

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Held December 16 2025

**Etna Township, Licking County
Etna Township Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting**

December 16, 2025, At 6:00 P.M.

Etna Township Hall, 81 Liberty Street, Etna, Ohio 43018, Telephone (740-927-7717)

Trustees Present: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax
Also in Attendance: Christina Giesey, Administrative Assistant

I. Opening

a. Call to Order b. Roll Call c. Invocation: Staci Kitchen d. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Rozland McKee

Second by: Gary Burkholder

Trustee Evans stated he did not have an opportunity to review the agenda prior to the meeting, and we'll see if this behavior will change come January 1, 2026.

Moved by Evans to amend the agenda to add under "New Business": a. to waive attorney/client privilege so to inform the incoming trustees regarding attorney communications; and b. the Palmer and Mink Road intersection for discussion.

Second by: Rozland McKee

Trustee Burkholder stated he would not support waiving attorney/client privilege for the trustee-elects, and they should be briefed at the first meeting in January 2026. Trustee McKee asked if the waiving of the attorney client privilege was for a particular matter or in general. Trustee Evans reported that the attorney/ client privilege should be waived in "general" because most townships welcome the newly elected trustees into the meetings, provide discussion, and attend executive sessions. He isn't sure how the newly elected trustees would be up to date on the township matters if we don't allow them access prior to January 1, 2026.

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to amend the amendment and add only Palmer and Mink intersections discussion but not waive of the attorney/client privilege for the newly elected trustees.

Second by: Rozland McKee

Yes: Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee

No: Mark Evans Amended Amendment

Carried 2-1

Yes: Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Amended Agenda

No: Mark Evans

Carried 2-1

III. Adoption of Minutes

Motion by: Gary Burkholder to approve October 7, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes

Second by: Rozland McKee

Trustee Evans reported that adding the attached minutes to the agenda was only done to make it look like something was being done. He further asked if the public was provided with the minutes and why the board wasn't provided with the minutes when the drafts were completed. We had community volunteers offering to help with the office work as he did, personally.

Yes: Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee

No: Mark Evans

Carried 2-1

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IV. Public Comments: (limit 3 minutes per person)

Staci Kitchen 8983 Thornton Hall Blvd #306 – Shared that she as new to Etna but not Reynoldsburg, some have seen me here before providing the invocation and hope to continue coming to the meetings to learn and be a part of etna township. She appreciates everyone’s service and does hope to be more involved in the coming year. The community appears to be taking the township issues to heart, and she finds that very moving.

Joan Burns 10650 Mink Street SW – I’m here again to discuss the intersections of Palmer and Mink Roads where vehicle accidents continue to occur. There should be a 4-way stop at this intersection and the speed limit reduced now and not wait for a roundabout to be implemented later. The increase in traffic resulting from the businesses and residential areas will only increase.

Tia Raver Zimmerman – 9035 Summit Road SW – Asked why a member of the board was not present at the Reynoldsburg meeting for the new interchange from Taylor Road and State Route 170. She wanted to know why etna township would not be interested in what is going on in their backyard and not allow Reynoldsburg to have complete control of what, how, when, etc., as Reynoldsburg never asks permission for anything, but they do ask for forgiveness. This board tells the township community they are important to them, but their actions show something different. She further made suggestions for community involvement by holding a pie eating contest, a day to meet/greet the local fire and police departments, and to do something with the schools as well.

Kim Gold 1148 Nocturne Road – Shared her story about her granddaughter being involved in an accident at Palmer and Mink Roads and in November her grandson was involved in an accident at the same location, and then today another accident occurred at the same location. Her grandson always drives safely, maintains the speed limit because of his sister’s accident (in a coma), yet it happened to him anyway. For the family to get, yet another phone call about a loved one involved in a car accident at the same location, was extremely difficult to handle. Again, the speed limit needs to be reduced, and a 4-way stop installed.

Bill Halblaub 87 Beechwood Drive SW – Reported that the board has known about the intersections of Palmer and Mink Roads for years, yet nothing has been done. He shared that he keeps hearing that it’s a county issue as well and demanded to see some documentation from the board showing that this board has actively communicated with the county about getting some type of resolution. There is no reason for the speed limit to be 50-55 miles per hour and should be reduced to 45 miles per hour. He, too, has a family member that was involved in a car accident and knows what it feels like. He also commented on the matter of Trustee Burkholder not agreeing to waive the attorney/client privilege with the newly elected trustees before they assume office in January 2026.

