

**SHARON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION HELD AT
50 Westview Avenue
January 21, 2026
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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call:	John Oberle, Chair	Absent
	Laura Kunze, Vice Chair	Present
	Michael Farley, Trustee	Present
	Justin Adkins, Fiscal Officer	Present

Attendance: Chief Tuchfarber, Supt. Kayati, Marcus Rose

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge was led by Vice Chair Kunze.

Approval of Agenda

Farley moved to accept the agenda. Kunze seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Farley moved to approve the Minutes for January 7, 2026, as submitted. Kunze seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The minutes are approved.

Resident Comments

Pat Kelly spoke and introduced the Trustees, Fiscal Officer, Police, Fire, and Road Departments.

TRUSTEES

Old Business

Potential Levy for Increased Funds for the Fire District

Kunze turned the discussion over to Farley, who has been leading the Fire Levy efforts. Farley thanked Worthington Fire Chief Mark Zambito for attending and said the Township is lucky to have him as Chief. Farley noted that the Township passed a levy three years ago after not having done one for the previous 30 years, and thanked residents for their support of that levy. He stated that he has heard no support from residents for going to Columbus for fire service.

Farley explained that, under the contract with the City of Worthington, 2026 is the first and most cost-effective option for placing the levy on the ballot. By going this year, a total of \$370,000 would need to be raised, which, based on an estimate from the Franklin County Auditor, would represent an additional tax of approximately \$81.90 per \$100,000 of household valuation.

Contractual options

Amount to be raised

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1) Pass anytime in Calendar Year 2026 | \$370,000 |
| 2) Pass anytime in Calendar Year 2027 (if not passed in 2026) | \$450,000 |
| 3) Pass anytime in Calendar Year 2028 (if not passed in 2026 or 2027) | \$550,000 |
| 4) No levy is passed, and the Township breaches its contract | |

Once the levy is passed in 2026, 2027, or 2028, five years after passage, Sharon Township and the City of Worthington will be required to negotiate future service and cost agreements. However, residents will have a five-year pause on any further increases.

Zambito, who has been Chief for six years, was introduced and provided residents with numerous updates on various aspects of the Fire Department.

Several trucks have been ordered. The ladder truck will be delivered at the end of February, replacing a 15-year-old truck. The new engine is scheduled for April delivery and has been slightly downsized to save on costs without compromising capabilities, reflecting updated technology and including safety improvements for firefighters. An ambulance has also been ordered, and the budget has been approved for another fire truck. The current frontline truck will be moved to backup status due to high mileage and some mechanical issues. Equipment is currently taking three to four years from purchase to delivery. Sharon Township will be included

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on the next fire truck logos, thanks to the determination of Kunze.

The firehouse, built by Sharon Township in 1992, is undergoing updates, including a \$750,000 investment in restroom facilities. The Chief noted that several areas of the building haven't been touched since the firehouse was built, and that plumbing issues must be addressed to improve comfort.

A resident in attendance complimented the highly trained professionals at the Worthington Fire Department, citing his interactions with them at local hospitals while working in the healthcare industry.

Another resident expressed frustration about being able to afford rising property taxes and asked whether Worthington would also have a fire levy this year. Worthington is not, and there was an extensive discussion on how Worthington and Perry Township pay for their fire services. Aside from the levy passed a few years ago, Sharon Township had not had a fire levy increase since 1994.

Another resident asked what would happen if no levy were passed, and Farley said the Township would be in breach of its contract with the City of Worthington and would be forced to renegotiate from a weaker position. Farley noted that the City of Columbus would not provide fire services at the cost residents currently pay or at the level proposed by the City of Worthington. He thanked the City of Worthington for being a great partner throughout this process and for giving the Township the flexibility to increase its contributions over time.

A resident attending virtually asked how much the Township would pay relative to other municipalities served by the Worthington Fire Department. The Township accounts for 20% of the runs in a \$9 million budget, and is not currently contributing a proportional share.

A resident asked whether to reject the property tax increase and adopt an income tax, as in Worthington. The Trustees do not have the authority to levy an income tax, except for the JEDD.

There was an extensive discussion among residents about the benefits of having a fire department so close and the tremendous life-saving service they've provided the Township over the past few years.

Zambito discussed the fire department's history, noting that it originated with the Sharon Township Fire Department. Kayati provided additional context on how the fire department had historically been funded.

Farley noted that the Township has done a good job keeping township taxes low. However, they may need to do a small levy to maintain the roads department. A Police Department levy is also possible next year, as the Trustees are working on employee retention.

