

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Newbury Township Board of Trustees – Special Hearing / Regular Meeting – September 2, 2026

The Newbury Township Trustees called to order a special hearing at 6:05 p.m., September 2, 2026, at the Newbury Township Fire Station, 11111 Kinsman Rd., regarding the appeal by William Kovach et al. of the determination that the property at 14544 View Dr., Newbury, OH 44065, is unsafe and must be demolished. Trustees Gregory Tropf, David Lair, Jr., and Carly Sayre were in attendance. The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Newbury Township followed, called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Also in attendance:

Nick Bellas	Zoning Inspector	Fr. Jay McPhillips	St. Helen Parish
C.D. Boyd	Resident	Lindsay Pollock	Deputy Fiscal Officer
Karen Endres	Zoning Commission	Shannon Vaughan	St. Helen Parish
Ken Fagan	Fire Chief	Ann Wishart	Geauga Maple Leaf
Lesley Francis	Resident; 14544 View Dr. (party of interest, demolition appeal)	Doug Zipperman	Road Department
Jim Lang	Zoning Commission (Chair)		

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Hearing – Demolition Appeal, 14544 View Dr.:

- Mr. Bellas explained that the property remains recorded with the county auditor in the name of the Kovaches, the owners of record, who did not attend. Lesley Francis appeared as a party of interest, identifying herself as the new owner under a quit claim deed that has not yet been recorded with the county.
- Mr. Lair stated that the trustees could not proceed with the appeal until the property transfer is officially recorded, so that the hearing is conducted with the current owner of record. Mr. Tropf concurred.
- Ms. Francis estimated the transfer would close by Friday, September 4, 2026, or by Tuesday, September 8, 2026 (following the Labor Day holiday) at the latest. Mr. Bellas asked her to notify him once the transfer is recorded so that a new hearing date can be scheduled and tentatively suggested September 16th at approximately the same time. No vote was taken on the appeal; the hearing was continued.

Executive Session:

- Following the demolition appeal discussion, Mr. Tropf moved to enter executive session at 6:10 p.m., pursuant to ORC 121.22(G)(1) considering employment of a public employee and Mr. Lair seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes. Out of executive session at 6:28 p.m., no decisions made.

Public Input:

- Fr. Jay McPhillips, representing St. Helen Parish, requested permission for temporary parking on Hillview Rd. during the parish school’s construction project, which has eliminated approximately 25 parking spaces. He requested use of approximately 15 spaces on Sunday mornings (8:30 a.m. to noon) for the two Sunday Masses, as well as for the Christmas Eve Mass (December 24) and a confirmation Mass for the combined parish (with St. Edward and St. Lucy) on a Friday in April. He noted the need would likely last less than a year, until exterior construction is complete and existing parking is reclaimed.
- Mr. Tropf suggested a one-directional traffic pattern (entering from Rt. 87, exiting via Crestview) to avoid vehicles turning around in driveways, and noted the road would need to be kept clear in the event of a Sunday snowstorm. Mr. Fagan stated the Fire Department has no objection provided emergency access lanes remain open and only one side of the road is used for parking; he suggested parishioners be encouraged to check the church lot for open spaces before parking on Hillview. Fr. McPhillips confirmed the parish already encourages single-car attendance and parking at the rectory with a walk-down path.
- Mr. Tropf agreed to prepare a letter confirming permission for the parish to forward to the Geauga County Sheriff’s Office.

Fire Chief’s Update:

- 743 calls year-to-date; 83 calls in August; 4 calls so far in September. The department is averaging approximately 92 calls per month, compared with approximately 65 per month four years ago.
- Mr. Fagan confirmed the September 9 field usage meeting (6:00–7:30 p.m.) and noted he would mark it on the calendar.

