

Westchester Township Board Meeting & Public Hearing
September 10, 2025
5:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Westchester Township Trustee Suzanne Philbrick; Township Board Members Calvin Chubb, Barbara Stroud, and Cheryl Evans; Township Board Attorney David Hiestand; and Town of Chesterton Fire Chief Sean O'Donnell were present. Zernul Shackelford, owner of Darque Syde of D'Lyte, was on hand to provide streaming and recording services for the meeting. Mitch Reynolds, Porter resident, was also in attendance.

Fire Cumulative Fund – Requests from Fire Departments :

Chesterton Fire Chief O'Donnell updated the Board on potential needs in the short-term for the Fire Departments, noting that neither he nor Porter Fire Chief Jay Craig Jr (not in attendance) have any specific needs at this time, but they would continue discussions between the two departments for any future needs. Trustee Suzanne Philbrick was asked by Chief O'Donnell of the current balance of the Township's Fire Cumulative Fund, and Trustee Philbrick said as of July, 2025, the balance was approximately \$190,000. Chief O'Donnell mentioned expecting an invoice for the fire reporting software for 2026, and Trustee Philbrick asked that an invoice be brought to the Board at the next meeting if possible to make sure the Board has time to be presented with the invoice and provide approval.

Chief O'Donnell updated the Board on the baby box at the fire department buildings noting that, to date, they have not had a baby left at the stations in Chesterton or Porter. Chief O'Donnell then gave an update on the construction and remodeling currently taking place at the Chesterton Fire Department building, expecting the project to be done in December, 2025.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

Board Members reviewed the minutes of the Westchester Township Board Meeting held on May 7, 2025. Upon review, Board Member Barb Stroud made a motion to approve the May 7, 2025 minutes with the minutes corrected for dates of future meetings. Board Member Calvin Chubb seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. This motion carried unanimously.

Westchester Township Budget 2026

Township Trustee Philbrick presented Board Members with a proposed budget for 2026 for review and comment. This reading represented the first reading of the budget. A second reading of the budget is necessary and is scheduled for the next Board meeting on September 24, 2025. Although the public has a legal right to appear and was afforded an opportunity to remonstrate against this budget if they so wished, there was no comment from the only public person in attendance, Mr. Reynolds.

Township Trustee Philbrick described the process involved in preparing this budget, including gathering and submitting an extensive amount of data to the Department of Local Government Finance. She noted that the Department of Local Government Finance is the party who sets the maximum amount that can be raised and that their figure is not negotiable.

Board members thanked Township Trustee Philbrick for her work and promised to review this proposed budget in more detail prior to the next meeting.

Presentation of Capital Improvement Plan for Westchester Township:

Trustee Philbrick presented the Board Members with the “Township Capital Improvement Plan & Calculation of Estimated Transfer to Roads & Infrastructure Fund”. With instruction and forms provided by the Department of Local Government Finance, Trustee Philbrick calculated the estimated funds eligible for transfer to the Township Road and Infrastructure Fund, which must be created and approved by the Board by September 30, 2025. Based off these calculations, \$18,115 from the General Fund would be unrestricted, of which, 30% of that amount (\$5,435) would need to be transferred to the Road and Infrastructure Fund to be in compliance. Trustee Philbrick reminded the Board that there are no capital improvement projects currently, and nothing planned going forward at this time.

Presentation of Resolution to Adopt Capital Improvement Fund:

The Board was presented with the “Resolution to Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan Under Indiana Code 36-6-9-5” to comply with Indiana Code 36-6-9-5, which will be voted on by the Board at the next meeting on September 24, 2025. Trustee Philbrick outlined how after adoption the Board would vote to transfer funding to the Roads and Infrastructure Fund in January, 2026, similar to how the Rainy Day Fund requires approval from the Board before transfer of any funds.

Trustee Philbrick asked Township Attorney David Hiestand to share his concerns with compliance before the September 30, 2025, deadline. Attorney Hiestand's main concern was with the Township's Cumulative Fire Fund, suggesting it may need it's own Capital Improvement Plan to be able to continue adding to the Fire Fund. If an Improvement Plan is needed for the Fire Fund, it too would need to be approved by the Board by the September 30, 2025, deadline. Trustee Philbrick and Attorney Hiestand will work together and the Board will be presented with a Capital Improvement Plan for the Fire Fund, if found to be necessary, at the September 24, 2025, meeting.

Presentation of Resolution to Establish the Westchester Township Roads and Infrastructure Fund:

Trustee Philbrick presented to the Board a resolution to establish the “Westchester Township Roads and Infrastructure Fund” and asked the Board's approval to establish the fund at the next meeting on September 24, 2025, as the Township is now required to establish and maintain this fund. Board Member Barbara Stroud asked if there were any roads currently in Westchester Township that the Township is responsible for, and Trustee Philbrick let the Board know that there are no roads or infrastructure that the Township is responsible for.

Presentation of Memorandum of Understanding:

Trustee Philbrick presented to the Board “The Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Chesterton, Town of Porter, Town of Burns Harbor, Town of Dune Acres, City of Portage, and the County of Porter, All in the County of Porter, State of Indiana.” This memorandum of understanding would outline how the money transferred to the newly created Township Roads and Improvement Fund would be divided equally between the cities and towns listed above, and it would be up to the judgment of those cities and towns as to how that money is spent. Trustee

Philbrick informed the Board that the cities and towns would not be presented with anything until the Board approved the memorandum.

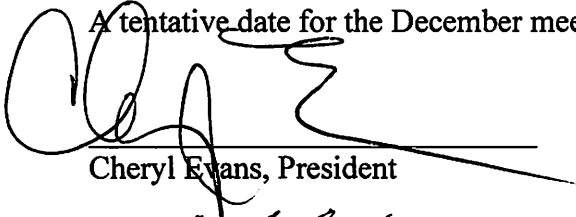
Westchester Township Website and Access to Streaming/Recordings of Board Meetings:

Trustee Philbrick provided the Board with the Township's new website address, accessible at <http://www.westchestertrustee.org/>. From there, the public can access information on the Township and the offices of the Trustee and Township Board, resources for those in need, previous meeting minutes, and a link to live streaming of Board meetings and an archive of previously recorded meetings, directly available at <https://www.youtube.com/@trusteewestchester>

Next Meeting and Hearing/Adjournment:

As there was no additional business to discuss and the date of the next meeting and budget hearing was already set for September 25, 2025 at 5 p.m., Board Member Stroud made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board Member Chubb seconded the motion. This motion was carried unanimously, and Board President Cheryl Evans adjourned the meeting.

A tentative date for the December meeting was set for December 3, 2025 at 5 pm.



Cheryl Evans, President



Calvin Chubb, Secretary



Barbara Stroud, Member