

Westfield Township Trustees
Special Meeting
Meeting Location: 6699 Buffham Rd, Seville OH 44273

This special meeting of the Westfield Township Board of Trustees is called to order on February 13, 2026 @ 6:30 pm. for the purpose of discussing and to request the prosecutor's office to prepare ballot language for a township wide Fire and EMS levy to be on the November 2026 ballot.

Chair Likley called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Doty- aye, Patterson- aye, Likley- aye.

Also present is Assistant Prosecutor Nathen Kott, Fiscal Officer Tera Seiwert, Chief Hall, Township Administrator/secretary Julie Carr.

Goals:

1. *To prepare ballot language to permit everyone in the service area of Westfield Fire and Rescue to have a vote on the level of service that they want. This includes Village of Westfield Center residents who have never had that opportunity.*
2. *If the November levy is successful, then the district's present 2.5 mil permanent levy would no longer be collected.*
3. *Contract between WFRD and the Village of Westfield Center for services, equal to the collection rate of the 2.5 mil levy would be discontinued.*
4. *The Westfield Fire and Rescue District would be dissolved and fall under the oversight of the Westfield Township Board of Trustees, whom all residents including Village residents can vote on.*

Questions

1. *Can common ballot language that can address these goals be prepared? OR*
2. *Can a clean levy be presented without addressing the 2.5 mil elimination in the ballot language and eliminate the 2.5 mil by a signed Resolution to the County Treasurer contingent on levy success?*
3. *Pitfalls of split ballots between village and twp.*
4. *Can District be dissolved by Resolution of the Board of Trustees? If not, how?*
5. *Preparation by Pros. of Resolutions to Auditor requesting certification of revenue?*
6. *Preparation by Pros. of Resolution to Board of Elections for Levy question?*
7. *If levy is successful how will District carryover funds be transferred to twp? By Special Revenue funds?*
8. *Can township general fund pay for community survey?*

Levy Committee

1. *Can Trustees participate on levy committee? If so, to what extent? 1, 2 or 3?*
2. *Can committee meet at township building? Hall or fire station?*
3. *Can levy information be posted on township website excluding "Vote For" verbiage?*

Discussion:

A.P. Nathen Kott a township wide levy including the village is the easy part of this, so yes you can. If passed the new levy typically would start to be collected starting in January. And you can dissolve the Fire and Rescue District by a Resolution of the Board. However, by statute that dissolution of the district does not take effect until the following July 1, 2027. So, you have an overlap of 6 months with taxes being collected.

Doty asked if the ballot language can say collection wouldn't start until July 1st. That way they could vote to dissolve the fire district at the end of November. Nathan said this is being looked in to, but he doesn't have an answer for that right now. Nathan did say language for postponing the collection to July is possible. Nathan also shared that the village could join the fire district in a separate ballot issue. This would not make it a joint district. This wouldn't take effect until the voters agree to join the district. That tax would start July 1 as well. Likley shared that the goal would be to cancel collection of the 2.5 mil levy. Nathan said we could cancel the existing 2.5 mil levy early making the dates work but would have confirm. Likley said the problem is if the new levy starts collect in July and it's a 5 year levy.... When will future collection happen? Nathan said these are things to think about and that we would want it to end when we can get back on track to a January start date- example a 4.5 year levy. Likley said the main question is can we stop collection of the 2.5 levy December 31? If the new levy starts collecting on January 1. Nathan said that is a good place to start and will look into that.

Nathan shared that ballot language can be prepared that would work in the village and township in one levy stating purpose of the levy, it can be worded to dissolve the district and replace it with a fire department. The dissolution of the district is done by Resolution not the ballot. Discontinue collection of present levy on December 31 and new levy would start its collection. A mutual release would be written up between the fire district and the village. The fire district can continue to provide services under contract with the township and village until July 1 when the district gets dissolved and becomes a fire department.

Doty, asked if we start a fire department on January 1 and that the fire district just sits there for 6 months until it officially dissolves July 1. Doty said if we do this, then contracts aren't needed and services are continued to be provided. Likley says he sees this as a win!