Trustee Burkholder reported that there are pending litigation matters within the township that should not be discussed. Trustee Burkholder stated there wasn’t a single person in the room tonight that was and is not sympathetic to the families and individuals involved in the accidents in the past or present. The township does not have the authority to change the speed limit on Palmar and Mink or any roads as this is the jurisdiction of the Licking County Engineer. This board has communicated personally and in writing with the county engineer about the numerous accidents occurring on some of the roads. The board has been told the county, and state are conducting a safety study which could consider the use of a

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roundabout, 4-way stop, reduced speed limit. Etna Township's previous trustee board members have also contacted the county engineer about these same concerns of the speed and the intersection. Also, residents posting on Facebook that another accident occurred and the township is still doing nothing about it, is untrue.

Mark Evans 91 Old Church – Trustee Evans shared that this time, 4 years ago, when John Carlisle served on the board had been deleting emails, refused to help with transitioning the incoming board members, pushing developer TIF's that diverted millions of dollars from the police and fire district, so we'll see that happens when he returns to the board in January 2026. Regarding the security access to the building today, Evans claimed the security code to access the building was changed and he was not made aware. Evans said he was surprised that Trustee McKee showed up for the meeting tonight because she had "ditched" several fire district meetings. Evans claimed Trustee Burkholder begged her to come tonight so that he could shove this stuff through tonight. Evans agreed with Mr. Halblaub about the transition of the newly elected board members prior to assuming office so that they are "brought up to speed" with the township events. Evans claimed Trustee Burkholder is ignoring emails, calls, events, etc., and total lack of transparency. Trustee Evans added how he held a Santa community event on his "dime" when nobody else would.

Trustee Burkholder informed that Mayor Begeny of Reynoldsburg would be making a presentation at a board meeting after the first of the year regarding the Palmer and Taylor Road study.

Shelly Ipacs 114 Royalty Drive - Shared that she found it very helpful to document dates, times, issues over a period of time and sent emails to every Licking county commissioner, every member of the Licking County Planning Commission, the chair of The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and every Etna Township board member, making sure that everyone received and heard the same concerns presented by the community. Even though I did receive some responses, I continued to send emails to keep the community issues on their radar, until matters were addressed.

Lasonya Fuller 9193 Henley Avenue Reynoldsburg – Shared that she was new here and found the meeting to be chaotic and noted that nothing is going to get done with the hostility, negativity, and continued arguing. We are supposed to come together with open minds and work together and agree to disagree.

Lorant Ipacs 114 Royalty Drive – Shared that he supported Ms. Gold and her willingness to present to the board and that Ms. Fuller come back in January 2026 for the new board.

Jon Hanson 51 Ridgewood Drive SW – Reported that even on Trustee Evans last meeting he continues to complain, attack, blame, and defending himself, however the key problem for Trustee Evans is that he lost trust with the township a while ago and never could communicate properly or work well with others. The new attendees tonight expressed their surprise at how hostile the meeting was tonight. Next month Mr. Evans will be limited to 3 minutes as a public speaker and I'm sure that he will continue to blame, complain, defend, and continue to present himself as the only solution. Mr. Evans has been campaigning since 2023, and he has already attacked Mr. Burkholder and his upcoming campaign in

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2026. I hope that the township will realize that he does not need to be elected ever again. Trustee Evans leaves us with a legacy of 8 people driven out of their jobs with the township by his massive ego and toxic nature, and if you don't bow too Mr. Evans, he will set out to destroy you on social media and at every meeting. His inability to ever admit that he may be wrong has not served him well as there are none among us that have not made mistakes. He also leaves us with outside legal bills where everything does not have to be reviewed because of inexperience or political witch hunt, and everything is a "big deal" with Trustee Evans is still buffered about getting removed as the president in 2022. The only thing he has done in 4 years is eliminate solar farms and nothing else. Right now, he appears concerned about what information Rachel Zelazny has provided to her by the board, and he should let her speak for herself and request her own information. Trustee Evans, you worry about you and go run a new business and do something.

V. **Old Business:**

a. Motion to discuss the 2026 Sheriff Contract

Moved by: Mark Evans

Second by: Gary Burkholder

President Burkholder referenced the document provided to the board prior to the meeting that pertains to the contract. The first draft recommended a 3-year contract, and in the current draft it has been changed to 1-year, vehicle end-of-life and any residual value of the vehicle would go back to the township instead of the county commissioners. The draft provided was reviewed by the Bricker and Graydon Law Firm, Lieutenant Lorenz with the Licking County Sheriff Department, and forwarded to Zach West, Assistant County Prosecutor for his review.

Trustee McKee indicated she should not be deciding on the contract as she is leaving the board effective December 31, 2025. Ms. McKee reported that she would like to see the newly elected board review the contract and make the appropriate decision.

