

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Meeting

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

Held December 22025

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

December 2, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

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

The Etna Township Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, in the Etna Township Hall, 81 Liberty Street, Etna, Ohio 43018 for the purpose of conducting a regular meeting. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Gary Burkholder.

Trustees Present: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder

Trustees Absent: Rozland McKee-Flax

Also in Attendance: Jackie Cotugno, Fiscal Officer

I. Opening

a. Call to order b. Roll Call c. Invocation – Staci Kitchen d. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to approve the agenda

Second by: Mark Evans

Trustee Evans reported that President Burkholder did not provide a draft of the agenda prior to the meeting, the agenda lacks meeting materials for comments from the public and considered a lack of transparency. President Burkholder has also used our road crew as his personal transportation service because his vehicle is non operable.

Moved by Trustee Evans to add the following items to the agenda and TIFs, use of road crew for personal transportation.

President Burkholder asked if there was a second to the motion to amend the agenda. Trustee Evans asked if this was how the matter was going to be played by not approving his request to amend the agenda.

Failed due to the lack of a second

Yes: Gary Burkholder

No: Mark Evans

Failed 1-1

III. Adoption of Minutes

a. September 2, 2025, Trustee Regular Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to adopt the minutes

Failed for a lack of second

Failed

IV. Public Comments (Limit of 3 Minutes Per Person)

Lorant Ipacs 114 Royalty Drive – Asked how long the temporary warning stop signs located at Prince and Princess will be posted as it's been at least 30 days. President Burkholder shared that it's an ODOT requirement and it may be a couple of weeks or more, thereby giving the community some time to get use to the flashing signs. The board will follow up with the road superintendent to determine the time frame.

Joan Burns 10650 Mink Street SW - Reported that she is concerned about the Mink Street and Palmer Road accidents and the potential for an increase in accidents due to new infrastructure and traffic. The 2-lane roads can't handle the influx of traffic and the current speed limit on these roads is 55 miles per hour, yet people are going much faster. The speed limit should be reduced to 45 miles per hour for safety and the installation of 4-way flashing light-stop signs at this location. President Burkholder spoke with the Licking County Engineer about assisting our road crew with the installation of the stop signs and they were not available. However, our road crew moved forward with the installation of the flashing stop signs. There is also an ongoing safety study taking place right now for this intersection and anticipates the completion of the safety study in early 2026 with consideration of a 4-way stop or a roundabout, and that other townships/communities have reported their concerns with the intersection as well. Trustee Evans reported that the township should

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have more control over how and when things get done for this matter and glad that things are moving for the betterment of the community. President Burkholder reported that any solution to this intersection will require the county, township and possibly federal funds to get this resolved.

Abraham Pickering 10081 York Road SW – Wanted to second his mother’s request about this same intersection and appreciated the update. He made a formal request for the trustees to vote and send a formal request to the Licking County Engineer showing our support in getting this matter moved forward and resolved sooner. President Burkholder reported that the board is united and sees no problem with honoring his request.

John Kenard 10785 Palmer Road – Regarding the Mink and Palmer intersection issue he felt that the 4-way stop with flashing signs would be more cost effective for the township and community and by reducing the speed to 45 miles per hour will most likely not require the traffic to slow anyone down. Trustee Evans’ repeated comments about the Sheriff’s contract is the reason we have the contract in the first place.

Rachel Zelazny 10141 Tollgate Road SW – Would like to see more information pertaining to the new business so that everyone can see what we’re doing in the community. She also thanked the road crew for an excellent job of managing the flashing lights and road conditions.

Mark Evans 91 Old Church – This is the same situation that has been ignored for years and how board members don’t care about keeping the community safe. Again, Trustee Evans has pushed for getting the township issues resolved and nothing has been done, his public records requests from the zoning commission, board of zoning appeals, fiscal officer, President Burkholder have not been fulfilled, use of the road crew for personal transportation reasons, lack of zoning enforcement, construction lights shining in people’s eyes, and how it is the legal obligation of the requested parties to fulfill his requests.

Craig Zacher 79 Trail East – The Sheriff’s contract is very important to the township for the following reasons: The Sheriffs have an east and west unit and when they are tied up on the other side of Licking County and there is a call for service in the township, it may be 10-20 minutes or more for a response. When you have Sheriff’s Deputies that are designated to Etna Township the response is much quicker and with the increasing infrastructure, housing, and traffic, the need for the Sheriff in our community continues to grow. Discussions that have taken place on the township lawsuits and legal fees costs, we should be able to find the money to keep and approve the Sheriff contract before the contract deadline on December 15, 2025. He further asked Trustee Evans when he was going to pay for the stop sign, he damaged. Trustee Evans reported that he paid for the stop sign repair and that the fiscal officer was incompetent. Fiscal Officer Jackie Cotugno reported that she is not incompetent, and Trustee Evans was issued a bill for the stop sign repair and he has not submitted payment for it to date.

