfield Township Fiscal Officer