Trustee Evans thought it was interesting as he attempted to get this matter addressed earlier in the year, claiming the board was not aware of the deadline for "pick shifts" as of yesterday, December 15, 2025. Trustee Evans reported that the shifts are picked by the 15th of December and needed the contract by the December 31, 2025, for coverage in 2026. Once again, nothing gets accomplished here because they can't do anything. Trustee Evans expressed concerns with the second contract draft verbiage appears to read like the township is paying for all coverage and it should read that it's on top of the base coverage so that we are not subsidizing the county and sheriff departments, I agree with the 1-year contract, under section police services 2.B there should be language in there that the township gives direction to the deputies we are paying for. I've tried to have targeted traffic enforcement, it stated that 2 new cruisers for the life of the agreement, which was 3 years and again, do we still need 2 new cruisers, the times that the Etna deputies are dispatched out to the township should not be billed to the township, and I think that we should be pushing the commissioners to properly fund the Sheriff's Department so that they just hire the deputies they actually need. There is a section in the draft that says "the board shall not be responsible for the deputies' actions, and all cruisers, upgrades, and necessary equipment, and service records shall be provided under this agreement shall, at all times and remain the property of Licking County of Ohio, which is in direct conflict of the newly added section under 3D and should be clarified.

Trustee Burkholder stated he reviewed the contract and as far as the township requiring the Sheriff to notify the board if there is going to be

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overtime from an officer is not an appropriate request to ask. There is a provision in the contract to discuss with the Sheriff every 6 months to review what compensation needs to be paid and/or any other issues/concerns that may come up. Regarding the residual value of the cruisers, I did learn that there is no residual value in the cruisers if they run 5-6 years and, at that time, the items updated in the cruisers, if needed, are communications and computers equipment. When this is reviewed by the prosecutor, our legal counsel, the Sheriff, and then to the county commissioners, hopefully we will have a contract agreement. Trustee Evans asked where the provision for overtime came from since he, Trustee Burkholder, was handling this matter with the attorney and then the provision for overtime was added. Trustee Burkholder shared that he asked the attorney to review the contract and noted the items that were of concern to the township. Trustee Evans asked when the drafted contract needed to be approved. Trustee Burkholder noted that after our attorney reviewed the contract it was submitted to the Sheriff and forwarded to the prosecutor's office for another review. He respected Trustee McKee's decision to abstain from voting on this matter and the possibility that there won't be any extra coverage come January 1, 2026, because of the contract reviews and edits by all parties. Trustee Evans inquired about section 5D of the contract conflicts with 3D that was added and needs to be resolved. Trustee Burkholder stated he had received the edited contract today and submitted it for review to the trustee board.

Motion by: Gary Burkholder asked that Trustee Evans and Trustee McKee submit in writing their requested changes in an email to our legal counsel. Trustee Evans agreed and said that it was already done.

Second by: Rozland McKee-Flax

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax **Carried 3-0**

VI. New Business:

a. Motion to approve Resolution 2025-078 for the Etna Township 2026 Appropriation Budget.

Moved by: Gary Burkholder

Second by: Rozland McKee-Flax

Trustee Burkholder noted the temporary budget needs to get passed to avoid being late with payments rather than passing a full-year budget for 2026 at this time. This temporary budget will cover the first quarter of 2026 and allow for the new board to set a budget for the rest of 2026.

Trustee Evans claimed that nothing had changed from the budget, the numbers are made up, the form submitted is not for the quarter, but for the year 2026. He has asked the fiscal officer for access to the numbers and she has not responded. Trustee Burkholder disagreed with Trustee Evans' comments as it relates to the temporary budget which applies until April 1, 2026, by which time a full-year budget must be passed. Burkholder reported he met with the fiscal officer and the consultant, Chris Kirby, about the temporary budget and they discussed the numbers presented today. As an example, Pike Street cost of \$ 1.1 million is in the temporary budget, because it is going out to us soon and the township may need to write a check within the next 2 months for the \$1.1 million. Just because the temporary budget reflects says \$5 million in expenditure doesn't mean the township is going to spend \$5 million, this is just a cushion. Trustee Burkholder noted the township had a problem with one of our prior budgets when the fiscal officer could not pay an insurance premium because the board of trustees did not pass a temporary budget until after January 1st. Burkholder stated he would support the temporary budget so that we can support the operations of the township and move forward. Trustee Evans asked to get back to reality and stated the prior board with Mr. Carlisle didn't have a budget and they would just be spending until a budget was finally passed. There is no concern about the numbers presented or the books by the fiscal officer. Trustee Evans stated if the township receives a \$1 million grant and you spend \$1 million, you must

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have \$2 million in the budget because you're spending \$2 million and the revenue is \$1 million, why doesn't anyone understand this. Trustee Evans claimed the fiscal officer refuses to sit down or provide him with the numbers and answer his questions.