Road Update:

- Center Cemetery paving: Mr. Zipperman clarified that the two G.A.R. Paving quotes previously discussed cover two different sections – the access driveway from the fire station parking lot to the circle, and the circle itself – rather than being duplicate quotes for the same work as had been assumed. The access driveway portion (previously approved at \$21,745) is separate from the 14-foot circle paving, quoted as Proposal Number One at \$23,840.
- Ms. Sayre moved to accept Proposal Number One (Quote #11704 Rev.) from G.A.R. Paving for the 14-foot circle paving at Center Cemetery, in the amount of \$23,840, and Mr. Lair seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes.
- Geauga Feed & Grain (“feed store”) driveway tie-in: as part of Geauga Feed & Grain’s parking lot resurfacing, the township ground off approximately 40 tons of deteriorated material on its adjoining section. Mr. Zipperman presented a G.A.R. Paving quote of approximately \$6,400 (of which approximately \$2,500 is labor) to tie the two sections together in one continuous paving operation.

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- Mr. Lair moved to accept G.A.R. Paving's proposal to tie in the feed store driveway and the road, in the amount of approximately \$6,400, and Ms. Sayre seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes.
- Old fire station (Legion Hall) parking area: Mr. Zipperman noted the pavement is deteriorating from plowing and provided a budgetary estimate of just under \$25,000 for a future full tear-out and repave; in the interim, in-house patching can extend its life. No action was taken.
- Park View Rd. resurfacing / chip-and-seal projects: substantially complete, with only mailbox adjustments and a stop bar remaining; fog sealing is expected within the coming week. Overall, the Park View Rd. project is trending about \$5,000 over budget while the chip-and-seal project is trending about \$2,500 under budget, for a net overage of approximately \$2,500 for the year.
- Crestwood Rd.: Ms. Sayre relayed a resident report of significant potholes; she and Mr. Zipperman plan to inspect the road.
- Valley Rd. speed limit: Mr. Zipperman relayed a request to consider a speed limit reduction in connection with a new house under construction. He and Mr. Fagan noted Valley Rd. has no posted speed limit sign and therefore defaults to 55 mph under Ohio law, consistent with Auburn Rd. The trustees noted only one complaint had been received and declined to pursue a change, noting a request would need to go through the township to the county engineer for a study, and that residents with speed or traffic concerns may contact the Sheriff's Office or State Highway Patrol.
- Chatham Glen: Ms. Sayre reported that the Chatham Glen HOA changed its posted speed limit to 20 mph, generating resident complaints, and that the Sheriff's Office cannot enforce a speed limit under 25 mph on an improperly posted road. Mr. Tropf and Mr. Zipperman stated the HOA would need county approval to make such a change and questioned whether that approval was obtained; Mr. Tropf will follow up with the county.
- OTARMA backup camera grant: Mr. Zipperman reported OTARMA is offering a one-time grant for backup cameras; only the township's two newest trucks currently have them. He will obtain pricing to add cameras to additional trucks.

Zoning Inspector's Update:

- Seven permits were issued; two courtesy letters were sent (a courtesy letter allows seven days to respond before a more formal violation notice, which cites potential penalties, is sent).
- The Board of Zoning Appeals held six hearings last month: five area variances were approved, and one was denied. Mr. Bellas noted recurring area-variance requests tied to older, irregularly shaped lots, and that workshops have suggested reviewing the code to reduce the need for repeated variances. Three lot splits/consolidations were also processed, generally to allow family members to live nearby; Mr. Bellas noted a broader trend toward multiple dwellings on one parcel ("cottage" or "garden" homes) that the township may wish to examine.
- Mr. Bellas and Ms. Lydan attended the American Planning Association conference in Geneva, Ohio, and will bring information back to the Zoning Commission.
- 14258 View Dr.: Mr. Bellas presented photographs of a long-neglected, overgrown, vacant property. The county building department inspected the property and, by letter dated August 6, 2026, determined the structures are unsafe, unsecured, and uninhabitable. The property owner (Debra Shay) has not responded to correspondence, and neighbors have complained. Mr. Bellas recommended a resolution declaring the structures a nuisance to be demolished; the trustees concurred, and Mr. Bellas will prepare the resolution for the next meeting. A question was raised about pest control (exterminator) prior to demolition, based on a prior experience with a similar property.