V. Old Business

- a. Moved by Gary Burkholder to approve the 2026 Licking County Sheriff Contract for deputy services.

Second by: Mark Evans

Trustee Evans asked where the contract was and that he had not seen it. President Burkholder reported sending Trustee Evans the contract for review, noting Evans’ failure to follow up with the Sheriff’s Office. Trustee Evans claimed they won’t talk to him. Trustee Evans compared the service the Licking County Sheriff provides to the coverage for Violet Township in Fairfield County and believes that Etna is paying more than Violet when they have more deputies than Etna. Trustee Evans stated the fiscal officer has not provided or given him access to the costs associated with the Sheriff’s contract. Trustee Burkholder reported that he was in favor of the contract for the safety of the community and township. Trustee Evans wanted to table the matter. Trustee Burkholder asked him to vote for or against the contract.

Yes: Gary Burkholder

Abstain: Mark Evans

Motion Failed

Failed

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President Burkholder reported that he would be required to call a special meeting with hopes of getting the contract passed.

VI. New Business

- a. Motion to purchase 2026 International Dump Truck HV507 SFA
Motion to purchase Failed
- b. Motion to purchase 6 Stealth Radio Walkie Talkies with headset and mics for a cost of not more than \$1,600 for the road crew department.
Moved by: Gary Burkholder Second by: Mark Evans

President Burkholder shared with the those present in the meeting that the board had attempted to appoint volunteer members to the JEDDs and JEDDZ boards, tax financing, and Trustee Evans verbally criticized those individuals of which many are present in tonight's meeting. As the current Chair, nobody in this community should be criticized by Trustee Evans in any future meetings. We need to transition to a civil meeting with discussion, not harassment.

Trustee Evans asked if President Burkholder had researched the proposal and what model was being considered. He further stated that based on the price the model is a G1 that is not waterproof, drop proof, and questioned if FMCHA compliant, adding it appeared to be the cheapest model available. Trustee Burkholder reported that he was bringing this forward at the request of the road superintendent's recommendation. Trustee Evans stated he had been pushing the road department to have better communication and that he could research the products himself.

Tabled pending further research by the board and road department.

- b. Moved by Gary Burkholder to approve the contract with EMH&T for environmental services for the new park.
Moved by:
Second by: Failed due to a lack of movement
- c. Motion by Gary Burkholder to approve the 2-year contract with Civic Plus for website services
Moved by: Gary Burkholder
Second by: Failed for lack of second
- d. Motion to approve Resolution 2025-076 for the 2026 Temporary Appropriation Budget.
Moved by: Gary Burkholder
Second by: Mark Evans

Trustee Evans reported that there was an error in the budget for 2027 and that the numbers are being made up. There is no proper categorization for expenses, and the fiscal officer is incompetent. Why are we trying to pass a budget without accountability. President Burkholder commented on Trustee Evans continuous disregard for maintaining order and called for a vote.

Yes: Gary Burkholder

No: Mark Evans

Failed 1-1

VII. Fiscal Officer Report

- a. Resolution 2025-075 to approve purchase orders
Moved by: Gary Burkholder
Second by: Mark Evans

Trustee Evans asked if the purchase orders were for prior purchases, what we owe and what we intend to buy. Fiscal Officer Cotugno reported the items noted are to buy. Trustee Evans asked why a "park master plan" for \$20,000 was a line item. Trustee Burkholder reported that we need to have a purchase order if it passed and it's part of the master plan and the delineation of the wetlands. Trustee Evans asked what the task log was for. Fiscal Officer Cotugno reported that the task log was originally approved for \$20,000 and they spent \$2,700.

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Trustee Burkholder moved to amend the purchase order list by removing Civic Plus, EMH&T, dump truck, and Ace Truck from the list. Trustee Evans then asked about the snowplow and what it was for. President Burkholder reported that the snowplow would be for the new truck if approved and purchased. Trustee Evans would not consent because of a lack of further discussion.

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to amend the purchase order list

Failed for lack of second

Yes: Gary Burkholder

No: Mark Evans

Failed 1-1

Moved by: Gary Burkholder to ratify the payment of the attached listed bills

Second by: Mark Evans

Trustee Evans reported that the Taft Law Firm exceeded the approved amount. Trustee Evans questioned fees for Bricker and Graydon and wanted to know if there had been any past due invoices received, the zoning office furniture (approved, ordered, and check ordered for payment but not sent), why are there 2 bills from AlphaLink for \$7,200 and one for \$1,400. He questioned why the fiscal officer would order a check for approval for an item that hasn't been received yet. The fiscal officer reported that the AlphaLink bills are for the server and service. He asked if the server was supposed to be \$6,000 and not \$7,200 and why he wasn't provided with copies of the bills.