Yes: Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax

No: Mark Evans

Carried 2-1

b. Palmer and Mink Roads Intersection accidents

Motion by: Gary Burkholder to discuss the Palmer and Mink Roads intersection

Second by: Mark Evans

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax

Trustee Evans provided another communication addressed to the Licking County Commissioners and County Engineer asking that this intersection be addressed for some time now and it's taken them a year and a half to get approval and placement of the 2 signs that note "cross traffic does not stop". The communication provides some interim safety measures for the intersection, visual with arrows indicating that the cross traffic does not stop (more effective than words), continue the center line across Palmer Road to show that the traffic is continuous, speed and traffic enforcement, and asking them as a unified board to reduce the speed to 45 miles per hour. The township could have the authority to do this themselves if we become a limited home rule township (like Violet Township), since we are currently paying for our law enforcement coverage and outside counsel and this will allow us to make the necessary changes within the township. Other measures would include adding high reflection surface treatment to help minimize impact as well. Trustee McKee stated that she felt comfortable with allowing the new board for 2026 to move forward with the request by Trustee Evans. Trustee Burkholder asked if the board would approve sending this to the county commissioners and engineer in addition to what Trustee Evans has already done showing that we have a documented record of the board's approval. Trustee Burkholder reminded everyone that the county commissioners and engineers have in place a traffic study that may be available in the spring of 2026 with no specific date yet.

Motion by: Gary Burkholder to forward the communication from Trustee Evans and the board supporting the suggestions as presented.

Second by: Mark Evans

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax **Carried 3-0**

VII. **Fiscal Officer Report:**

a. Resolution 2025-079 to approve the purchase orders

Motion by: Gary Burkholder pass resolution 2025-079 purchase orders

Second by: Rozland McKee-Flax

Vice President McKee asked about the ACE Trucking, snowplow line item. Trustee Burkholder reported that this is to add a snowplow and other items to the Chevrolet pickup 3500 series we recently purchased. If we approve the expenditure, we can move forward by adding additional components to the truck for use.

Trustee Evans asked what the delay was for the new snowplow truck, Trustee Burkholder noted that there was no delay, just performing due diligence because it is on the State bid for the chassis and truck, but when it comes to the dump bed and other accessories. the price is approximately \$96,000 and exceeds the \$75,000 expenditure without getting bids, adding it appears there is a provision in the law that states if your vendor documents are 10 percent lower than the state bid, do not need to seek competitive bids. This provision has not been verified by the vendor at this time. We wanted to get a definitive answer from the vendor that we are doing this properly and don't have the answer yet. Trustee Evans had this same exact conversation with the road superintendent last week and due diligence should be within a day. Trustee Burkholder reported the vendor reported having the document verification, but he had not seen that documentation.

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Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax Carried 3-0

b. Motion to ratify the payment of the attached listed bills**Moved by:** Rozland McKee-Flax**Second by:** Gary Burkholder

Trustee Evans stated he has no clue what the fiscal officer is doing and believes that she is trying to hide some impropriety, especially with the first 5-line items with Keystone Cooperative postdate 12/16 which indicates that we are approving the payment of this line item, and then moved to a line item that showed the same invoice was already paid online on 12/12. The fiscal officer is not permitted to pay the bills without our approval and did and is now trying to cover up by including payment vouchers for the 16th, thereby making it a regular purchase order. He also reported talking to the vendor and was told that payments were late, an example is an invoice received for September 22nd, and she's not paying bills timely. She is violating policy, law, and not being honest because you can't say you're paying the bills for the 16th when you already paid it. He further questioned the \$853.95 for MS 365 for 1 year subscription and thought all the software applications were switched to Alpha Link. Trustee Burkholder noted that the software is proprietary to Microsoft and regulated by them. Trustee Burkholder reported that he too had some concerns about the Keystone invoices/payments. Trustee Evans noted the purchase order list from today for payment to Bricker and Graydon, but no purchase order listed, what invoice is being used to make the payment. There are also purchase orders in the amount of \$10,000 for Fishel, Downey, Albrecht, and Riepenhoff and the amount charged is zero. All traffic solutions, we paid them. yet there is a purchase order #249 on 10/7, in the of amount to \$9,346.23 and no charges. He feels that Ms. Cotugno is not competent in doing her job. Trustee Burkholder asked Trustee Evans if he had taken his concerns to the fiscal officer and he said no, he was bringing the matter to the attention of the board and feels that these accounting practices are ripe for mistakes, fraud, and inaccurate accounting practices. He further questioned her credit card expenditures being made in partial increments, duplicate payments, over payments, etc.