Fiscal Officer's Update:

- Bank transition: the transition from Middlefield Banking Company to Farmers National took place over the weekend of August 21–23, 2026. The August bank reconciliation is split between the two institutions; Ms. Pollock is finalizing the Farmers National portion and will present the completed August reconciliation at the next meeting. A \$10 fee was observed on transactions through the clearing account (through which HRA amounts are funded); Ms. Pollock has contacted the bank and is awaiting a response and has also observed offsetting credits.
- Bank balance / view access: Ms. Sayre asked about an apparent discrepancy between the Star Ohio balance and amounts reported at past meetings; Ms. Pollock explained the increase reflects a transfer of surplus funds following the township's tax settlement, and recommended trustees rely on month-end online statements, which will match what is reported at meetings. Mr. Lair reported continuing difficulty accessing online view access with Farmers National; this will be revisited when each trustee has time together with the Fiscal Officer at the town hall.
- Town hall / community center reserve fund: establishing a reserve fund requires at least one cost quote for a facilities study. Mr. Tropf will contact Infinity, the firm that performed the fire department's reserve study, or Brad's office, to begin that process.
- Fiscal officer transition: Ms. Pollock will inquire what is required for both the incoming and outgoing fiscal officer to have concurrent access to the UAN accounting system during the transition period.
- Uniform vendor: Ms. Pollock recommended proceeding with the "City" uniform vendor as the most responsive option; a competing vendor ("Model") was less expensive but does not offer the required reflective safety certification. A protection plan add-on (approximately \$38.50/month) was discussed; without it, pricing would be within about \$18 of the Model quote, but the township would bear replacement costs for lost or damaged items. Ms. Pollock sent a marked-up service agreement, revised with input from the prosecutor's office (Susan Wieland) to the vendor for review; a decision is pending, and Ms. Pollock will follow up on replacement-cost terms if the protection plan is declined.

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- Fire department financials: Ms. Pollock is working with Belinda (the fire department's bookkeeper) to obtain a corrected July file and several missing bank statements needed to substantiate the department's records – two months for a savings account, both certificates of deposit, and the rainy day fund. She will share income and expense records with the trustees once complete and noted a separate discussion with the auditor is pending outside this meeting.
- Credit card processing: ADP approved proceeding with Catalis for credit card processing, including delivery and configuration of payment devices, an administrator portal, remote device upgrades, and web-based training; the service can also be linked on the township website.
- Mr. Tropf moved to accept Catalis for credit card processing and Mr. Lair seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes.
- Consent agenda: Ms. Pollock presented Resolution 20260902-01 (deactivation of the Miscellaneous Capital Projects Fund and related accounts for Veterans Memorial Park) and Resolution 20260902-02 (accepting the amounts and rates determined by the County Budget Commission following the August 17 budget hearing and authorizing the necessary tax levies, certified to the county auditor), together with the 8/19/2026 special and regular meeting minutes.
- Mr. Tropf moved to accept the consent agenda as presented, and Ms. Sayre seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes.
- Risk assessment report: Mr. Lair distributed printed copies of the OTARMA risk assessment report to the trustees; Ms. Pollock will file a copy at the town hall. The trustees will schedule time to review the findings together.
- Recycling program follow-up: no action items were assigned to Ms. Pollock at this time; the trustees agreed the curbside recycling/trash collection bid concept discussed with Ms. Jones is worth pursuing further (see Ms. Sayre's and Mr. Lair's updates below).
- Veterans Memorial Park fund history: in response to a prior request from the County Auditor's office, Ms. Pollock located the original 2015 meeting minutes approving the fund being deactivated under Resolution 20260902-01.