Farley explained that the Local Government Fund has been cut in half, but the JEDD has been a strong revenue driver. It will be a very, very long time before the Township has to do a general fund levy. He emphasized that they don't want to tear the fabric of the community apart and acknowledged that while the Township has a small footprint, there are many costs with keeping things running smoothly.

Kunze added that they do everything possible to run a tight ship and are exploring other opportunities, but the Township is limited in how it can generate revenue.

Tuchfarber highlighted the strong working relationship between the police and fire departments and noted that the Columbus Fire Department would not provide the same sense of community.

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A resident who spoke earlier continued to express frustration at being priced out of their home due to rising property taxes. The Trustees provided context that the increase was primarily due to higher property valuations and said they would ask someone from the County Auditor's Office to speak with residents about contesting their increased valuations.

Tuchfarber and Kayati discussed the benefits of living in Sharon Township and noted that the township's relationship with the City of Worthington is a strong partnership that extends to the police and road departments. Kunze noted that such a strong relationship helped sustain this financial request over multiple years.

There was an ask from a resident about the specifics of the proposed levy. Farley explained that the proposed levy would be permanent, using outside millage, and would not increase over time.

2026 Permanent Road Department Budget

Farley provided a history of departmental funding and a summary of the current budget issue. Costs have grown considerably since the last levy was passed in the 1990s.

The Trustees and Fiscal Officer are taking a deep dive into the budget and noted that the roads department has done an excellent job of keeping vehicles running. There are upcoming transition costs with the road department superintendent.

Farley noted the need to consider a temporary levy, either a quarter mill or a half mill. While not as urgent as the fire levy, he wanted to bring it to residents' attention. The Trustees are seeking resident feedback on how they want to see the department used and emphasized that funds have been managed well for the past 30-plus years.

Trustees explained that older department vehicles are approaching the end of their life. The Township works with the Franklin County Engineer to perform paving work, helping keep costs low by pooling asphalt needs among local Townships. It was noted that Walnut Grove and Flint Cemetery cover half of the employee costs, which has been a significant help.

New Business

Resolution 01212026 Declaring the Necessity for a Levy for the Fire District

Farley, after weeks of resident feedback and hearing a general consensus from those in attendance, moved to approve the resolution. Kunze seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Deer in Tremont Gardens

A resident asked about the local deer population. The Trustees said there was no plan for culling in Tremont Gardens and provided an update on the City of Worthington's culling program.

FISCAL OFFICER

Old Business

None

New Business

December Credit Card Statement

After receiving a vendor credit for the sales tax charged, Adkins presented the December credit card statement. Kunze signed the statement.

Improving Access to Township Records

Adkins announced that the format of published meeting minutes is changing and will no longer be a scanned copy of the signed minutes. The new format will be searchable, but minutes won't be published until signed and approved by the Trustees. He will try to go back and republish historical minutes where digital files are available.

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Resolutions will soon be published alongside the agenda, and he will also try to publish historical resolutions. There's a possibility of creating an electronic database of resolutions.

Adkins is working with Farley on a proposal for dedicated microphones, and recordings will be available on YouTube soon. He noted that financial records from 2022-2024 are being released to checkbook.ohio.gov, with 2025 records to follow soon. Email newsletters are coming very soon, and residents can begin subscribing on the township's website.

POLICE

Old Business

None

New Business

General Updates

Tuchfarber reported that the goal is to reach full staffing soon, noting that the department has many young officers and that a few applicants are currently being interviewed. All townships in Franklin County are short-staffed. The department is working to increase annual funding to retain staff and prevent departures to neighboring departments.

The primary focus is on being good neighbors and ensuring the community is patrolled. The department has mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions. Tuchfarber also discussed the Service Coordinator, a service within the fire department that helps police departments. The Township has used this service in the past to connect residents with local resources.

ROAD

Old Business

Ongoing Water Intrusion Issues Related to Kanawha–Rosslyn Sanitary Sewer Project

Kayati spoke about the City of Columbus's recent work to repair two water leaks and potential improvements to the area's sump pumps, noting that sump pumps are significantly more active than before work began. Kayati expressed frustration with the ongoing situation and the general lack of updates from the City. He also acknowledged resident complaints about the unnecessary amount of salt dumped by the City of Columbus on Kanawha after their recent work.

Kunze said it would be appropriate to invite someone to speak with residents and provide a comprehensive update on the project. Kayati provided context that the project was required by Franklin County and that the ice buildup on the metal grates would prevent the road department from clearing snow properly.

Multiple residents expressed frustrations with the sewage connection process and the risk posed by ice on Kanawha from water leaks. Another expressed a desire to support their neighbors in dealing with this issue.

New Business

None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further matters to discuss, Farley moved to adjourn the meeting. Kunze seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Date

Chair

Fiscal Officer