Nathan said he will look into all this, and the absolute fallback is that we expand the fire district. Currently, there aren't many opinions by the AG on this.

Trustees do not get paid for fire district work, neither does the fiscal officer. However, the work is doubled to cover both. By eliminating the district, the operating budget of the department will save \$5,000-\$6,000 a year just in UAN accounting fees and audits.

Likley asked about the resolution to the auditor- for example what does 1 mill generate. The answers from the auditor have been different answers. We need a resolution from the auditor to identify what 1 mill will generate. Likley wants to know if Nathan can prepare that resolution. He said he will take a look at it. Likley also asked him to prepare a resolution to the board of elections for ballot language. If he can't prepare them, he asked if he can give the trustees a sample. Doty asked if we have a certified valuation for the township and village. Likley said yes. Doty said we can do the math as trustees as well. Yes, but would still need certified information from Auditor.

Likley asked if district funds can be transferred over. Nathan said we will have to figure out what the transaction would look like. He said if assets are left then he would suggest that would be the money the fire district would pay the fire department for services. Nathan will look into this.

Likley asked if the township can pay for a survey of the residents regarding the level of services that they want. Nathan said he doesn't think so but will look into it. Doty said the school district has done this. Doty added that a quality survey by a third party with purely unbiased questions would be around \$5,000 and that finding another party to pay for this might be a challenge. The trustees asked Nathan to please look into this- they do not want to use elections as surveys. They need a way to see what the residents want for fire and EMS services and get a pulse on how they are feeling on those services moving forward.

Likley asked if Trustees can participate on a levy committee. Nathan said yes, but they have to be mindful of public meeting requirements. Likley asked if a committee can meet at township building? Hall or fire station? Nathan said you treat this as a rental like anyone else. Nathan suggested the Village Hall as well. Likley asked can levy information be posted on township website excluding "Vote For" verbiage? Nathan said yes, but expanding on details is where the issue is. Doty asked if we kept to facts only, can we post details and explanations. Nathan said he will look into but most likely yes. Likley asked if we can explain on the website what the funds would be used for- Doty said that might be persuasion language. Doty said can we be clear on the website what will happen if the levy doesn't pass. Nathan said he will look into it, but thinks that would be allowed. As this get written and prepared possibly run it by Nathan. Nathan said if you form a committee they can have their own website, but to note the township cannot link to the levy website.

So, to recap:

Preparing ballot language for Fire and EMS that works in township and village, millage not set yet.

Confirm with Treasurer to discontinue collection of 2.5 mil by resolution contingent on new levy. And the timing of such communication.

Mutual release of contract with village.

January 1 collection starts with a new levy.

Fire and EMS protection continues under the fire department.

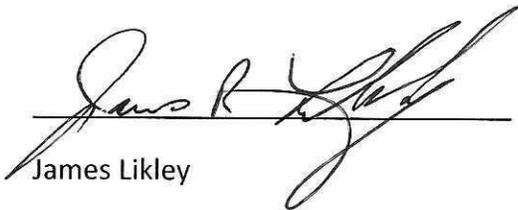
District dissolution by Resolution, unfunded District dissolves July 1

Likley asked for information before he attends the Village meeting the beginning of March.

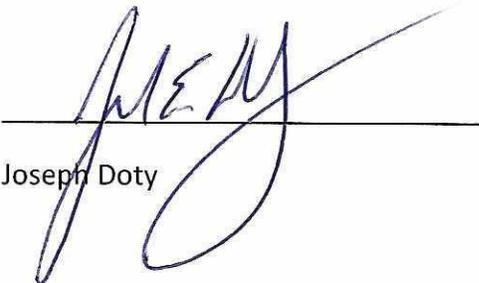
Motion to adjourn time 7: 41pm. Doty made motion to adjourn. Likley seconded.

Roll Call- Doty- aye, Patterson- aye, Likley- aye. Motion passed.

Meeting minutes prepared by: Julie Carr


James Likley


Kent Patterson


Joseph Doty

02/16/2024
Date Approved