

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

**Board of Commissioners
2524 Corydon Pike Suite 104
New Albany IN 47150
December 27, 2022
6:00 p.m.**

Shawn Carruthers called the meeting to order and led the *Pledge of Allegiance*

Present: President Shawn Carruthers, Vice President John Schellenberger and Tim Kamer

Also present: Attorney, Rick Fox; Attorney, Bridget Cantrell and Attorney, John Kraft

Old Business

1. *Lafayette & Greenville Fire District Attorneys- John Kraft & Steve Langdon*

a. FCO 2022-41 Creating a New Combined Highlander Fire Protection District

Attorney, John Kraft, and Attorney, Rick Fox, spoke with Wes Bennett, Commissioner of Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) to make sure they were on solid ground and didn't mess up the levy. Lafayette and Greenville Fire Districts would continue operations in 2023. In 2024 the new Highlander Fire District would become functional and operational providing the ordinance passes in 2022. If the signing is delayed until 2023 the new district would go into effect in 2025.

Reuben Cummings, GFC, LLC, works for Greenville and Lafayette Fire Districts. Mr. Cummings discussed the 2023 tax rates and the 5 year projection on AV growth and levy growth for both townships. Lafayette's tax bills will go up slightly and Greenville's will go down.

Lafayette Fire District has debt and the Lafayette's residents will pay the debt until it is paid. The Greenville residents will not pay on the debt as Highlander Fire District.

Mr. Kraft stated both Fire Boards approved the consolidation of the two Fire Districts unanimously.

Attorney, Bridget Cantrell, stated she has been to the Greenville Fire District public meetings and they believe it is in their best interest to consolidate the two Fire Districts. There has been a lot of thought and consideration for this for about 9 months and not a push through at the end of the year.

Tim Kamer wanted to clarify if this is a merger or a new district. Mr. Kraft stated it is an establishment of a new district that is a consolidation of the two.

Public input

Mike VanBree, Greenville Town, stated he believes this is a babystep towards a county-wide Fire District. He approves of this approach.

Mark Huth, chairman of Lafayette Fire District, stated both boards voted for this consolidation unanimously. He appreciates the Commissioners vote to support the Ordinance.

Greg Redden, Greenville Town Board, asked for due diligence to look at the all the financials. It will be a good step for the community but wants to make sure they cover all the bases. He asked what the staffing would look like.

Dave Gomes, Greenville Town Board, agreed with Mr. Redden. He stated the Town Board just learned of this Ordinance. He isn't necessarily against it but wants to make sure they do their due diligence. He would like to see the 5 year plan. He asked they take time to approve this.

John Schellenberger stated this was on the agenda the first meeting of December.

Mr. Cummings stated, if this is passed, he will lose a client in 2024. He has nothing to gain by consolidating.

Tim Kamer stated he would like an unbiased tax assessment. It isn't that he doesn't trust Mr. Cummings but the Reedy Group has done a lot of work for the county and would like them to do an unbiased tax assessment. He thinks this feels rushed.

Shawn Carruthers stated his questions have been answered and is comfortable with the numbers provided.

Motion to approve FCO 2022-41 Creating a New Combined Highlander Fire Protection District. Moved by John Schellenberger. Seconded by Shawn Carruthers. Motion passed 2-1. Tim Kamer opposed.

Tim Kamer stated he disagrees with rushing for the second reading by the end of the year before doing their due diligence.

Rick Fox stated it doesn't accomplish anything to not pass this Ordinance in 2022. The new Board of Commissioners in 2023 can address this at the beginning of the year.

Motion for 2nd reading Friday, December 30 at 4:00 pm. Moved by John Schellenberger. Seconded by Shawn Carruthers. Motion passed 2-1. Tim Kamer opposed.

Reuben Cummings asked what Tim Kamer needs answered. Mr. Kamer stated he needs the DLGF conversation that says they are totally good in writing and have the Reedy Group to verify the numbers.

Mr. Kraft stated Wes Bennett from DLGF will not give a written opinion.

Motion to adjourn. Moved by John Schellenberger. Seconded by Tim Kamer. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes approved January 17, 2023

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Shawn Carruthers

Timothy Ober

Tim Kamer

John Schellenberger

John Schellenberger

Diana M Topping

Attest: Diana M. Topping, Auditor