Mr. Tropf's Update:

- Fiscal Officer appointment: following Ms. Pollock's relocation and transition to Deputy Fiscal Officer (approved 8/19/2026), the trustees interviewed and selected Virginia Dressler.
- Mr. Tropf moved to appoint Virginia (Ginnie) Dressler as Deputy Fiscal Officer, effective September 8, 2026, and Mr. Lair seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes. Ms. Pollock will contact Ms. Dressler to confirm. Ms. Pollock and Ms. Dressler to both work in the position during a transition period to be determined.
- Trick-or-Treat: set for Saturday, October 31, 2026, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Ms. Montani-Kerr will post the date and time to the township website.
- Landscaping, tree service, and related uses in the B-1 Commercial District: Mr. Tropf stated that after further consideration since the August 19, 2026 joint session, he continues to lean toward a conditional-use approach that would allow existing operators to remain while bringing them into compliance, rather than removing businesses from the township. Ms. Sayre reiterated her view that B-1 should remain reserved for retail uses consistent with the township's land use plan, noted that approximately 2.66% of the township's roughly 28 miles of Rt. 87 frontage is affected, stated that existing operators are already grandfathered regardless of the outcome, and that a nonconforming (grandfathered) use does not transfer to a new owner if the business is sold. She reiterated interest in a resident survey given the decision's long-term impact.
- Mr. Lang, speaking for the Zoning Commission, stated the commission is not advocating for a particular outcome and needs direction from the trustees; he described a conditional-use approach with standards (screening, appearance requirements similar to M-1) as a possible middle path, and noted that whether a conditional-use permit transfers with a sale of the business (unlike a grandfathered/permitted use) is a relevant distinction. He and Mr. Bellas stated that the key open question is what enforcement authority the township has over pre-existing operations versus new development, which requires an opinion from the township's assistant prosecuting attorney.
- Ms. Endres and Mr. Bellas expressed concern that permitting landscaping as a conditional use in B-1 could open the district to additional such businesses, and that a court case previously won by the township in Common Pleas and on appeal had not resulted in the affected business ceasing operations, raising questions about enforcement history.
- The trustees agreed to table any zoning text change pending the meeting between Ms. Sayre, Mr. Bellas, and the township's prosecuting attorney scheduled for September 15, 2026, and continued review by the Zoning Commission. Ms. Sayre offered to arrange a separate, more detailed working session (potentially including the Board of Zoning Appeals and Zoning Commission) once further legal guidance is available, tentatively in the October–November timeframe.
- Road worker application: Jim Stefancin's application remains the only one received. Mr. Lair will reach out to Mr. Stefancin once he is feeling better to schedule a time with Mr. Zimperman to review the application; the position remains open in the meantime.

Mr. Lair's Update:

- OTARMA risk assessment: distributed to trustees (see Fiscal Officer's update above); the assessment is performed approximately every three years, and the most recent one was just completed.
- America's 250th Celebration / Car Show recap: over 400 cars attended. Mr. Lair thanked the volunteers, the road department for grounds preparation, and the park board for their efforts. Additional children's activities (bouncy house, ice cream truck, dunk tank) were well received. For

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next year, the trustees plan to address traffic backing up on Auburn Rd. by directing incoming vehicles to stage in the old school property parking lot before proceeding to the field.

- Veterans Park LED sign: Mr. Lair presented a comparison quote from Stewart Signs for a larger, 4.2’ x 8.5’ sign at \$32,832 plus approximately \$11,000 installation (approximately \$43,000 total), and an updated quote from Designs by Diana for a 4’ x 8’ sign at \$37,997 including installation. Color preference remains green, to complement existing park buildings. Following the 5-year warranty period, service continues through a \$20/month subscription (via ScreenHub, using AT&T or Verizon cellular data). A NOPEC grant of approximately \$11,374 will be applied toward the cost.
- Mr. Lair moved to go with Designs by Diana for the Veterans Park LED sign at a cost of \$37,997 and Mr. Tropf seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes. Mr. Bellas will coordinate sign placement with Mr. Lair.
- Community center / Panzica Plaza LED sign: in response to a resident inquiry about whether the township has rights to post on the existing LED sign at the community center (built when the plaza was developed), the trustees could not confirm any current township control or access; the sign is understood to be controlled by the plaza’s owner/leasing company. Mr. Tropf will follow up to confirm the township’s rights, if any.