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to amend payment of the bills on condition of verification that the bills have not already been paid (example Keystone, Bricker and Graydon, etc.), review the then and now purchase order line items, ACH payments that should not have been paid, and update the payment voucher.

Second by: Mark Evans**Yes:** Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax Carried 3-0**Moved by:** Gary Burkholder to Amend**Yes:** Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee, Mark Evans Amended Main

Motion. Carried 3-0

VIII. Public Comments: (limit 2 minutes per person)

Tia Raver Zimmerman 9305 Summit Road SW – The board needs to interact more with the community by becoming a music booster, athletic supporter, go to the schools and represent the township, be a part of the community and not just sit there approving and disapproving line items. She thanked Trustee Evans for his help with Reynoldsburg and the Summit Road issue; she thanked Rozland for her service and hopes that the next board is open and communicative to the community.

John Kenard 10785 Palmer Road – I want to remind the board to cancel his township credit card, get all keys for township access from him, retrieve his laptop, change the passwords, security codes, and have all the locks rekeyed.

IX. Announcement and Trustee Comments:

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- a. Trustee reorganization meeting January 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., followed by the regular meeting.
- b. Etna Township Zoning Commission meeting and Public Hearings, December 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
- c. Licking County Planning Commission had a meeting last night, December 15th, and issued a decision on the DR Horton recommendation of denial and that report will go before the Zoning Commission and may be continued in 2026. The Cumberland Estates preliminary and final plan public hearing and review tomorrow night as well.

Trustee McKee noted that this would be her last meeting, the past 4 years she has learned a great deal about the community and the people who call this their home. Although the township has a long way to go while moving forward, she shared that she is a believer and she continues to pray for Etna Township and she's not the only one praying, even when things are difficult. She addressed matters that were painful for her pertaining to the lies that had been spoken about her, you cannot chase down every false statement, and my parents raised me not to focus on the negative. I chose to serve as Vice President of the township and we have accomplished safe, secure, and positive outcomes for the township to include the Pike Street Project that will serve as the heart of the township, the Refugee Road and State Route 310 Projects, the roundabouts, and the hiring of a township administrator. I feel that I have brought culture to the community and hope that everyone is treated with respect and dignity no matter who they are. She is proud to say that she was the first black American elected official in Licking County, and this is a milestone, and can only hope that she is not the last. So, no matter what anyone has ever said or will ever say about me, I have worked hard all my life and have been working since I was 15 years of age, I've sacrificed time, family, energy, and resources for the government, community, and this country. As a trustee you are elected for the benefit of the community, and this is what I've strived for and will continue to work toward. I will not stop praying and believing in this community and will continue to support Etna Township.

Trustee Evans asked for extra time because Vice President McKee spoke for 7 minutes. He claimed the township is in deep trouble with the fiscal issues. We are in the 3rd year of the comprehensive plan that should have taken 6-8 months, attempts to get the road crew plow trucks that's taken 4 years to accomplish. Words are nice, but actions say everything. More should have been accomplished in the township in the last 2 years and hasn't because Vice President McKee and President Burkholder controlled everything. He believes that the township is being affected daily by the board and nothing is getting done, and just because my term as Trustee is ending in 15 days does not mean that I'm going away, I will continue to hold people accountable and more that I can do as a resident and not a trustee. I wish that more good people would run for trustee because it's not that difficult and most didn't because of the vile attacks that occur. Four years ago, the John Carlisle board gave millions of dollars for our schools and fire districts to the developers. I've pushed for staffing, not friends or girlfriends, and the nonsense is not going away with me gone, it will get worse, and a wasted 4 years that should have been better. I'll talk to anyone and everyone that wants to hold this board accountable in the future and hope everyone has a good holiday.

Trustee Burkholder thanked his colleagues for their service and Ms. McKee's positive message for the future, wished everyone **safe and** happy holiday and stated he is looking forward to the new year, **and the incoming** elected trustees, adding we are fortunate people to attend our township meetings.

X. Adjournment

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Moved by: Gary Burkholder to adjourn

Second by: Mark Evans

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder, Rozland McKee-Flax Carried 3-0

XI. Adjourned


Gary Burkholder, President
Jackie Cotugno, Fiscal Officer*All resolutions presented are on file with the Fiscal Officer*