Yes: Gary Burkholder

No: Mark Evans

Failed 1-1

VIII. Public Comments (Limit of 2 Minutes Per Person)

Rachel Zelazny 10141 Tollgate Road SW -Expressed her displeasure with the failure to communicate and approve during the meeting. President Burkholder interrupted Ms. Zelazny and reported that the board has been trying to conduct a professional meeting and that he was not going to argue with Trustee Evans anymore and I do take exception her comment. Ms. Zelazny asked why the matter of the dump truck failed. President Burkholder shared that he wanted more information regarding the State contract. Ms. Zelazny reported that the road crew hasn't been given anything in the last 4 years, and that she can google from her phone a list of the top walkie talkies in 10 seconds, why didn't President Burkholder have the State contract information prior to the purchase request, the Sheriff contract, if we don't renew it, it goes to bidding, and nothing is getting done.

Craig Zacher 79 Trail East – Asked Trustee Evans if he gave false information regarding the Sheriff contract and how he tried to explain to the board. There is an East and West unit and if they are tied up on either side of Licking County, we will have no service in Etna Township. Apparently, you don't care about the community like you say you do, because if you did, you would have approved the contract. Your decisions here let the community know that you don't care about their safety and it's all about you and your ego. He further thanked President Burkholder for backing the Sheriff Department, community, and by deciding to have a special meeting on December 12, 2025, to address the matters discussed and not resolved here tonight.

Jeff Hall 79 Roma Court – Asked if there was a current contract with the Sheriff Department. President Burkholder shared that the proposed contract is a renewal of the previous contract with date changes, and the increased costs that was provided to the board which is \$131,000 plus. President Burkholder spoke with Lieutenant Lorenz about the contract, it was discussed that when the board approves the contract, they would make the necessary changes to the dates etc. and forward it to the County Prosecutor for a signature. He didn't see anything in the proposed contract that requires a more in-depth review at this time, but they can always come back to that later with the parties involved. Trustee Evans reported that he could show emails confirming the lack of response from the Sheriff Department.

The fiscal officer Cotugno asked Jeff to send her a public records request for a copy of the Sheriff Contract, and she will follow up.

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John Kenard 10785 Palmer Road – The reason the Sheriff has an issue with Trustee Evans is because when he called for a public forum on township property, he also called the Sheriff and asked to have a resident removed from the meeting and they would not comply due to this being a public meeting place and a public meeting was arranged. He further commented on the number of employees that have left the township because of him.

Mark Evans 91 Old Church – Trustee Evans reported that we shouldn't approve the money before approving the township contract, nor should we approve it and go back later for a more in-depth review and/or revision. He is for Sheriff coverage, but the county should be providing coverage for the community in the meantime. Why are we waiting until now, why has it been delayed, and this is what every vendor says about President Burkholder. Again, no one is doing their duties and Mr. Burkholder controls everything that happens. He's requested that the township disclose emails, calls, etc., to the public.

Alecia Zacher 79 Trail East – She would like for everyone to know that Mr. Evans thrives off every person and negativity in the room and when Ms. Zelazny, stated that the behavior is with both (Evans & Burkholder), that is incorrect. The behavior of Trustee Evans is the problem, and Ms. Zelazny is going to have to deal with it when she assumes her new role as trustee in 2026. Trustee Evans has no concept of what and how law enforcement works, the responsibilities, and stress they endure and as a retired Columbus Law Enforcement Officer, she does.

IX. Announcements and Trustee Comments (2 Minutes Per Trustee)

President Burkholder reported that he would have to call a special meeting, contact Ms. McKee and then ask Trustee Evans if is available as well.

- a. Next Trustee Meeting December 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
- b. Etna Township Zoning Commission Meeting December 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
- a. Etna Township Board of Zoning Appeals, December 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Moved by Trustee Evans to request the County Engineer lower the speed limit on Mink Street to 45 miles per hour.

Second by: Gary Burkholder

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder

Carried 2-0

Trustee Evans reported that President Burkholder blocked any discussion about having the road crew transport him from his house, blocked the road crew to not respond to Mr. Evans, and Ms. Cotugno also continues to block him from receiving his records requests. He also disagreed with Ms. Zelazny and her comments about approving simple township matters and whether she can serve on the board for the township.

X. Adjournment

Moved by Gary Burkholder

Yes: Mark Evans, Gary Burkholder

Carried 2-0

Adjourned


Gary Burkholder, President


Jackie Cotugno, Fiscal Officer

All resolutions as presented are on file with the Fiscal Officer