Ms. Sayre’s Update:

- Field usage meeting: confirmed for September 9, 2026, 6:00–7:30 p.m.; all user organizations accepted the date.
- Website update: Ms. Sayre will sign the previously approved proposal and obtain next steps and a timeline; work is expected to begin this month.
- Shared road letter: Ms. Sayre and Mr. Zimperman drafted a letter to Munson Township and Auburn Township requesting a written commitment regarding shared road maintenance responsibilities; Ms. Sayre will circulate it to the trustees for review and approval before sending it.
- Fiscal Officer letter of interest and Road Department application: addressed under Mr. Tropf’s and Mr. Lair’s updates above.
- Zoning Alternate application: a candidate (Mallory), with a background in engineering and city planning, plans to attend upcoming Zoning Commission meetings ahead of a possible appointment to the open alternate position.
- Geauga County Zoning Group (August 26): State Rep. Sarah Fowler Arthur described a “day in the life” opportunity in Columbus for zoning officials to observe legislative hearings and bill activity. The Zoning Commission is interested in additional training but has not decided between attending in Columbus or pursuing local training options.
- Geauga Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Meeting: informational – October 6, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. Ms. Sayre is unable to attend.
- 2026 Post-Construction Evaluation & Feedback (due October 16): Ms. Sayre reported positive feedback from local businesses (Teague Shopping Center, Kinetico) regarding contractor responsiveness and site cleanup.
- Cemetery Monthly Report: burials in process: 2; year-to-date: 14. Pre-need plot purchases: 2 this month, 8 year-to-date. Foundation requests: 1 this month, 6 year-to-date. No immediate upcoming reservations at Oberland Park, with one reservation coming in October.
- Oberland Park restrooms: recurring toilet clogging was again reported, particularly during high-use events (car show, a recent softball tournament, and soccer activity). A lockbox and plungers have been placed on-site as an interim measure given the limited number of people with keys. The trustees discussed adding a contact-info plaque for after-hours or weekend issues, though the appropriate contact and process remain undetermined, and discussed signage discouraging excess paper product use. The restroom’s hot water tank had been found unplugged (cause undetermined) and has been restored.
- Donations: the trustees considered two inquiries – a Geauga County Fair 4-H’ers animal-purchase sponsorship and a Lindsey Elementary sponsorship. Consistent with prior guidance from the prosecutor’s office that Ohio townships may not make unrestricted gifts of public funds to private individuals or organizations absent specific statutory authority, the trustees determined neither donation could be made.

Additional Public Input, Mr. Lang (Zoning Commission Chair):

- Data centers: Mr. Lang, drawing on his engineering background, raised concerns about potential data center development in Newbury, particularly regarding water usage and depletion of the water table, and noted that a data center bringing its own power infrastructure could potentially benefit the township’s electric grid reliability. He suggested the trustees consider a temporary moratorium on data centers (rather than an outright ban, which could invite legal challenge) to allow time to study appropriate conditions, such as requiring a self-contained, closed-loop cooling system that does not draw from groundwater. He will research the topic further and bring recommendations to a future meeting and will check on a moratorium reportedly under consideration in Middlefield Village.
- Ms. Endres noted that the Geauga Park District’s planned acquisition of approximately 173 acres in Newbury (West Woods expansion, via the Clean Ohio Fund) will require future updates to the township’s zoning map and land use plan to reflect the additional passive parkland.

Summary of Motions:

Motion	Moved / Seconded	Vote
Enter executive session	Mr. Tropf / Mr. Lair	Roll call: three ayes

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Motion	Moved / Seconded	Vote
Accept Proposal Number One (Quote #11704 Rev.) from G.A.R. Paving for the 14-foot circle paving at Center Cemetery, in the amount of \$23,840 [this clarifies/completes the paving discussion from the 8/19/2026 meeting, where the \$21,745 amount recorded in the motion was for a separate portion of the project – the access driveway – approved previously]	Ms. Sayre / Mr. Lair	Roll call: three ayes
Accept G.A.R. Paving’s proposal to tie the Geauga Feed & Grain driveway/parking lot into the road, in the amount of approximately \$6,400	Mr. Lair / Ms. Sayre	Roll call: three ayes
Appoint Virginia Dressler as Fiscal Officer, effective Tuesday, September 8, 2026	Mr. Tropf / Mr. Lair	Roll call: three ayes
Accept Catalis for credit card processing	Mr. Tropf / Mr. Lair	Roll call: three ayes
Accept the consent agenda as presented (8/19/2026 special and regular meeting minutes; Resolution 20260902-01 Deactivation of Miscellaneous Capital Projects (Vets) Fund and Accounts; Resolution 20260902-02 accepting amounts and rates as determined by the County Budget Commission and authorizing tax levies)	Mr. Tropf / Ms. Sayre	Roll call: three ayes
Accept the Designs by Diana proposal for the Veterans Park LED sign, in the amount of \$37,997 (a NOPEC grant of approximately \$11,374 will be applied toward the cost)	Mr. Lair / Mr. Tropf	Roll call: three ayes
Adjourn the meeting	Mr. Tropf / Mr. Lair	Roll call: three ayes

Warrants approved prior to or at this meeting:

Number	Post Date	Total Warrant Amount	Payee	Status
39410	9/2/26	\$18.27	Amy Lydan	O
39411	9/2/26	\$340.00	Aris Company	O
39412	9/2/26	\$101.92	Bradford Neal Machinery Inc.	O
39413	9/2/26	\$4,461.25	CJ Landscape, LLC	O
39414	9/2/26	\$96.74	DEX Imaging	O
39415	9/2/26	\$1,875.00	Edward Johnson	O
39416	9/2/26	\$172.63	Fisher Auto Parts	O
39417	9/2/26	\$30.00	Green Vision Material	O
39418	9/2/26	\$50.00	H&M Landscaping	O
39419	9/2/26	\$15.64	Hartville Hardware Inc.	O
39420	9/2/26	\$54.99	Iron Man Contractors Supply	O
39421	9/2/26	\$20.00	Jehoshaphat K. Jones	O
39422	9/2/26	\$50.00	Julie Rudloff	O
39423	9/2/26	\$740.26	Jump With Us LLC	O
39424	9/2/26	\$237.14	Kimball-Midwest Inc.	O
39425	9/2/26	\$611.77	Newbury American Legion	O
39426	9/2/26	\$87.58	Nickolas Bellas	O
39427	9/2/26	\$550.00	Patsy Keyes	O
39428	9/2/26	\$407.90	Ray's Repair	O
39429	9/2/26	\$181,597.00	Ronyak Bros. Paving Inc.	O
39430	9/2/26	\$344.69	Sunrise Springs Water Co. Inc.	O
39431	9/2/26	\$948.00	Treasurer of State of Ohio	O
39432	9/2/26	\$1,418.04	Ullman Oil Company	O
39433	9/2/26	\$248.65	West Geauga Local School District	O
		\$194,477.47	TOTAL PAYMENTS	

Mr. Tropf moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Lair seconded. Roll call vote: three ayes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Gregory Tropf - Chairman

David Lair, Jr. - Vice Chairman

Carly A. Sayre – Trustee

Lindsay M. Pollock – Deputy Fiscal Officer